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### EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

**Sonu Shivdasani**

CEO, Soneva Group of Hotels

AND

**Eva Malmström Shivdasani**

Creative Director & Conscience, Soneva Group of Hotels

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Dear Readers,

It didn't have the 300-plus-year head-start of its peers such as London, New York City or Paris. Yet, the Maldives tourism industry has somehow gone from non-existent only a few decades ago, to leapfrog the competition and be regarded as truly world-class today.

Don't take our word for it. Trust instead the one million visitors who have believed in the Maldives from the beginning of the year until now.

The growth of tourism in the Maldives resembles a rising tide, carrying numerous stakeholders along its path. In this edition of Islandchief, we focus on sustainability, which has gained significant importance over the years and now encompasses a broader definition. The pandemic may have forced companies to put greening initiatives on the back burner but environmental stewardship is now back on the front burner. In our cover story, we bring you Sonu Shivdasani, the founder and CEO of Soneva resorts, and his wife, Eva Malmström Shivdasani, the Co-Founder and Creative Director of Soneva resorts, as we delve into their multifaceted vision and unwavering dedication to sustainability and luxury.

Within the delectable pages of our Bon Appétit section, we are delighted to have Chef Fathmath Lamha Ali, Demi CDP at City Bakery Maldives, graciously sharing with us the exquisite recipe of Bilimagu Curd Tart. Prepare to be captivated by her culinary expertise as she guides us through the step-by-step process of creating this indulgent and classic dessert with a Maldivian twist that will surely tantalize your taste buds.

As always, we are honored to feature opinions and perspectives from experts across our tourism industry, who share their invaluable perspectives, this time, on the pros and cons of having increased visits from superyachts to the Maldives, amidst amendment of current cruising regulations.

We look forward to shining more light on the many ways to go green in future issues of this ground-breaking tabloid magazine.

Until next time,

**The Islandchief Team**



## COIR ROPE MAKING

Coir rope making, known as Roanu Veshun in Dhivehi, is a traditional handicraft in the Maldives. The process begins by separating coconut husks from the fruit using a sharpened ironwood stick called 'Kaashi Hehun.' The husks are then soaked in water or buried in wet areas for one to two months until they become tender. Afterward, the husks are beaten and washed to obtain fibrous coir strands.

Once dried, the coir strands are hand-spun into ropes by joining strands together between the palms. This process, called 'Roanu Veshun,' is mainly carried out by women. Coir rope had various uses, such as in boats, traditional houses, hammocks ('Joali'), doormats, and bed frameworks.

Today, coir rope is used decoratively and for crafting Maldivian souvenirs. In the past, it was a significant export item, valued for its beauty and slimness. Although its demand has shifted, coir rope remains a common household item among the islanders. It was once exported to countries like China, Yemen, and the Persian Gulf.

Photo Credit: Rifshan Ahmed (Rippe Photos)

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ACROSS THE SKIES

# Sichuan Airlines to Launch Scheduled Flights to Maldives in August

Sichuan Airlines, one of China's prominent airlines, is expanding its reach by introducing a new flight route to the idyllic Maldives. Commencing on August 29, the airline will offer three weekly flights from Chengdu to Male'.

Recognizing the growing demand for travel to the Maldives, Sichuan Airlines has strategically scheduled three flights per week, catering to a wide range of travel preferences. This increased frequency aims to accommodate the diverse needs of passengers seeking to visit Maldives.

Sichuan Airlines has further appointed Villa Travels as its ground handling agent at Male Airport. Renowned for its exceptional ground services and extensive expertise in the field, Villa Travels will provide invaluable assistance to passengers upon their arrival in the Maldives, handling services such as luggage handling, inquiries, and other essential travel support.

By partnering with Villa Travels, Sichuan Airlines



demonstrates its commitment to enhancing the travel experience of its passengers to the Maldives. The collaboration ensures that travelers can rely on professional and reliable assistance right from the

moment they step foot in Male', enabling them to fully immerse themselves in the captivating beauty and attractions of the Maldives.

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## ACROSS THE SKIES

## Emirates Launches Regional Charter Service Offering Flexibility and Comfort for Short Trips



Emirates has launched an on-demand regional charter service, offering flexibility, convenience, privacy and comfort for customers who want to make short trips in the GCC from Dubai's Al Maktoum International Airport (DWC).

Operated by the airline's Phenom 100 twin-engine aircraft, customers can fly to a wide range of GCC destinations both within and outside of the Emirates network, with quick turnarounds to points in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman and

within the UAE.

The aircraft seats up to four passengers, and travelers on the short flights will be offered a well-stocked hamper of light bites and refreshments. Each passenger can check in one medium-sized bag weighing up to 15 kilograms, in addition to a carry-on handbag. Customers are encouraged to consult with their assigned booking representative or travel agent if they have any special requests.

The services offer discerning travelers with busy schedules privacy and a high level of flexibility, with a hassle-free ground experience. In Dubai, customers can expect Emirates Chauffeur Drive Services to transport them to DWC, and VIP treatment upon arrival with a dedicated representative who will support them throughout the airport journey, ensuring minimal pre-flight wait times. At their destination, customers benefit from fast on-ground escorted arrival and quick VIP clearance at customs and immigration provided by private terminal service partners. They will also have access to the private terminal lounge upon arrival.

## Maldivian Increases Flight Frequency to Lh. Madivaru and N. Maafaru Airports

National carrier Maldivian has responded to the increasing demand by announcing their decision to augment the number of flights to Lh. Madivaru and N. Maafaru airports. Starting from July 20, the airline will introduce an extra daily flight to both destinations. This move aims to improve connectivity and meet the rising passenger needs.

At present, Maldivian operates one daily flight each to Madivaru and Maafaru. Adding another flight is a strategic decision to better serve travelers and enhance accessibility to these highly sought-after locations. Passengers will now enjoy the benefits of a more extensive flight schedule, offering greater flexibility and convenience for their travel arrangements. The roundtrip fare for these flights has been set at MVR 2,754, providing an affordable and competitive option for individuals traveling to and from Madivaru and Maafaru.

Lhaviyani and Noonu atoll in the northern Maldives are renowned for their tourism, with resorts catering to various segments of travelers in these atolls.



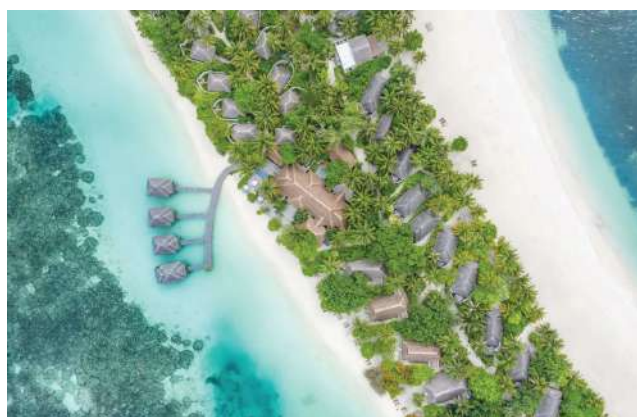
Maldivian usually adjusts its flight frequencies based on demand, especially during holiday periods. However, the recent increase in flights to Maafaru and Madivaru is not directly tied to the ongoing school

holiday season, according to the airline's statement. Instead, it reflects the company's strategic efforts to address the growing interest in these destinations and further strengthen its network.



IN A NUTSHELL

# Mindful Travel with LUX\* South Ari Atoll: 5 Ways to Make the Tropical Holiday Truly Meaningful



From yoga and meditation sessions to unique Extraordinary Experiences, this renowned resort of The Lux Collective – LUX\* South Ari Atoll knows how to turn a couple getaway, a family vacation, or a solo retreat into a life-changing adventure.

## Stop and enjoy the breeze

Landing in secluded tropics amidst the Indian Ocean is a perfect opportunity to slow down. Take a deep breath. Sink the toes in the warm white sand. Enjoy a bike ride along LUX\* South Ari Atoll's 1.8 kilometers long island with lush gardens. Look up to watch the sun streaming through the palm leaves. Guests can sip signature cocktails during the sunset Aperitivo hour, as the sky turns rosé. The starry Maldivian nights are the best for indulging dinners on the beach or open-air movies at the Cinema Paradiso.

## Detox all the way

Away from the noise and stress of city life, this is a well-deserved "me" time. Switch off the phone and switch on the detox mode. Guests can start the day with an invigorating yoga class or an energizing workout at the island's well-equipped fitness centre. Visit the LUX\* ME Spa for personalized wellness advice and be pampered with a massage, facial, or a salon treatment. De-stress at the tennis court before taking a dip in the ocean. For ultimate zen with a Maldivian twist, couples can book a private yoga and sound healing Extraordinary Experience - onboard a dhoni traditional wooden boat amidst the waves at the Golden Hour. With self-care opportunities at every step of the holiday, LUX\* South Ari Atoll is the ideal place to let go and recharge.

## Mind what you eat

Eight restaurants and five bars of LUX\* South Ari Atoll is where guests learn that food can also be a meaningful journey. Discover the variety of cuisines and flavors. Wake up to a healthy breakfast served fresh at the table or on a floating

tray in your private pool. LUX\* signature Keen On Green cuisine features plant-based and vegan specials in every restaurant, while ICI parlor serves homemade guilt-free ice cream right on the beach. Guests who wish to take a deep dive into culinary knowledge can book a wine-tasting or a bubbly and oysters pairing class and even a private Maldivian cooking class with the resort's Master Chef.

## Reconnect with each other

Be it traveling solo or with a companion, every hour at LUX\* South Ari Atoll is a socializing opportunity. Guests can spend a meaningful time together with their loved ones or meet some new friends. Morning boat trips gather ocean lovers for exciting snorkeling and whale shark discovery outings. Wellness group classes are for those looking to get fit together. A variety of experiences, from coffee art at LUX\* Cafe', visiting a local island for a shopping tour, and jet ski ocean safari to a sunset dhoni cruise, the island's Jungle Gym, water sports and diving centres, and the sea-facing Wanderlust Library await.

## Appreciate the Nature

Located in the Marine Protected Area, LUX\* South Ari Atoll gives a chance not only to see the vibrant underwater world but also to contribute to the ecosystem's wellbeing. Coral planting classes invite everyone to engage in protecting coral reefs. Junk Art studio is the place where trash turns into treasure during the weekly craft classes. The reusable LUX\* Bamboo Cup from Café LUX\* is a great souvenir of this mindful holiday. Additionally, even a wedding is a zero-waste experience on this magnificent island, awarded multiple times as the Most Sustainable Wedding Resort in South Asia. With a mindful approach to travel at its core, all guests are encouraged to join in the efforts to preserve and protect the beauty of the Maldives.

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## IN A NUTSHELL

# dnata Partners with Pulse Hotels & Resorts to Represent its Growing Maldives Portfolio in the GCC



dnata, one of the world's largest air and travel services providers, is partnering with the Maldives' Pulse Hotels & Resorts to bring its unique and expanding portfolio of properties across the Indian Ocean archipelago closer to the region's traveler base.

dnata Representation Services will become Pulse Hotels & Resorts' exclusive sales and marketing representative in the GCC, showcasing its latest news, exclusive rates, and more to travelers across the region, as travel demand for the Maldives continues. According to statistics from the Maldives Ministry of Tourism, the UAE was placed in the top ten number of arrivals by country of residence in its latest reports, between January and

May 2023, whilst tourist arrivals from other GCC destinations remain strong.

Pulse Hotels & Resorts owns and manages three properties across the Maldives, each offering a unique experience.

- The Nautilus is an ultra-luxury private island and winner of multiple awards, known as one of the world's most exclusive bohemian island hideaways.
- One of the newest resorts in the Maldives, Nova launched in 2022 with a modern take on all-inclusive with a vibrant 'community' concept.
- The largest of the offerings, Kandima, is a stylish and game-changing island destination boasting 264 studios and villas, 10 dining venues, and a plethora

of activities for leisure, corporate or MICE travel.

The Maldives-based company, which launched in 2015 with an entrepreneurial mindset to re-imagine the hospitality offering of the destination, continues to enhance the current portfolio and further expand its resort portfolio with product launches scheduled for the coming years.

Althaf Mohamed Ali, Chief Operating Officer at Pulse Hotels & Resorts, commented: "There has been an increase in interest and travel to our resorts from the GCC region in recent years. Our resorts cater to luxury travel experiences not only for short breaks and weekend getaways, but also for extended escapes from the region's warmer summers. Each resort targets a different market segment and offers a range of facilities and amenities, including stylish and affordable overwater villas, modern all-inclusive community concepts, and an entire ultra-luxury private island resort that guests can take over for maximum privacy."

According to Pulse Hotels & Resorts, since the start of 2023 recent trends in travel to the Maldives include a spike in last-minute holiday bookings from across various countries. Typically, holidays tend to last between six and seven nights, while the country's idyllic private island resorts are increasingly

attracting a growing number of long-stay travelers seeking to blend work and leisure.

Rakhi Purohit, Head of Representation Services at dnata, added: "GCC travelers seek the nature, privacy, and convenience of travel to the islands of the Maldives. The destination continues to grow in popularity as more resorts open for business, with Pulse Hotels & Resorts a prime example of a forward-thinking portfolio offering something new to the market. From the family amenities at Kandima, to the highly personalized experiences for couples and families at The Nautilus, and the community aspect that draws in solo travelers at Nova, we look forward to promoting these unique features to travelers across the GCC."

Established in 2015 by two Maldivian entrepreneurs with a proven track record in resort development in the Maldives and abroad, Pulse Hotels & Resorts is a hospitality development company specializing in tourist resorts and other tourism-related businesses. Find out more at:

<https://pulseresorts.com/>.

dnata Representation Services, part of the dnata Travel Group, is the global representation services partner of choice by multiple airlines, hotels, transport, and tourism board partners worldwide. Find out more, at [www.dnata.com/travel](http://www.dnata.com/travel).

## Taj Announces the Opening of J Wellness Circle in Maldives

Taj hotels in Maldives announce the opening of J Wellness Circle, offering curated experiences for rejuvenation of mind, body and soul. Its exclusive services are now open to guests at the award-winning Taj Exotica Resort & Spa and Taj Coral Reef Resort & Spa in Maldives.

Corinna Luebbe, Cluster General Manager - Maldives & General Manager - Taj Exotica Resort & Spa, Maldives, said, "Inspired by traditional Indian healing wisdom and based on principles of Ayurveda and Yoga, J Wellness offers an exquisite array of treatments, rituals and personalized experiences. We look forward to welcoming our guests to our resorts in the Maldives. Set on the backdrop of soothing turquoise waves and soft white sand, the spas present a pristine,

natural canvas for body-mind-soul balance."

The opening of J Wellness at Taj Maldives is part of a global launch of a new era of rediscovering Indian wisdom and healing by the Taj brand. Expert therapists use ancient master techniques to relax, rejuvenate, inspire and delight weary travelers. From the in-house range of sustainable, luxurious ingredients to nutritious dining options, J Wellness touches all facets in a guest's profound and meditative journey to self realization.

The J Wellness menu immerses guests in a meticulously-researched treasure trove of holistic Indian therapies, consultations and curated experiences. Svastha for pain therapy, Nidra for deep, multilayered sleep and the



ceremonial beauty ritual Shringar impart the wisdom of Indian healing to modern lifestyles. Even a regular manicure (Hasta Snana) and pedicure (Pada Snana) are elevated to deeply tranquil and pleasurable experiences. Taj Maldives's experts relieve jet

lagged guests with the Abhilaya therapy, while Sammatva aims at achieving a balanced state of well being through a series of asana (postures) and pranayam (controlled breathing techniques).



## IN A NUTSHELL

# The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort Introduces Exquisite Seasonal Specials to Kindle House of Celebration Program Across the Asia Pacific

The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort announces the addition of two limited-time specials in culinary and the art of drinking to join St. Regis' "The House of Celebration" initiative, a collection of special experiences that turn old customs into new traditions. The House of Celebration encourages guests to relive the magnificent and legendary festivities of the Astors, the founders of the renowned brand who were famous for their extravagant gatherings. The House of Celebration adopts a distinctive theme for each of the four seasons, similar to haute couture fashion runways, offering unique cultural, fashion, and dining experiences for a limited time. These experiences highlight St. Regis' beloved customs and establish new traditions in some of the Asia Pacific region's most exquisite locations, including the St. Regis Maldives Vommuli.

Beginning this summer, the finest address in the Maldives will unveil "Celebration of Place", a bespoke pairing menu for the season featuring dishes infused with local ingredients at the newly opened Asian

specialty restaurant, T.Pan. The new T.Pan set dinner menu, featuring Japanese style Kaiseki cuisine, starts from USD \$350++ and offers a beverage pairing option for \$220++. The presentation begins with an Osaka Nights "Otoshi" appetizer with Roku gin, Aperol, Antica Formula Vermouth and Ume Liqueur.

Paying homage to the St. Regis New York's famed King Cole Bar's focus on the art of drinking, the St. Regis Maldives Vommuli will introduce a New York-inspired cocktail infused with local ingredients at The Whale Bar to enrich the celebrated bar programming experience. It currently features a selection of 40 recipes inspired by five New York neighborhoods, and "The Violet Hour", a dedicated ritual to celebrate the end of the day and the start of the evening, when the sky is purple and talented bartenders can be found throwing martinis. Additionally, the five-star resort has introduced a limited time cocktail, Tropical Tuna Twist, inviting guests to indulge in the essence of the Maldives with this creation that captures the vibrant flavors of the archipelago. The refreshing



blend of Clear Tomato Water infused with Maldivian Chili and Curry Leaves is enhanced by the perfect balance of Tuna Vermouth, London Dry Gin, and citrus notes. Served with a side of homemade Tuna Rice Crackers and topped with a delightful Celery Foam, this cocktail is a taste of paradise not to be missed.

"At the St. Regis Maldives, we make the everyday exquisite and welcome guests into our home to experience the extraordinary in an unparalleled setting," says Vincent Pauchon, general manager of The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort.

"The St. Regis legacy as the original House of Celebration lives on through the Astor family's tradition and spirit. We continue to be the ultimate luxury destination and are proud to introduce our modern luminaries, tastemakers and global influencers to this new bespoke programming that one can only find at the finest address in the Maldives."

The seasonal Celebration of Place menu at T.Pan and Tropical Tuna Twist cocktail at The Whale Bar are available from July 5 - August 31, 2023. For more information, please visit <http://stregismaldives.com>.

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## MOVERS &amp; SHAKERS

## Kuda Villingili Appoints Abdulla Alim as Marketing Communications Manager

Luxury private island retreat Kuda Villingili is delighted to announce the appointment of Abdulla Alim, as the Marketing Communications Manager. With over six years of experience in the hospitality industry including two years' experience in a luxury resort, Alim brings a wealth of experience and a passion for marketing that is set to elevate the resort's marketing strategies and positioning.

As the Marketing Communications Manager, Alim is responsible for developing and implementing comprehensive marketing campaigns and strategies while working closely with PR Representatives, fostering brand awareness, and nurturing relationships with media partners and key stakeholders. With his creative approach to digital marketing and PR, Alim is poised to elevate the resort's brand positioning and drive innovative strategies to attract discerning travelers from around the world.

Prior to joining Kuda Villingili, Alim was at Vakkaru Maldives for two years, handling marketing, social media and PR-related activities while maintaining a strong brand positioning and digital presence of the luxury resort. Alim also played a crucial role in the pre-opening and post-covid reopening



as a Cluster Marketing Executive in the largest integrated leisure resort destination, CROSSROADS Maldives, where he looked after the overall marketing aspects of Hard Rock Hotel Maldives, SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton and CROSSROADS Maldives.

"We are delighted to welcome Alim to the Kuda Villingili family. With his extensive experience and passion for marketing, Alim is expected to bring fresh and innovative ideas to the Kuda Villingili team, helping the resort to maintain its position as a leading resort in the Maldives," said Amjad Thaufeeg, Director of Commercial.

### About Kuda Villingili Maldives

Located a mere 30-minute comfortable speedboat ride away from the Velana International Airport, Kuda Villingili Maldives embraces cultural diversity by designing its 59 beach villas and 36 water villas in an Asian eclectic style, further enriched by the local arts and fabrics. The open-plan spacious villas and Suite offer 180-degree view of the vast Indian Ocean, positioned both on the sunrise and sunset side of the island.

The resort developed its food & beverage concept to offer guests a unique gourmet journey. From The Restaurant that serves as a breakfast

venue which converts to three dining venues in the evening, to The Hawkers, which presents three restaurants catering to distinct specialty cuisines. All the restaurants at the resort provide an experience one should not miss. Spice entices guests with Indian-Arabic dishes, while East offers Oriental-Thai, and Med brings an Italian-Mediterranean touch. Mar-Umi has primarily been a favorite of the guests, serving South American cuisine during lunch and mouth-watering Japanese-Peruvian dishes in the evening.

Kuda Villingili Maldives offers its guests a unique, experience-driven journey, where time and space are redefined. The resort is home to an idyllic beachfront Spa, a fun-filled kids club, and one of the longest pools in the Maldives at 150m. Stylish sunbeds, cabanas, and a bar encircle this spacious azure pool where one can take a dip in the jacuzzi, do a marathon swim, or enjoy with the kids at the shallow end. Spend time with loved ones, make up for lost times, strengthen friendships, or forge new ones — whether guests are traveling as a couple, family, group of friends, or alone, Kuda Villingili is a slice of paradise where everyone is welcome.

## Cocoon Maldives Appoints New Resort Manager

Cocoon Maldives has announced the appointment of Mohamed Imthiyaz (Inthi) as their new Resort Manager.

Inthi started his career in 2004 as a Billing and Accounts Clerk at Vilamendhoo Island Resort. In 2005, he was offered the position of Head of Food and Beverage for Hilton Maldives Rangali Island after witnessing the excitement and opportunities in the Food and Beverage department. Since then, he has held various roles in luxury Maldives hotels such as Conrad Maldives, One & Only Reethi Rah Maldives, and Huvaafen Fushi.

Before joining Cocoon Maldives, Inthi had the role of Resort Manager at the beautiful adult-only resort, You & Me Maldives, for almost 2 years, having

been promoted from Operations Manager.

Cocoon Maldives considers it a privilege to have Inthi on board and they are excited to witness the contributions he will bring in his leadership, focusing on providing an unforgettable Cocoon experience with the warmth of Maldivian hospitality.

Cocoon Maldives is a 5 star luxury resort where contemporary taste is blended with the beauty of the Indian Ocean, beaches and tropical weather, creating a unique resort and the first design hotel in Maldives. Indeed, Cocoon Maldives has been the winner for 3 consecutive years of the award as Leading Design Resort in South Asia.





# Fairmont Maldives Appoints Valentina Sobeshchuk as Director of Sales & Marketing



Valentina Sobeshchuk has been appointed as the new Director of Sales & Marketing at Fairmont Maldives, Sirru Fen Fushi. With extensive experience in luxury hospitality and a deep understanding of the luxury

market and UHNW clientele, Valentina will be based in Dubai and oversee global sales and marketing efforts. Her responsibilities include building relationships with luxury tour operators, implementing a strategic

sales plan, guiding the Sales and Marketing Team, and identifying new business opportunities.

Valentina brings over 12 years of sales and marketing experience from prestigious hotels and brands, including her most recent position as Director of Sales and Marketing at W Dubai – The Palm. She has previously held management roles at Rixos Hotels UAE and Mövenpick, gaining a wealth of global hospitality experience. Valentina is currently pursuing an MBA in Finance at Middlesex University Dubai, further expanding her skill set.

Notably, Valentina achieved the Salesperson of the Year award at the Hotelier Middle East Awards in 2020. Her successful campaign for the reopening of Rixos Bab Al Bahr resulted in a sold-out property one week prior to opening, leading to a

significant increase in revenue and sales. Valentina aims to replicate this level of success at Fairmont Maldives, Sirru Fen Fushi.

Valentina expresses her excitement in joining the talented team at Fairmont Maldives and looks forward to leading the sales and marketing efforts during an exciting festive period. The appointment comes at a favorable time for the resort, as the Maldives tourism ministry reports a 31% increase in tourist arrivals in 2023 compared to the previous year. In addition, Fairmont Maldives offers unique experiences such as the Beach Tented Villas and workshops at the Sustainability Lab, along with various amenities including private pools, restaurants, a Kids Club, and a spa.

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## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

# Maldives Boating Awards 2023 Opens for Nominations



The nation's largest industry award 'Maldives Boating Awards' has opened nominations for the year 2023. The award which was launched in 2016 recognizes the best of the boating industry both in the Leisure, trading, and building sector.

The prestigious annual event honors businesses and individuals in a wide array of categories. Boating Awards opened the nominations with over 33 categories for individuals and brands to compete. The awards were planned for 2020 and 2021 due to the global pandemic and travel restrictions. NBAM hopes 2023 to be more favorable to the Hospitality Industry and wishes the travel industry to boom this year.

Nominations are open for 33

categories, from July 10 onwards with the deadline set for August 10, 2023. The Gala will be held in December 2023. State Trading Organization (STO) has currently signed as the Silver Partner of Boating Awards.

The organizer National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) ensures that this year's edition will be as colorful as the previous ones.

#### Download links:

Nomination Kit:

<https://tinyurl.com/23x84abb>

Nomination Form:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p9y2a3e>

Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/AmTzk2moNWSxvRWx9>

# Partners Unveiled for South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) 2023



The highly anticipated unveiling of partners for the South Asian Travel Awards (SATA) 2023 took place on July 10, 2023 at Maagiri Hotel in Malé. This event marked the official announcement of the partners for this year's awards ceremony.

SATA Vice President Suraj Khan delivered the welcome remarks, expressing his excitement for the upcoming event. The partners for SATA 2023 were revealed, showcasing their commitment to supporting the travel and tourism industry in South Asia. Gulf Craft, a renowned name in luxury

yacht manufacturing, proudly emerged as the Platinum Partner. The Hawks Pvt Ltd and Velana International Airport were unveiled as the Gold Partners, while Crowe Maldives joined as the Auditing Partner. Maagiri Hotel was announced as the Hospitality Partner, Maldives.

The unveiling event concluded with closing remarks delivered by SATA President Ismail Hameed, who expressed his gratitude towards the partners for their invaluable contributions to SATA. He also shared the exciting news that the South Asian



Travel Awards will take place at Sheraton Grand Hotel at Brigade Gateway in Bangalore, India in October 2023, bringing together industry leaders and stakeholders from across the region.

Celebrating its 7th year, SATA has consistently recognized excellence in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries in South Asia. The previous editions of the awards were successfully hosted at Adaaran Select Hudhuranfushi, Maldives (2022), SATA Virtual (2020), Amari Galle, Sri Lanka (2019), Taj Mahal Palace, India (2018),

Equator Village, Maldives (2017), and Mount Lavinia Hotel, Sri Lanka (2016).

The South Asian Travel Awards is a premier annual event that acknowledges and applauds the best in the travel and tourism industry in South Asia. With a rigorous selection process conducted by a panel of experts and industry professionals, the SATA recognizes outstanding achievements over 52 categories such as Best Domestic Destination, Best International Destination, Best Adventure Destination, and Best Emerging Destination.



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EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW  
with

**Sonu Shivdasani**  
CEO, Soneva Group of Hotels

AND

**Eva Malmström Shivdasani**  
Creative Director & Conscience, Soneva Group of Hotels

*In 1995, Eva and Sonu Shivdasani founded SONEVA to create locally crafted villas and promote eco-conscious living. Their vision sparked the trend of luxury holidays reconnecting people with nature, fostering a collaborative community that cherishes the environment and offers personalized experiences. SONEVA maintains a strong commitment to environmental and social responsibility, prioritizing the protection of ecosystems and local culture. Their resorts are built sustainably, banning plastic and sourcing food locally to minimize their carbon footprint. We spoke with Sonu Shivdasani about the importance of sustainability in the travel industry today.*

“Our shared passion for sustainability and protecting the environment has been a driving force behind Soneva's commitment to sustainable luxury.”

*As the founders of Soneva, a luxury resort company dedicated to sustainability, what inspired you to integrate environmental initiatives into your business model?*

Ever since Eva was a small child, she was brought up to always think about our planet. This is something which her parents instilled in her, she has always cared about nature and this is something that she taught me and then all of our Hosts. Her nickname has been “The Conscience” since she was a child. Her personal philosophy has significantly influenced the ethos of our hospitality brand, Soneva, and has shaped its core values and practices. Our personal experiences and values have served as a compass for shaping the Soneva brand, and we strive to create resorts that reflect our own way of life. By infusing sustainability, cultural authenticity, well-being, and meaningful experiences into every aspect of Soneva, we hope to inspire guests to embrace a more conscious and fulfilling way of traveling and living.

Our shared passion for sustainability and protecting the environment has been a driving force behind Soneva's commitment to sustainable luxury. From the inception of Soneva, we sought to create resorts that not only provided luxurious experiences but also minimized their ecological footprint and made a positive impact on the environment. This commitment to sustainability is a direct reflection of how we have lived our lives, prioritizing responsible choices and mindful practices that respect and preserve the natural world.

*Can you explain Soneva's core philosophy in terms of protecting biodiversity and habitats around the resorts, and how it aligns with the concept of "slow life"?*

‘Slow Life’ is our guiding principle - both our moral and operational compass. Through this ethos, we aim to tread lightly on the earth, while creating rare and



inspiring experiences for our guests, making memories that last a lifetime.

Our Slow Life focus has led to levels of guest loyalty and repeat business that far surpass industry norms, and this tells me unequivocally that the values of a company matter to those who consume its products.

The acronym Slow Life represents the core principles and values that guide our sustainability efforts and overall approach to hospitality. Each letter in "SLOW LIFE" represents a specific aspect of our commitment to sustainable luxury and responsible practices: SLOW LIFE (Sustainable – Local – Organic – Wellness – Learning – Inspiring – Fun – Experiences.) Let me explain further:

**S - Sustainable:** We prioritize sustainability in every aspect of our operations, from minimizing our carbon footprint to promoting eco-friendly practices and preserving natural resources. We strive to ensure that our resorts have a positive impact on the environment and local communities.

**L - Local:** We celebrate and support local communities by engaging with them, sourcing locally and by working with local communities to solve challenges they face, such as our Soneva Namoonaa activities.

**O - Organic:** Organic and locally sourced ingredients for our culinary offerings are a vital part for our F&B offering, with all of our resorts featuring organic gardens which supply our restaurants with herbs, vegetables and fruits. Our commitment to organic practices extends to our spas, where we utilize only natural, organic products.

**W - Wellness:** We believe in fostering holistic well-being for our guests through our wellness programs and facilities. Soneva Soul promotes physical and mental health, relaxation, and rejuvenation.

**L - Learning:** We aim to educate and inspire our guests by providing opportunities for learning and exploration. Through Soneva Academy, educational talks at AquaTerra, and interactive experiences, we raise awareness about sustainability, environmental conservation, and local cultures.

**I - Inspiring:** From unique dining concepts and recreational activities to innovative architecture and design, we aim to ignite a sense of wonder, curiosity, and awe.

**F - Fun:** We believe in the importance of joy and light-heartedness creating a playful and enjoyable atmosphere for our guests, ensuring that their stay is not only enriching but also filled with moments of laughter, happiness, and memorable experiences.

**E - Experience:** We are committed to providing exceptional and personalized experiences that exceed our guests' expectations. Every interaction, from arrival to departure, is designed to create lasting memories and a sense of enchantment.

**How do you engage and educate your guests about environmental sustainability during their stay at Soneva resorts?**

The guests that stay at Soneva come from all over the world and more than half of them are repeat guests, like the multi-generational families who have been coming to stay with us for years on end. We attract a lot of families with our extensive programme of activities for children and teenagers. Our children's clubs, called The Den, offer so much excitement and opportunities for learning. We also see guests who take great interest in water sports, diving, and wellness.

I would say about half of our guests care about sustainability; our Soneva Enthusiasts certainly do. They are very impressed by what we have achieved: whether it's that we banned branded water, single-use plastics, and plastic straws or that our mandatory environmental levy has raised USD10+ million for the Soneva Foundation's carbon offsetting projects. We also recycle 90% of our waste and our



resorts' Eco-Centro Waste to Wealth facilities are constantly innovating.

That said, in certain markets people still think to themselves, "well, if it's sustainable it cannot be luxurious." This is why we focus on our brand proposition of, 'Inspiring a Lifetime of Rare Experiences'. We bring our core purpose to life through our operations and the experiences we offer.

Our guests change while they're with us. This may sound like a naïve message coming from an island in the middle of the Indian Ocean, accessible only to a handful of travellers, but we see it as an awareness building experience. We want people to recognize the necessity of repairing the damage that we have caused to the environment; the energy we consume or the water that we take for granted. The hospitality industry can make a huge impact by getting this message across. We get our guests involved so that they can spread the good word about giving back to the planet.

**How did Soneva address the issue of carbon emissions from guest flights and other resort activities? & How has Soneva been carbon neutral as an organization since 2010, and what are your plans**

**for decarbonizing all three resorts by 2030?**

In 2008, we learnt that our carbon emissions measurement was incomplete as we didn't consider scope 3, which includes guest travel and supplies. We found that 85% of CO2 emissions at Soneva Fushi came from scope 3. To offset emissions, we added a 2% Environmental Levy to guests' bills, investing in projects with positive environmental, social, and economic impacts.

Soneva has been carbon neutral since 2012, setting an example in the luxury hospitality industry for sustainability. Their goal is to decarbonize all three resorts by 2030, focusing on reducing emissions, adopting renewable energy, and exploring new technologies for a net-zero carbon footprint. They also plan to expand efforts in sustainable transportation, waste management, and carbon offset initiatives.

Through these ambitious plans, Soneva aims to lead the way towards a sustainable future for luxury hospitality and inspire action against climate change.

**What steps do you take to ensure that the local communities surrounding your resorts benefit from your sustainability initiatives?**

We have been working in the Maldives for a few years now far beyond the hospitality scope, specifically the environmental and sustainability initiatives we do with Soneva Namoonaa.

Soneva Namoonaa is an environmental and sustainability initiative launched in 2019 in the Maldives. It aims to address waste disposal challenges, including burning garbage and single-use plastics littering beaches and coral reefs. The initiative, founded by Soneva and island councils, focuses on three core components: Reduce, Recycle, and Inspire.

They installed the first glass water bottling center, reducing plastic bottle waste. Maalhos became the first island to stop burning garbage through their Eco Centro waste-to-wealth center. They expanded their efforts to more islands in 2021, promoting waste management and environmental stewardship.



Soneva Namoonaa is a non-profit Maldivian NGO, dedicated to working with local islands to manage waste and eliminate single-use plastic. They also collaborated with Women's Development Committees to create an innovative second-hand market connecting multiple islands.

*Soneva has made significant efforts in waste management, particularly through its waste-to-wealth programs. Could you provide examples of how these programs work and their positive impact on the environment?*

Sustainability has always been at the heart of Soneva's ethos, from sourcing sustainable materials and pioneering 'waste-to-wealth' practices, to working in partnership with our local communities. One example from recent years is Makers' Place at Soneva Fushi. Launched in the summer of 2021, this fully carbon-neutral recycling studio transforms waste into works of art. Developed in partnership with artist Alexander James Hamilton, it tackles discarded aluminium and plastics from the soft drinks industry, which sadly often wash up on the Maldives' shores. Within its first three days of operation, the studio processed 15,000 aluminium cans alone, creating a better end life for these once-discarded, unwanted materials, and removing them from the fragile ecosystem.

*How does Soneva incorporate renewable energy sources into its operations, and what steps are you taking to reduce reliance on fossil fuels?*

At Soneva, we are deeply committed to incorporating renewable energy sources into our operations as part of our sustainability journey. We understand the critical role renewable energy plays in reducing our carbon footprint and mitigating the impacts of climate change. Here are some of the steps we are taking to achieve this:

**1. Solar Power:** A recent example is our solar power developments at Soneva Fushi and Soneva Jani which are based on USD 10 million in funding provided by German-headquartered Aareal Bank and will boost the electricity generated from renewable energy to over 50% at both resorts. Soneva secret will be almost 100% reliable on solar power. By utilizing solar energy, we reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and lower greenhouse gas emissions.

**2. Energy Efficiency:** While incorporating renewable energy is essential, we also focus on energy efficiency. Our resorts are equipped with energy-efficient appliances, lighting, and HVAC systems, reducing overall energy consumption and increasing our sustainability efforts. Our hosts play an important role in that aspect.

**3. Responsible Design and Construction:** When building new structures or renovating existing, we prioritize sustainable design practices. This includes optimizing building orientation and follow natural curves, using only sustainably sourced materials and insulation & ventilation to reduce energy demands.

**4. Innovative Technologies:** We continually explore and invest in cutting-edge technologies that promote sustainable energy usage.

Our aim is to make Soneva a shining example of sustainable luxury hospitality, where renewable

energy and responsible practices are seamlessly integrated into every aspect of our operations. By reducing our reliance on fossil fuels and embracing renewable energy solutions, we strive to be a catalyst for positive change in the global fight against climate change.

*Sustainable food production is another focus area for Soneva. Could you elaborate on your farm-to-table approach and initiatives to promote local, organic, and fair-trade food sourcing?*

Sustainable food production is indeed a core focus area for Soneva, and we take great pride in our farm-to-table approach and initiatives that promote local, organic, and fair-trade food sourcing. Our commitment to sustainable food practices is an integral part of our overall mission to reduce our ecological footprint and support local communities.

At our resorts, we have established organic gardens that supply a significant portion of the fresh produce used in our restaurants, up to 90% of greens are grown in our resorts and served in all our dining destinations. These gardens are meticulously managed using natural and sustainable farming practices, without the use of harmful chemicals or synthetic fertilizers.

For all our resorts in the Maldives and Thailand, we follow a sea-to-table approach, sourcing seafood from sustainable and responsible fishing practices. This helps protect marine ecosystems and ensures the long-term viability of fish populations.

Our chefs work closely with our food and beverage team to create menus that prioritize seasonal and locally available ingredients. By adapting to the seasonal availability of produce, we reduce the need for energy-intensive preservation methods and support sustainable farming cycles. Lastly, we strive to minimize food waste throughout our operations. Any surplus food for leftovers are reused in our waste-to- wealth centers into fertilizers and more.

*Soneva places a strong emphasis on preserving marine ecosystems. What measures have you implemented to protect and conserve the marine environment around your resorts?*

At Soneva, we proudly consider ourselves stewards of our planet. Since our inception in 1995, we have been at the forefront of the Maldives' sustainable future, championing various initiatives to combat climate change. One particularly important endeavour we have undertaken is our commitment to coral conservation and restoration.

We recognise the crucial role coral reefs play in marine ecosystems and the urgent need to protect and restore these delicate habitats. In April 2023, we opened AquaTerra, an education and research centre that serves as a hub for our conservation efforts. It brings together sustainability, science and unique experiences to advance varied initiatives, including the Soneva Foundation's Coral Restoration Programme.

In collaboration with Coralive and Soneva Fushi, the Soneva Foundation has established one of the world's largest coral nurseries using Mineral Accretion Technology (MAT) at Soneva Fushi. With 432 table structures, the aim is to propagate 50,000 corals each

year. Additionally, AquaTerra houses a spawning and rearing laboratory for assisted evolution and the creation of heat-resilient super corals, as well as a 3D-printing laboratory for coral substrate production. Soon, a micro-fragmenting laboratory will be installed, producing up to 100,000 corals annually. Guests at Soneva Fushi can also take behind-the-scenes tours of AquaTerra, combining them with snorkeling tours or visits to our organic gardens and Eco Centro Waste to Wealth centre.

Through the Soneva Foundation, guests also have the opportunity to sponsor coral nursery tables, leaving their mark on the planet in a unique way. Donors receive photos, updates and personalised name tags for their sponsored coral tables.

Our commitment to coral conservation and restoration reflects our belief in the interconnectedness of all living beings and ecosystems. Through these sustainable projects, we aim to protect ocean biodiversity, support local communities dependent on healthy reefs, and create positive environmental impact.

*As pioneers in the luxury travel industry, how do you envision the future of sustainable tourism, and what role do you believe businesses should play in driving positive change in the sector?*

I have spent my life working in the hotel industry and have devoted my career to building what is now a network of luxury resorts. I do not believe that this puts me at odds with conservation; but I am the first to say that the hotel and tourism sectors should admit where they have failed and take steps to bring about change.

There can be no doubt that we, as an industry, consume far more than our fair share of resources. But I believe that all companies, hotel businesses included, must have a purpose beyond profit. They must play a greater role in the world beyond just enriching their shareholders. I don't believe that this has to run counter to a successful business model, in fact, it can be central to it. We can find opportunities to make small positive changes that do not impact negatively on our profitability or our guests' perception of our products, yet which can generate considerable good for both the environment and society. In fact, they can often enhance our guests' experience.

By taking bold steps we can fundamentally redress the balance between business and communities and shift back to the original purpose of the corporation as a service to society.







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EVENTS & AWARDS

# 5th Edition of the Biennial Maldives Marine Science Symposium (MMSS) to Take Place in July 2024

The Maldives Marine Science Institute has announced its fifth edition of the biennial Maldives Marine Science Symposium (MMSS) series, the nation’s leading platform for the communication of marine research conducted in the Maldives. As the pioneers of marine research in the Maldives, the institute takes immense pride and joy that the fifth MMSS will also take place in the same year as Maldives Marine Science Institute marks its 40th anniversary. To celebrate this very special milestone, the fifth MMSS will feature a panel discussion in addition to oral and poster presentations.

MMSS has always fostered an exciting and fruitful exchange of ideas among the research community. Therefore, to ensure it continues this important rapport, the fifth symposium will also take place as a hybrid event, with opportunities for both in-person and virtual participation. The fifth MMSS

24<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup>  
July 2024



Fifth

Maldives

Marine

Science

Symposium

fisheries research

coral reef ecology

ecosystem dynamics

fisheries management

marine conservation

marine biodiversity

deep-sea ecology

climate change

resource use

spatial planning

marine pollution

mariculture

oceanography

intends to feature a variety of marine research areas, including fisheries, coral reef ecology, ecosystem dynamics, fisheries management, marine conservation, marine biodiversity, deep-sea ecology, climate

change, resource use, spatial planning, marine pollution, mariculture, and oceanography.

As per Maldives Marine Science institute, the submission of abstracts

and attendance at the symposium is free of charge. Abstract submissions will be open in their next announcement in August 2023.

Event Dates: July 24 - 25, 2024.



ZFOLD PAPER TOWEL



SCAN FOR CATALOG



# Astrabon Expo 2023 to Take Place on August 12th and 13th at Manhattan Business Hotel



Astrabon Expo, proudly announces its second edition, setting the stage for the premier platform showcasing resort supplies and F&B products in the Maldives. This exclusive trade exhibition fosters valuable connections, unveils cutting edge products driving industry growth.

Astrabon EXPO 2023 aims to deliver an unparalleled experience, featuring diverse innovative products that highlights the latest trends in the resort's supplies and F&B industry.

The highly anticipated Astrabon Expo 2023 will take place from August 12 to

13, 2023 at the prestigious Manhattan Business Hotel in Male', Maldives,. This prime location has been selected to ensure convenient accessibility for both local and international visitors.

**Event Schedule:**  
Day 1: August 12, 2023, Saturday from 09:00 am to 05:00 pm  
  
Day 2: August 13, 2023, Sunday from 09:00 am to 05:00 pm

Astrabon, renowned for high-class kitchenware and F&B accessories in the Maldives, showcases its exceptional offerings:

- 1. Incomparable Quality: Sourced from leading manufacturing worldwide, Astrabon's products embody exceptional quality and reliability
- 2. Comprehensive Warranty: Astrabon offer's a generous one-year warranty, demonstrating the

- company's commitment to customer satisfaction
- 3. Outstanding Customer Support: Customers receive personalized attention, expert guidance, and prompt assistance from Astrabon's dedicated sales agents
  - 4. Local Servicing Expertise: Convenient local servicing ensures a seamless customer experience, quick resolutions and efficient after-sales within the Maldives
  - 5. Competitive Pricing: Astrabon provides the most competitive prices in the market, offering premium products at affordable prices without compromising quality
- Additionally, Astrabon proudly offers 30-day credit facilities to its customers, providing flexible payment options that enhance convenience and facilitate business partnerships.

# Voyages Maldives Conferred National Award of Honour by President of Maldives

Voyages Maldives Pvt Ltd has been conferred with the National Award of Honor for their excellent and continued efforts in the tourism sector.

The honor was presented during the official ceremony held at the Maldives Centre of Social Education (MCSE), in commemoration of Maldives' 58th anniversary of Independence.

The journey of Voyages into the tourism industry initiated in the early 1980s, with a dhoni named Voyages 1 that was used to ferry tourists. 43 years later, Voyages Maldives stands tall as one of the most influential industry veterans that has given some of the biggest contributions to the sector. Through the years, Voyages Maldives has expanded immensely, from venturing into and becoming a top notch safari related service provider, to being one of the leading travel and tour

operators in the Maldives through their affiliation with global airlines and travel agencies. By 2008, they owned and operated twelve safari vessels, from which they currently operate seven, and is recognized as the most trusted Safari operator in the Maldives.

Not only is Voyages the oldest running company in Maldives to have been providing diving and cruising services on safari boats, but also is the first to be conferred with the national award.

The company was incorporated by 4 shareholders on February 13, 1980. Managing Director of Voyages, Mr. Salah Shihab is also one of the founder members of the company. Through the continued contribution by three of their founders towards the growth and development of the tourism industry of the Maldives, Voyages play an active role in shaping the destinations' future





IN THE NEWS

# Velana International Airport to Host the Prestigious Air Service World Congress 2024

Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) announced that Velana International Airport (VIA) will be the official host of the prestigious Air Service World Congress 2024. This marks a historical milestone as it will be the first time the Maldives hosts this esteemed global event.

The Air Service World Congress 2023 event held at Oakland, San Francisco Bay Area from 17 to 19 July 2023 reached a successful conclusion with the handover to Velana International Airport. Mr. Mahjoob Shujau, MD, and CEO, welcomed the attendees, inviting them to explore the aviation industry of the Maldives alongside the significant upgrades at Velana International Airport.

The upcoming event, scheduled to take place in July 2024, is expected to attract international representatives from the route development community and provide a platform to discuss the future of global air service development. Velana International Airport, as a hub of connectivity in the Indian Ocean, feels honored to facilitate such important industry conversations in its home, the Maldives.



Throughout the event, participants can look forward to engaging in insightful industry discussions, one-on-one meetings, and an array of networking opportunities. These interactions will undoubtedly provide avenues for knowledge sharing, fostering collaboration, and exploring innovative solutions for air service development. The event is not just about industry discussions and networking. Velana International Airport is incredibly excited to showcase the beautiful islands of the

Maldives, offering delegates the opportunity to experience the breathtaking natural beauty of the region.

"It is with immense pleasure that MACL announces Velana International Airport as the host for the 2024 Air Service World Congress. This pivotal event emphasizes the dedication to continual growth and development in the aviation industry. Over the years, Velana International Airport has made significant strides in transforming its

infrastructure and expanding its operational capacity," said Mahjoob Shujau, MACL's CEO, and Managing Director.

"From innovative projects such as the development of the New Seaplane Terminal to building a new Code F runway along with other facilities, Velana International Airport has continuously elevated its services to meet the evolving needs of passengers and airlines. This Congress will present an invaluable opportunity for us to showcase these advancements and open the gates to prospective partnerships with global airlines. We believe the Air Service World Congress 2024 will set the stage for a new chapter in the growth story of Velana International Airport, further reinforcing our path as a leading airport operator in the region."

MACL eagerly anticipates welcoming delegates to the Air Service World Congress 2024 and believes that the island paradise of the Maldives will leave an indelible imprint on all who attend.

## FIRST TIME IN MALDIVES - DRY SOLID WASTE THERMAL DECOMPOSITION MACHINE ( SMART GARBAGE SOLID WASTE (DRY) DISINTEGRATION MACHINE )



Installed at ( Real picture ) – Kendhikulhudhoo, Maldives



Google Map Location

<b>Type of Waste can be Decompose:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>! Dry solid waste (Plastics, Paper, Card Board, Rubber, Thermocol sheet, Clothes, Shoes)</li><li>! Sanitary pad, Nappy and Disposable medical waste</li><li>! Plants, Wood, Organic sludge, Kitchen waste etc. (80% Dry Waste + 20% Wet Waste)</li></ul>	<b>Residues after decomposition process:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>! Hot flue gas (Non Hazardous)</li><li>! Bottom ash (Very less amount generation) Can be used in paver block &amp; Cement industries . Volume of waste reduce to 500% . i.e. 10 Ton waste converts into 50 Kg of Ash.</li><li>! No Smoke</li></ul>
<b>Advantages:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>! Easy operation and not required any high skilled man power.</li><li>! Processing chamber does not required any Electricity, Fuel or Solar energy. (Electricity required only for waste handling, Water circulation &amp; Shredder)</li><li>! Low operational &amp; Maintenance cost.</li></ul>	<b>Buyer's Obligation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>! All government taxes, duties, port expenses, Local transportation, Agent charges, Helper &amp; Instruments for onsite installation.</li><li>! Installation &amp; Maintenance team (From India) expenses from male International Airport including local Transportation, Food, Accommodation &amp; Medical if require.</li></ul>

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# Maldivers Diving Centre Introduces Professional Diving Programs for Maldivian Fishermen

Maldivers Diving Centre, located in Dhiffushi, Malé Atoll, has announced the launch of professional diving programs tailored specifically for Maldivian fishermen. This initiative is made possible through generous funding provided by the Ministry of Economic Development. Interested individuals can apply to participate in these programs through the JobCentre Portal.

In collaboration with Scuba Schools International (SSI), a globally recognized organization renowned for its commitment to high-quality scuba diving education and certification, Maldivers offers comprehensive training programs that prioritize safety and utilize modern teaching techniques.

Maldivers now provides Maldivian fishermen with access to a range of SSI Dive Programs, including Open Water Diver, Advanced, First Aid, Rescue, and Deep Diver courses. The training programs take into account participants' prior scuba diving certifications and experience.

With a proven track record of



successfully training local divers for over 24 years, Maldivers is deeply embedded in the community and dedicated to offering exceptional training opportunities. For more information about the program and to join, please contact Maldivers at 7777532 or email [dhiffushi@maldivers.net](mailto:dhiffushi@maldivers.net).

About Maldivers Diving Centre  
Maldivers Diving Centre is a well-established diving facility that has been serving the local community for over 24 years. The centre offers a wide range of scuba diving courses and programs, focusing on delivering

high-quality training with a strong emphasis on safety. Actively involved in the community, Maldivers plays a vital

role in promoting responsible diving practices and preserving the abundant marine ecosystem of the Maldives.



# Addu Council Opens EOI Submission for Builders Interested in Developing a Yacht Marina and Cruise Terminal in S. Feydhoo



Addu Council has opened an Expression of Interest (EOI) for those interested in building a yacht marina and cruise terminal in Addu.

Companies interested in these facilities to be set up in Feydhoo can submit EOI till July 25, 2023. According to the council, interested companies will have to submit their financial statements from the last three years. It has to be companies with at least 10 years of experience.

The council had made plans to build a yacht marina and cruise terminal in Addu city from 2021 onwards. The facilities will be set up at Feydhoo's former football ground and the area

connecting Feydhoo and Gan.

The Feydhoo Land Use Plan, which was approved late last year, also allocated land for the yacht marina and cruise terminal. According to the council, a 100-room hotel will also be developed in the area where the yacht marina and cruise terminal are being built. Addu City Mayor Ali Nizar said companies have already shown interest to take the project.

There was talk of a yacht marina and a cruise terminal in Addu, and plans were first made in this regard in 2007. The project was also included in the 'Vision Addu' released in 2008.



## IN THE NEWS

# Inner Maldives Launches First-Ever South Korea Itinerary



Inner Maldives Private Limited, a leading travel and tour operator in the Maldives, announces the launch of its highly anticipated first-ever organized group tour to Korea. This marks a significant milestone for the company as it expands its portfolio to provide captivating travel experiences for its esteemed clientele.

Scheduled from October 13 to 20, 2023 coinciding with the academic mid-term school holidays, this tour allows travelers to experience Korea during the vibrant autumn season when the landscape comes alive with breathtaking colors and cultural

festivities. It is the perfect time to explore the country's iconic landmarks, delve into its fascinating history, and indulge in its culinary delights.

The 7-day South Korea Seoul and Busan itinerary includes a sea cable car ride between Songlim Park east of Songdo Beach to Amnam Park west of Songdo Beach, where visitors can enjoy the thrill of being in the middle of the sea, as well as Song do Beach, Busan Yeongdo and Namhang Bridge, Songdo Coastal Dulle Road, and the surfacing cliffs.

Travelers will be able to explore

Gangnam, which gained fame through Psy's popular song 'Gangnam Style'. The travel plan also includes visits to the most enchanting sites of K culture where the travelers can indulge in activities of their favorite Kpop and Kdrama industry namely, HYBE insight, Hikr ground, K star road and Nam-SangK-culture pilgrimage tour.

Mohamed Firaq, Managing Director of Inner Maldives said "Korea has transformed into a dominant force in popular culture in recent years. It has emerged as a highly desirable travel destination for individuals aged 18-35 worldwide. This surge in popularity can

be attributed to the significant influence of acclaimed movies and TV shows like "Parasite" and "Squid Game," as well as the exponential rise of K-pop and the widespread fascination with K-beauty".

Inner Maldives Private Limited has meticulously designed a 7-day, 6-night itinerary, featuring luxurious hotel accommodations on a full board basis, along with convenient return flights for a group of 15 persons.

The package includes a delightful stay in renowned hotels, offering unmatched comfort and relaxation throughout the trip. Guests will be treated to delectable meals on a full board basis, savoring the flavors of Korea's renowned cuisine. Inner Maldives Private Limited has carefully curated a diverse range of activities and excursions to ensure that travelers experience the very best that Korea has to offer.

The package costs USD 2877.00 per person on twin sharing basis including return airfare, 6 nights accommodation, meals on full board, local transfers and English speaking guide. Inner Maldives request all interested parties to contact their hotline 791 6886 for more information and registration.

## EU Support for a Resilient Recovery of SME Tourism Industry in the Maldives

The European Union (EU), Maldives Fund Management Corporation, the Maldives National University, Maafushi Council and local business community gathered on July 18, at the island of K. Maafushi to conduct information sessions targeted towards local guesthouses. This information session was conducted under the EU funded project "EU Support for a Resilient Recovery of SME Tourism Industry in the Maldives".

The EU has provided EUR 2 million to help the local tourism industry to recover from the COVID-19 crisis. The goal for this project is to help build up a more resilient and diversified economy in the SME Tourism Industry in the Maldives. As part of the project, a total of EUR 1,400,000 (MVR 25,332,672) was allocated to tourism SMEs as a grant to support business operations to tide over a period where businesses struggled to survive given global lockdowns. To date, 406

beneficiaries received a direct EU grant, out of which 341 are local guesthouses and 65 are safari vessels upon completion of component 1 of the project.

While addressing the guests, the Head of Cooperation at the EU Delegation to Sri Lanka and the Maldives, Dr. Johann Hesse highlighted that, "EU funding always puts people at the heart of our activities. This is why we support small guesthouses and safari vessels aligning with the Government's agenda of spreading the tourism experience and spending in communities. We are strong believers that economic growth models should be sustainable, not lead to polluting your beautiful islands and amazing marine biodiversity which tourists flock to your country to enjoy. Our future funding will focus on ensuring economic and environmental sustainability, which do not ultimately threaten the livelihoods and health of



communities in the long run."

The objective of conducting nation-wide training sessions is to contribute towards the development of SMEs operating in the local tourism industry. The key focus areas of the sessions include, adapting to a post pandemic world, sustainability, front-office and financial management, and effective waste management. Additionally, token cheques were handed to some of the beneficiaries

on the direct cash transfer component, at the conclusion of the training session.

The Delegation of the European Union to Sri Lanka and Maldives, Maldives Fund Management Corporation, and the K. Maafushi Island Council attended the token awarding ceremony. The Maldives Fund Management Corporation (MFMC) is the lead implementation agency for the project.



# Alia Successfully Concludes Training Program to Enhance the Skill Set of Boat Operators

In a collaborative effort to enhance the skillset of boat operators in the Maldives, ALIA successfully conducted a comprehensive training program that garnered praise from participants representing various resorts, companies, and government institutions.

With a total of 50 participants, the training program provided invaluable knowledge and skills to its attendees, leaving them grateful and equipped with a newfound confidence in their careers. The participants expressed their appreciation for the program, recognizing its significant contribution to their professional growth and advancement. A ceremonious closing marked the conclusion of the training, during which the all the participants were presented with well-deserved certificates of completion.

The training curriculum encompassed a comprehensive array of practical skills essential for navigating a wide range of speedboats with confidence. Participants were thoroughly acquainted with Local Maritime Regulations, preventive maintenance strategies, crucial safety protocols, and emergency procedures. Moreover, the program provided in-depth training in first aid, fire safety, as well as the maintenance and troubleshooting techniques for outboard engines.

ALIA extends heartfelt gratitude to all the participants whose active engagement contributed to the success of the training program. The organization also extends its appreciation to the Maldives Institute of Technology (MIT) for their support and collaboration throughout the endeavor. ALIA holds optimistic aspirations that the acquired training will serve as a catalyst for raising industry standards and inspire further excellence among participants.

ALIA's boat operator training program in the Maldives has left an indelible mark on its participants. The program's comprehensive approach has undoubtedly elevated the skills and confidence of boat operators in the region. By equipping participants with practical expertise and ensuring adherence to safety measures, ALIA has made a significant contribution to the progression of the industry, fostering a promising future for boat operators in the Maldives.





BON APPÉTIT

Bilimagu Curd Tart



Hello there! I am Lamha a.k.a. Lam. I am a Pastry Chef Specializing in Cold Pastries and cakes. I am very interested in making and researching about different desserts in different cultures. Especially Local recipes that is being lost in history.

I was a young girl who was always keen on baking. I used to bake cookies or cakes with whatever ingredient that were available in the kitchen at the time. With lots of experimenting and failures with rock hard cookies, and cakes that turned out to be brownies, I found my way to the internet and recipes that made me open to proper techniques of baking.

I went from baking to my family, to bake for classmates, teachers and school events and to become a home baker until my Culinary and Patisserie education from FHTS MNU. That's when my professional career began. At first I experienced different cuisines and fields just to realize I have always had love for baking. Then so my Pastry Chef career came to be.

Now I am a member of the CGM participating in competition, and gradually achieving a name for myself in the industry. In Sha Allah, this is just the beginning of a fruitful profession with luck and prosperity in the future to come.

INGRIDENTS:

Tart Base Recipe:

- 40g Butter
- 20g Sugar
- 5g Whole Egg
- 2g Egg Yolk
- 70g Flour
- Butter (For greasing tart rings)
- Melted White chocolate (for base)

METHOD:

In a bowl, mix together Butter and sugar until creamy. Then gradually mix in the egg and egg yolk. Lastly, fold in the Flour and let the dough chill in the fridge for an hour. Butter the tart rings and shape the dough into the rings. Serrate the base of the tart with a fork and let bake in a preheated oven of 170C oven with baking beans for 12 to 15 minutes or until golden brown. Let cool in room temperature. Brush some melted white chocolate on the inside of the tart shell and let chill in room temperature.

INGRIDENTS:

Bavarian Cream

- 4.5g Gelatin
- 22ml Water
- 3nos Egg Yolk
- 37g Sugar
- 180ml Meadowland Double Cream
- 1tsp Vanilla
- 60ml Meadowland Double Cream

METHOD:

Soak the gelatin in the water to bloom. While it blooms, whip the egg yolks with sugar until creamy. In a pan, cook the 360ml Cream with Vanilla Until 60C. Then Slowly add the egg mixture into the cream while whisking, making sure the eggs don't clump. Leave this to cool. When it cools down, whip the 240ml cream. Fold the pastry cream into the whipped cream. Lastly, melt the gelatin in the microwave and fold it into the mousse.

INGRIDENTS:

Bilimagu Curd

- 100g Bilimbi Fruit
- 50ml water
- 5g Lime zest
- 3 Egg yolks
- 50g Sugar
- 14g Unsalted Butter

METHOD:

Blend the Bilimbi Fruit with the water and sieve out the juice until you have 55ml of juice. In a small sauce pot, Add in the egg yolk, sugar and the zest. Whip until the sugar is dissolved into the eggs. Then mix in the juice and cook on medium heat making sure the yolks do not curdle. Turn off the heat and add in the cold butter. Whisk until combined well.

INGRIDENTS:

Meringue

- 50g Egg white
- 150g Caster Sugar

METHOD:

In a mixing bowl, add in the egg whites and sugar and mix together until combined. Place on top of a double boiler and alternate between whisking the mixture and scraping the sides with a spatula. Continue this until all the sugar is dissolved. Remove the bowl from the double boiler and attach to the electric stand mixer to whisk in the lowest speed and increase the speed gradually up-to medium-high speed. Whisk until you achieve a stiff peak.

Assembling the tart:

In the tart shell, pipe a layer of the Bavarian cream until the half of the tart is filled. Then let chill for a few minutes, and pipe on a layer of the Bilimagu curd until the tart is full. Add a dollop of the swiss meringue on top of the tart. For the garnish, place a standing white chocolate ring, and add a pinch of edible gold on the meringue. Lastly, Place 2 freshly picked Bilimbi Flower to give a pop of color.

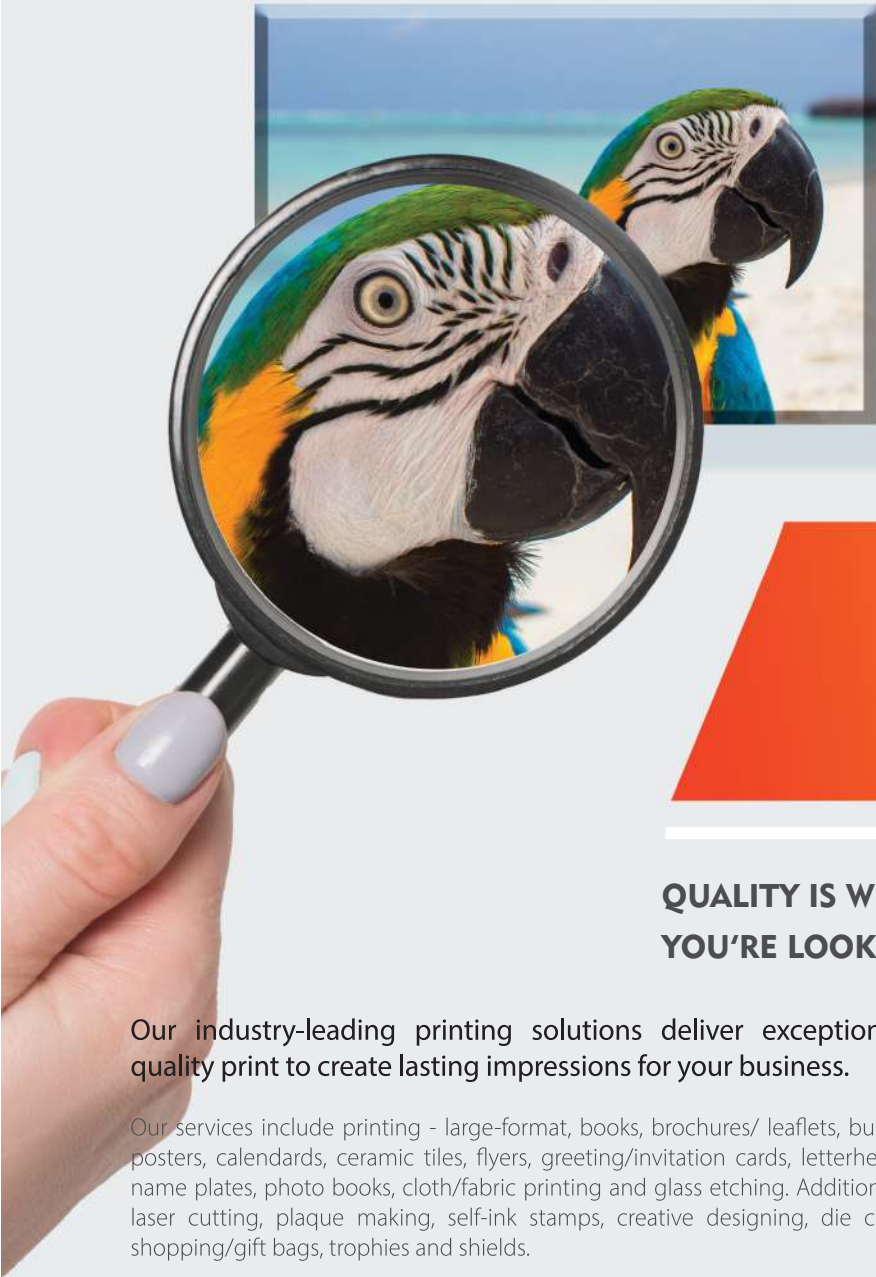


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# Frankly Speaking

**The first week of 2023 has seen a jump in superyachts visiting the Maldives. According to tracking data compiled by Bloomberg and reported on 6 January 2023, “the Maldives saw 18 superyachts in early January, compared with only one two months ago.”**

**The report indicates a growing number of the global fleet cruising in the Maldives, with the island chain currently seeing more yachts than Hong Kong and Singapore combined, and slightly outpacing Thailand.**

**With the increase of super yachts, the government has prepared and amended the current cruising regulations. What are the pros and cons of having many super yachts choosing the destination?**



**Amir Mansoor**  
Chairman  
Carpe Diem

*It will surely have a positive impact as super yachts are handled and operated by leading international operators, which will boost the economy via bookings in resorts and hotels. Additionally, handling supplies, payments and taxes in a formal transparent way will further support the boost.*

However, there's also the chance it may create a loophole for sole agents to swindle tax payment according to amended regulations.



**Ahmed Zubair**  
Director  
Blue Horizon

*Need to get them to go to remote areas away from busy Ari and Male' atolls. They need to be tracked by Customs similar to how Customs tracks liquor!*

*All jokes aside, having Super Yachts is a good thing, they book rooms in resorts & hotels, hire locals for spear fishing guides, buy local produce, handling agents, pay taxes etc.*



**Ahmed Naushad**  
Regional Director  
JLS Yachts Maldives

### Pros

- Destination will be advertised as a high-end luxury market to the world.
- Revenue will be generated to the economy, not to an individual.  
Eg: Revenue to the government as fees, taxes and permits (MOT).
- Ports authority as entry fees, port dues and anchorage fees and light dues.
- Local suppliers: local groceries, flower shops, workshops, fuel suppliers taxes etc.
- Day workers: Create job opportunities in these vessels arriving to maldives.
- Local boating industry will try to compete and up scale the standards and new builds similar to the superyacht designs.

### Cons

- Congestion in the port and in tourist attractions.
- Environmental effects: pollution, wastewater and sewage disposal to the sea and increased anchor drops will damage the reefs.
- Garbage disposal will add to waste management costs.



**Ibrahim Nizam**  
CEO & MD  
The Grand Holidays & The Grand Associates

*Travelers by Superyachts are the most affluent cruise lovers in the world. These travelers are from the niche and the high-end luxury market and are passionate about moving around the globe at their convenience and freedom. Their spending power is strong, and they are the least affected by economic crunches and unforeseen crises.*

Moreover, the enormous publicity that the Maldives will receive as an ideal destination for Superyachts will attract more celebrities and the most high-end luxury travelers from various parts of the globe.

*It's a fantastic market that we should explore further and find more impressive ways to extend the best services to the charterers, operators, owners, local yacht agents and especially guests arriving by these yachts.*

*In order for us to continue enjoying the benefits of this industry and to prevent or minimize the adverse effects, a good SOP is recommended.*



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