

The islandchief

travel news

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NESCAFÉ

TASTE OF ADVENTURE

AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR **Kity** ENTERPRISES PVT. LTD.



Featuring

Ali Zahir

Owner

BRENNIA KOTTEFARU

with

*Aminath Hussain
Zaady*

Chief Operating Officer

PAGE: 12

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Dear Readers,

As the year draws to a close, we reflect on a remarkable journey, one defined by renewal, innovation, and purpose across the Maldivian tourism landscape. From transformative partnerships to milestones in sustainability and hospitality, 2025 has reaffirmed the Maldives' enduring spirit as a world-class destination.

This November, The Islandchief spotlights stories that capture the pulse of our evolving industry. Trans Maldivian Airways expands its wings with the addition of Ananea Madivaru Maldives Resort, while Villa Air readies its return to seaplane operations, strengthening connectivity across our atolls. Meanwhile, the Baa Atoll Council's Guinness World Record for the most people snorkelling simultaneously stands as a proud symbol of unity and environmental stewardship.

We also mark a defining chapter for Maldivian hospitality as Universal Enterprises rebrands to VERSA Hospitality, launching NIVA Hotels & Resorts—a bold stride toward global recognition and emotionally connected travel.

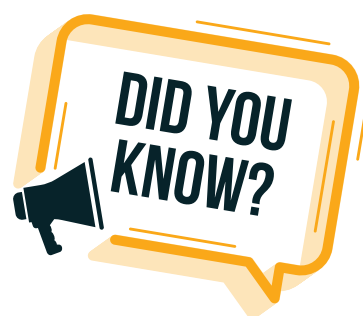
For this edition of The Islandchief, we sit with Ali Zahir, the visionary behind Brennia Kottefaru—a resort that epitomizes Maldivian entrepreneurship, authenticity, and purpose. Nestled in the tranquil embrace of Raa Atoll, Brennia stands as a testament to Zahir's belief that world-class excellence can thrive from local roots. Together with Chief Operating Officer Aminath Hussain Zaady, he has shaped a brand that celebrates Maldivian identity while seamlessly blending innovation, sustainability, and heartfelt hospitality.

In our Bon Appétit section, Chef Devin Rodrigues – A Culinary Maestro with a Global Touch (Chef de Cuisine) at Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa presents his signature Maldivian Octopus Carpaccio, a refreshing creation of tender octopus, creamy guacamole, jalapeño oil, and fish roe. A fusion of local inspiration and global flair, the dish embodies Chef Devin's approach to balancing tradition with innovation, a skill honed through his experience with leading brands such as Taj, Four Seasons, and The Leela.

In our Frankly Speaking segment, industry experts weigh in on the recent increase in the Tourism Goods and Services Tax (TGST), which rose from 16% to 17% on July 1, 2025. The new rate applies to all tourism-related businesses, affecting any "time of supply" transactions, meaning invoices or payments made on or after this date are subject to the higher rate. The discussion explores how this adjustment is expected to influence occupancy levels and visitor arrivals across the Maldives.

As we enter the final months of the year, we continue to celebrate the people, partnerships, and progress driving Maldivian tourism forward. May this season inspire reflection, renewal, and anticipation for the opportunities that lie ahead.

Until next time,
The Islandchief Team



KOIMALA STORY

The Koimala Story is a foundational Maldivian legend that traces the origins of its early monarchy to a noble foreign lineage, commonly linked to the ancient kingdom of Kalinga. Various versions of the tale describe Koimala or his royal parents arriving from India or Sri Lanka with a noble entourage, settling first in Rasgetheemu before moving to Malé. In every retelling, Koimala or his parents are welcomed by the local people and chosen to rule, reflecting a tradition of respect for royal heritage and foreign connections. Though historical records of pre-Islamic Maldivian rulers are scarce, the Koimala story is widely regarded as a symbolic account of the nation's first king and its earliest structured governance, preceding the Islamic conversion in 1153 A.D.

Photo credit:
Oaga Art Resort

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5 UNITED NATIONS AGENCIES

Trans Maldivian Airways Begins Operations to Ananea Madivaru Maldives Resort in North Ari Atoll



Trans Maldivian Airways (TMA) has announced its partnership with Ananea Madivaru Maldives Resort, a new luxury island retreat located in the tranquil North Ari Atoll. The collaboration marks the resort’s inclusion in TMA’s distinguished portfolio of resort partners across the Maldives.

As the preferred seaplane transfer provider for the five-star resort, TMA reaffirmed its commitment to delivering a seamless and memorable journey for guests – from arrival at Velana International Airport to their breathtaking descent over the turquoise atolls en route to Ananea Madivaru.

Ananea Madivaru Maldives officially opened in April 2025, introducing a new standard of refined island living. Spanning two interconnected islands, the resort features pristine white-sand beaches, a sprawling lagoon, and a rich house reef teeming with marine life. Guests are invited to indulge in a

variety of experiences on the main island, which houses the Kandu Spa, Dive Centre, Kids Club, and nine distinctive dining venues, along with a selection of beachfront and overwater villas. The adjoining island offers additional villas, restaurants, and a Recreation Centre, creating a complete and idyllic Maldivian escape.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Qatar Airways Awarded 'Best Airline App 2025' by World Aviation Festival

Qatar Airways has been named the winner of the 'Best Airline App 2025' award at the World Aviation Festival, the world's largest aviation technology event. The award was presented during the festival's 'Battle of the Airline Apps', where travellers first nominated their favourite airline apps, and a jury later evaluated the top five based on user experience, mobile services, and digital innovation.

Qatar Airways' Senior Vice President Business-to-Consumer, Mr. Christophe Guittard, expressed pride in the achievement, calling it a reflection of the airline's ambition and dedication to digital excellence. He highlighted that the app goes beyond being a travel tool, becoming a "powerhouse of smart technology and innovation" that enhances customer satisfaction through speed, personalization, and

world-first features.

The Qatar Airways app is designed to provide a personalised travel experience at every stage of the journey, from booking to arrival. With access to over 170 destinations worldwide, the app simplifies trip planning and management, offering travellers a seamless and intuitive digital experience.

In addition to its core features, the app introduces exclusive services for both frequent flyers and first-time users. These include instant refunds for Privilege Club members, real-time updates, and personalized touches that celebrate milestones such as birthdays and tier upgrades.

A standout feature of the app is its integration of artificial intelligence



through Sama, the world's first AI Cabin Crew. Sama assists travellers via voice and chat, helping them explore destinations, compare prices, and select flights while creating tailored itineraries in real time.

For Business Class passengers, Sama

also enhances the inflight experience by showcasing menus, recommending chef's specials, and suggesting meal options that align with personal dietary preferences reinforcing Qatar Airways' reputation for innovation and excellence in digital travel experiences.

Villa Air Nears Return to Maldives Seaplane Operations



Villa Air is making its way back into the Maldives' competitive seaplane sector with the arrival of its DHC-6 Twin Otter aircraft. The newly acquired fleet, initially based at the airline's Maamigili hub, has been undergoing final configurations as part of preparations to commence seaplane services in the near future.

This upcoming launch signals a new

chapter for Villa Air, which until now has primarily focused on domestic routes using ATR aircraft. By venturing into seaplane operations, the airline is set to strengthen its position in the local aviation landscape and cater more directly to the needs of the tourism industry, a sector that heavily relies on seaplane connectivity to link travelers with island resorts.

Seaplanes remain an integral part of the Maldives' travel experience, offering direct access to resort lagoons and bypassing the need for additional transfers. The low-altitude journeys also double as a scenic introduction to the islands, making them a favored option among tourists. Operators like Trans Maldivian Airways and Manta Air have long proven the success of this model, maintaining

strong demand and consistent performance.

Although Villa Air has not yet confirmed the exact launch date for its seaplane operations, the sighting of its Twin Otters at Velana International Airport suggests that the airline is in the final stages of preparation for takeoff.



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IN A NUTSHELL

OZEN LIFE MAADHOO Unveils Wind Villa with Jacuzzi & Slide

OZEN LIFE MAADHOO has announced the introduction of its newest villa category, the Wind Villa with Jacuzzi & Slide, offering guests a playful yet luxurious twist to their Maldivian getaway. Designed for travellers seeking both relaxation and excitement, the new villa combines captivating ocean views with dynamic features for an unforgettable island experience.

Located at the edge of the island, the Wind Villa enjoys a prime sunrise position and includes a spacious bedroom with high ceilings, an elegant outdoor lounge, and direct access to the lagoon's clear waters. The addition of a private Jacuzzi and waterslide adds an element of adventure and intimacy, ideal for couples or small families in search of both tranquillity and fun.

Guests can unwind on the sun-drenched



deck, enjoy a soothing soak under the Maldivian skies, or take a refreshing slide into the turquoise lagoon, surrounded by the serene beauty of Maadhoo's shimmering waters.

Stéphane Laguette, Chief Commercial Officer of Atmosphere Core, commented: "Imagining the children's

faces when they see for the first time the striking blue lagoon off the terrace and the bonus of sliding directly into the warm, calm waters below is a joy in itself. What's even more delightful is the thought of adults embracing the same experience – sliding by day, then later cuddling beneath the starlit Maldivian sky in a hot Jacuzzi, bubbles all around

– including in their flute glass! We are thrilled to introduce the Wind Villa with Jacuzzi & Slide, a fresh take on luxury that fuses private leisure with a sense of adventure. This new category reflects our commitment to creating memorable experiences for families and couples seeking a vibrant or romantic island retreat."

The launch of the Wind Villa coincides with the upcoming holiday season and follows recent enhancements across the resort, including new pool additions to the Earth Villas. OZEN LIFE MAADHOO continues to evolve its offerings to elevate the guest experience. With its contemporary design, luxurious comforts, and imaginative features, the Wind Villa with Jacuzzi & Slide offers a refreshing balance of indulgence and exhilaration—an experience that perfectly captures the resort's philosophy of joyful island living.

Universal Enterprises Introduces VERSA Hospitality and Launches New Lifestyle Brand NIVA to Fuel Global Growth

Universal Enterprises, the parent company of Universal Resorts and pioneer of Maldivian hospitality for over 50 years, has announced the rebranding of its hotel management arm to VERSA Hospitality and the launch of its new lifestyle brand, NIVA Hotels & Resorts.

The transformation marks a strategic shift from a respected, B2B-focused resort operator to a globally recognised, consumer-centric hospitality brand poised for international expansion. Managing Director Ahmed Umar Maniku said the move builds on the company's legacy of iconic resorts such as Kurumba, Baros, Kuramathi, Huvafen Fushi, Velassaru, Milaidhoo and Labriz. "VERSA isn't merely a new name; it's a strategic repositioning to unlock the full potential of our portfolio and position the company for future growth," he said.

As part of the rebrand, Visha Mahir, a second-generation member of the founding family, has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of VERSA Hospitality. Having served in senior roles for two decades, most recently as COO of Universal Resorts, she described the new direction as "a continuation of



our family's legacy, rooted in authenticity and heartfelt service."

At the centre of this evolution is NIVA Hotels & Resorts, a lifestyle-led brand reflecting a new era of travel focused on emotional fulfilment and genuine experiences. The brand will bring together six of the group's Indian Ocean properties including Kurumba,

Velassaru, Kuramathi, Dhigali, Labriz, and the upcoming Aria Seychelles (opening in 2026) — under one cohesive philosophy: "to bring lightness back to travel."

VERSA Hospitality will guide the company's new direction through two divisions: NIVA Hotels & Resorts, and The VERSA Collection, a portfolio of

distinctive standalone destinations such as Baros, Milaidhoo, Huvafen Fushi, and Kandolhu. "The name VERSA captures the spirit of transformation, turning islands into destinations and journeys into memories," said Mahir. "As we grow beyond the Maldives, we'll continue sharing the true character of every place in our care."

IN A NUTSHELL

Ifuru Island Maldives Unveils Kai: A Dynamic New Teppanyaki Experience

Ifuru Island Maldives proudly announces the launch of Kai, an exciting new addition to its culinary scene, offering guests an authentic Japanese teppanyaki dining experience with a Maldivian twist. At Kai, guests gather around the communal teppan table to enjoy an evening of flavor, flair, and connection. The talented chefs at Kai transform the freshest seafood, meats, and vegetables into a captivating performance — slicing, flipping, and grilling with precision and showmanship right before guests' eyes. The word teppanyaki comes from TEPPAN (鉄板), meaning "iron plate," and YAKI (焼き), meaning "grilled" or "pan-fried."

Kai brings this timeless Japanese art to life in an elegant, interactive setting where guests can sip on sake, handcrafted cocktails, or fine wines while savoring each course. Offering a



Japanese-inspired tasting menu that blends tradition, artistry, and contemporary flavor, Kai invites diners on a refined culinary journey that celebrates connection and craftsmanship.

"Kai is all about shared moments and sensory delight," says Marcel Sawyer, General Manager of Ifuru Island Maldives. "It's a lively, interactive experience that perfectly complements our island's spirit of joy and

togetherness." Available as part of the resort's Premium All-Inclusive offering with a supplement of USD 35++ per person, Kai promises an unforgettable dining experience set against the serene beauty of Ifuru Island.

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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa Announces Promotion of Ajay Sharma to Resort Manager



Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa is delighted to announce the promotion of Ajay Sharma from Director of Operations to Resort Manager, effective September 2025. Since joining the resort in August 2024, Ajay has played a pivotal role in

shaping operational excellence and enhancing guest experiences, bringing a wealth of hospitality expertise and leadership to the island.

With over 18 years of experience across premier global hospitality brands, Ajay's career spans notable roles at W Goa, Hyatt Hotels, Kempinski Hotels, and IHG® properties. Prior to his tenure at Sheraton Maldives, he served as Executive Assistant Manager at W Goa, where his leadership contributed to award-winning revenue growth, operational performance, and team development across multiple outlets.

At Sheraton Maldives, Ajay's tenure as Director of Operations has been marked by seamless operational management, fostering empowered teams, and ensuring that every guest moment is memorable.

Ajay describes his promotion as both a proud milestone and a humbling responsibility, highlighting his commitment to leading with integrity, empathy, and a strong "innkeeper's attitude." He emphasizes that smooth operations are the heartbeat of hospitality, enabling teams to focus on authentic, human connections that create unforgettable experiences for every guest.

Under his leadership, the resort will continue to innovate and evolve, offering experiences that balance international comfort with the richness of Maldivian culture, from curated wellness journeys and family adventures to immersive cultural encounters.

Beyond operations, Ajay is passionate about empowering his team and cultivating a culture of recognition,

trust, and shared purpose. He believes that inspired associates are key to delivering exceptional service and ensuring that Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa remains a sought-after destination for travelers seeking both relaxation and meaningful connections.

"Ajay's promotion reflects our ongoing commitment to recognizing and nurturing exceptional leadership within our team," said Greg Allan, General Manager of Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort & Spa. "His passion for people, operational excellence, and authentic hospitality continues to inspire those around him. I have full confidence that under his leadership, the resort will continue to reach new heights and deliver meaningful experiences that truly embody the spirit of Sheraton."

Brennia Kottefaru COO Aminath Hussain Zaady wins Global Women of Influence Award

Aminath Hussain Zaady, Chief Operating Officer of Brennia Kottefaru and Co-Founder of Rouf, has been recognised as the winner of the Global Women of Influence Award 2025 in the Impact and Change category. She was also named Global Woman of the Year under the Professional and Career Women Award 2024 by Women in Management, highlighting her outstanding contributions and influence on both local and international platforms.

The Global Women of Influence Awards is an international initiative that honours exceptional women leaders who are shaping industries through innovation, empowerment, and transformation. The 2025 awards reviewed over 300 candidates worldwide, selecting honourees based on their leadership vision, social impact, and measurable achievements.

Zaady has emerged as a pioneer in redefining leadership through the integration of innovation, sustainability, and inclusivity. At Brennia Kottefaru, she has introduced AI-driven operational systems, data-led marketing strategies, and a responsive

management model rooted in sustainable and people-centred practices. Her leadership has transformed traditional hospitality operations into a modern, technology-enabled, and collaborative ecosystem. Under her stewardship, Brennia has become one of the fastest-growing hospitality brands in the Maldives, setting a new benchmark for intelligent and sustainable luxury.

Renowned for her empathetic and inclusive approach, Zaady leads with creativity and collaboration, fostering a culture that promotes empowerment, innovation, and continuous learning. Her philosophy focuses on building workplaces that celebrate diversity, shared purpose, and collective growth.

As Co-Founder of Rouf, a global travel technology and co-living company, Zaady is helping shape the future of community-oriented travel and living. Rouf combines two key concepts: Co-Living, which provides smart, design-led shared spaces encouraging collaboration and connection; and Travel Tech, a digital platform offering global citizens flexible, technology-driven experiences.



Together, these elements position Rouf at the intersection of innovation, sustainability, and human connection—redefining modern living in an increasingly borderless and digital world.

Beyond her entrepreneurial work, Zaady serves as the Ambassador of Co-Liv Singapore, where she advocates for sustainable living ecosystems and inclusive innovation across Asia. She is a committed supporter of women's empowerment and continues to

advance access to leadership, mentorship, and opportunities for women and underrepresented groups, inspiring emerging changemakers to lead with purpose.

Established in Singapore and presented in Dubai, the Global Women of Influence Award celebrates women who embody a balance of innovation and empathy—leaders shaping a more equitable, sustainable, and connected future.

JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort Welcomes Ahmed Adam as New Director of Human Resources

JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort has announced the appointment of Ahmed Adam as Director of Human Resources. With more than 17 years of experience in the Maldivian hospitality sector, Ahmed brings a wealth of knowledge and a leadership style rooted in empowerment and a people-first approach.

Ahmed joins JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort from JW Marriott Maldives Resort & Spa, where he began his Marriott International career in 2019 as Assistant Director of Human Resources and advanced to Director of Human Resources. He began his hospitality career in 2007 in housekeeping, marking the start of a career defined by dedication. After transitioning into human resources, he held leadership roles at leading resorts across the Maldives.

“The most meaningful milestone has been contributing 17 years to the Maldivian hospitality industry, during which I have had the privilege to coach, develop, and train countless talented individuals who now play vital roles in shaping our country’s tourism,” said Ahmed Adam, Director of Human Resources at JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort. “I love helping people, building meaningful connections, and supporting associates in developing their careers. At JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort, I see great opportunities to create an environment where associates truly feel at home.”

At JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island Resort, Ahmed will oversee human resources strategy, with a focus on talent development, associate well-being, and fostering a workplace culture of respect, inclusion, and empowerment. His democratic and



coaching-based leadership ensures that decisions are made thoughtfully and collaboratively.

“Our associates are at the heart of everything we do,” said Srikanth Devarapalli, General Manager of JW Marriott Maldives Kaafu Atoll Island

Resort. “With his extensive experience in the Maldivian hospitality sector and his people-first approach, Ahmed will play a pivotal role in strengthening our Marriott culture and commitment to excellence, ensuring that our associates thrive and our guests continue to experience the finest Maldivian hospitality.”



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Aminath Hussain Zaady
Chief Operating Officer
BRENNIA KOTTEFARU

Ali Zahir
Owner
BRENNIA KOTTEFARU

ALI ZAHIR

How have your roots influenced your vision for Brennia Kottefaru Resort?

I come from a background that taught me the importance of humility, perseverance and purpose. The Maldives has given me everything: its people, its culture, and its natural beauty. Because of that, I have always felt a responsibility to give something meaningful back. When we began Brennia Kottefaru, I didn't want to build just another resort. I wanted to create a brand that reflects the true soul of Maldivian hospitality: warm, grounded, and genuine.

From the start, my dream was to show that a locally created brand could stand confidently alongside international names, while keeping its own identity and heart. Every detail in our design, our service, and our team culture was built to honour who we are. Our people are the foundation of that vision. I wanted Brennia to be a place where young Maldivians could grow, contribute ideas and see their potential. My upbringing taught me that leadership is about lifting others. Brennia's success is really the result of collective belief. It is a brand created by Maldivians, for the world, with pride and sincerity.

What has been the biggest challenge in developing Brennia Kottefaru, and how did you overcome it?

The journey has not been easy. We started with limited resources and a bold dream to build a five star resort from the ground up as a Maldivian brand. One of the biggest challenges was balancing our ambition with reality, making sure every step was sustainable. In the early years, we faced a shortage

For this edition of The Islandchief, we sit with the owner of Brennia Kottefaru, Ali Zahir, the visionary force behind the resort that stands as a proud reflection of Maldivian entrepreneurship, authenticity, and purpose.

Set amid the pristine beauty of Raa Atoll, Brennia Kottefaru is more than a luxury retreat; it is the realization of Zahir's belief that world-class excellence can emerge from local roots. Alongside Chief Operating Officer, Aminath Hussain Zaady, she has shaped Brennia into a brand that celebrates Maldivian identity while embracing innovation, sustainability, and heartfelt hospitality.

of skilled professionals and we had to be strategic with our finances. We learned to do more with less, reinvest wisely, train our own people, and build partnerships with those who believed in us.

There were times when the easier choice would have been to hand management over to an international company, but I believed that the Maldives deserves its own brands and its own leadership. So instead of outsourcing, we focused on capacity building. Many of our senior leaders today joined us at entry level and grew within the company. That growth is one of our greatest achievements.

We also faced challenges like the pandemic, which tested our resilience. We had to protect both our people and the business. Those difficult moments strengthened us. We adapted quickly, restructured what was necessary, and emerged stronger. Looking back, every obstacle shaped Brennia into what it is today – a brand built with conviction, not convenience.

What steps has Brennia Kottefaru taken to minimize its impact on the environment?

From the beginning, we made sustainability a priority. Brennia runs on a solar energy system that helps reduce our carbon footprint. We have invested in efficient water desalination and recycling systems, waste segregation, and composting to reduce environmental pressure. But sustainability is also about people. We work in ways that support local communities, livelihoods, and future generations. We make it part of the guest experience as well, because once visitors understand how delicate our environment is, they become part of protecting it. Our goal is to show that local ownership and environmental responsibility can grow together in a meaningful way.

You mentioned creating an authentic Resort Management Group. What is your vision for this?

This idea comes from a belief that it is time for the Maldives to tell its own hospitality story. For many years, international management companies have shaped the resort landscape. They have added great value, but I believe it is time for a homegrown brand to stand at the same level, with its own approach.

Our vision is to build a management group that brings together local insight with world class practices. We want each resort we manage to express its own story, reflect its community, and offer authentic hospitality. We will focus on developing local talent, increasing operational efficiency, and integrating smart technology, while keeping the warmth that is uniquely Maldivian.

What sets us apart is the long term vision. This is not about short contracts or quick returns. It is about building an institution that represents the Maldives with pride and professionalism. We want to see more local brands recognized globally — rooted in culture, competitive in quality, and confident in identity.

What advice would you give to young Maldivians who want to become entrepreneurs?

Believe in your vision, especially when others doubt it. Entrepreneurship is not glamour. It is patience, resilience and commitment. Many people want fast results, but real growth takes time. Brennia was built over years of work, learning, setbacks, and determination.

Stay patient when progress is slow. Stay honest when shortcuts appear. Stay consistent even when no one is watching. Keep learning constantly. The world is changing fast and your ability to adapt will define your success. Learn from mentors, from experiences, and from your own team.

Also, value collaboration. We often work in isolation, but the future belongs to those who build connections. Create something that benefits others, not just yourself. The Maldives has so much talent and creativity. What we need most is the courage to build what has not been built before. My hope is that Brennia’s story shows that with purpose, heart, and resilience, anything is possible.

AMINATH HUSSAIN ZAADY

You’ve helped shape Brennia Kottefaru into one of the Maldives’ most forward-thinking resorts. How do you define modern Maldivian hospitality today?

For me, modern Maldivian hospitality is an evolution rather than a reinvention. It means taking the heart of who we are and allowing it to grow into something that reflects the world we live in today. The Maldives has always been known for its warmth, beauty, and sincerity in service. But to lead today, we need to go beyond what is familiar. We have to question traditional models, introduce new thinking, and build systems that are intelligent, flexible, and deeply human.

At Brennia Kottefaru, we treat hospitality as something living. It learns, adapts, and grows every day. Our choices are guided by empathy and understanding, whether we are shaping the digital guest journey or empowering our teams to take pride in their roles. Modern Maldivian hospitality should be bold and connected, while still rooted in our culture, humility, and compassion.

Today, luxury is defined by meaning and emotion rather than excess. Innovation should not take away humanity. It should amplify it. Whether we use technology or leadership development, the goal is always the same: to create experiences that feel sincere, effortless, and memorable.

Sustainability has become a key focus across the Maldives. How do you ensure that Brennia’s growth supports both the environment and local communities?

Sustainability is a responsibility of leadership. It cannot be treated as a campaign. From the

beginning, we understood that growth has to be balanced. The Maldives’ greatest strengths are its environment and its people. Both need consistent care.

Our sustainability approach looks at ecological, social, and economic wellbeing together. Environmentally, we have invested in renewable energy, solar integration, reduced waste systems, water purification that limits plastic use, composting, and architecture that respects the natural landscape.

But sustainability is also about people. We believe in nurturing individuals and communities before profit. When people are valued and supported, performance follows naturally. Long-term success comes from practices that strengthen loyalty, efficiency, and respect for shared purpose.

Profitability and sustainability do not compete. They support each other. Sustainability is a promise to protect, uplift, and give back, so that what we build remains meaningful for generations to come.

Technology is changing how resorts operate. How has innovation improved the guest experience and daily operations at Brennia?

Technology is the quiet structure behind everything we do. It does not replace human connection. It enhances our ability to connect with more care.



At Brennia, we use intelligent guest insight tools that help us understand needs before they are expressed. This makes each stage of the guest journey more personal and seamless. For our teams, technology creates clarity. Mobile communication systems allow departments to respond quickly and work as one. Real-time data helps us make decisions that are faster, smarter, and more thoughtful.

Digital transformation is a mindset. It shifts us from reacting to anticipating. The strongest hospitality combines understanding with efficiency. Technology should support emotion, not erase it.

Through Rouf as Co-Founder, you’re introducing new concepts to travel and living. How does this connect with the Maldives’ tourism landscape?

Rouf grew from the belief that travel and living should feel connected, meaningful, and human. It brings together living spaces, technology, and community. It creates environments where people

can live and work while feeling at home.

I spent years traveling and often felt alone despite being surrounded by people. Rouf was created to bring people together. It offers a true sense of belonging. A portion of its income also supports vulnerable communities, including families in need, women seeking safe housing, and individuals requiring shelter and stability.

On the tourism side, Rouf Global strengthens how Maldivian hospitality connects with the world. After the pandemic, global competition increased. Rouf uses strategy, creativity, and digital systems to help Maldivian brands stand out in an authentic way.

Both Brennia and Rouf share the belief that hospitality begins with connection. Comfort is only the starting point.

You’ve earned recognition on the global stage. What inspires you most about representing Maldivian women in hospitality and leadership?

My inspiration comes from my parents. My mother taught me faith, intention, and grace. My late father taught me empathy, loyalty, and quiet strength. Together, they taught me that real leadership comes from compassion and courage held in balance.

Growing up in the Maldives, I experienced a culture of community, care, and gratitude. That shaped how I

lead today. It taught me that progress must not come at the cost of peace or humanity.

Representing Maldivian women internationally is an honour and a responsibility. It is a chance to show the world the depth, intelligence, resilience, and compassion our women have always carried. Every time I stand on a global platform, I carry the spirit of the island girl who grew up between the sea, community, and imagination.

My greatest inspiration comes from Allah (SWT), who is my constant guide. I believe that every success is written by His will, and every challenge is a reminder to stay humble, grounded, and grateful.

Success is not measured by awards. It is measured by how many lives are uplifted, how many voices are included, and how many doors are opened for the next generation.

NEW OPENINGS

Shangri-La Maldives Resort Set to Reopen in December 2025

Shangri-La Resort in Addu, one of the Maldives' most iconic properties, is preparing to reopen its doors after being closed since 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic, a move set to significantly boost tourism in the southernmost atoll.

Minister of Economic Development and Trade, Mohamed Saeed Thoriq, reassured X, following a meeting with Chris Fong, Head of Investment and Asset Management at the Shangri-La Group, and Hav Dubosque, General Manager of Shangri-La Resort. He confirmed that preparations are in progress to reopen the resort in time by December 31, 2025.

The 284-bed luxury property features a diverse range of accommodations, including 60 water villas, 26 beach villas, 28 pool villas, 16 treehouse villas, and two presidential villas.

The reopening of Shangri-La Resort aligns with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's commitment to revitalise tourism and stimulate economic development in Addu City. The resort's return is expected to create new employment opportunities and reaffirm the atoll's potential as a high-end travel destination in the Maldives.

Nestled on the pristine Villingili Island in the Addu Atoll, the Shangri-La Villingili Resort & Spa offers an unmatched escape surrounded by lush tropical greenery, natural lagoons, 2km of white sandy beaches, and 6km of picturesque coastline with turquoise waters of the Indian Ocean. The reopening promises world-class service for which Shangri-La is well-known for and also experiences designed to elevate every moment of the guest journey.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

Hospitality Reimagined: Hotelier Maldives GM Forum 2025 Embraces the Digital Wave



The Hotelier Maldives GM Forum 2025, the nation's most prestigious gathering of resort general managers and hospitality leaders, concluded successfully on October 13, 2025 at Kurumba Maldives. This year's edition, themed "Digitalisation and Expanding Experiences," brought together the industry's brightest minds to explore how technology and authentic Maldivian hospitality can unite to transform the guest journey.

From AI-driven personalization and data analytics to immersive experiential travel, the forum delved deep into innovations that are reshaping the future of luxury tourism. This year's forum emphasises how embracing digitalisation, while staying true to the warmth and authenticity that define Maldivian service, will drive the industry forward.

Minister of Tourism and Environment Thoriq Ibrahim urged "the Maldivian hospitality industry to stay agile and forward-looking as technology continues to reshape global travel behaviour". Speaking as Chief Guest at the ninth edition of the Hotelier Maldives General Managers (GM) Forum 2025, Minister Thoriq emphasized that the government remains committed to supporting and facilitating the industry's priorities amid rapid change.

The success of the GM Forum 2025 was made possible through the support of 15 strategic partners, representing the best of Maldivian and regional excellence in hospitality, innovation, and sustainability.

- Official Host – Kurumba Maldives
- Platinum Partner – Dhiraagu
- Silver Sponsors – Best Buy Maldives & Villa Hakatha
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- Sustainability Partner – Maldives



- Ocean Plastics Alliance
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- Transport Partner – Souvenir Marine
- Beverage Partner – MAWC
- Media Partner – Maldives TV
- Organising Partner – Storm Events (Think Associates)

Insights from Leaders Shaping the Future

The one-day event featured six expert speakers addressing crucial themes such as digital transformation, loyalty strategies, cyber resilience, leadership, insurance, and financial innovation in hospitality.

Distinguished Speakers includes;

- 1. Ms. Ru Yi**, Assistant Vice President, International Markets (APAC), Trip.com Group
Topic: Travel in the Age of Digital Transformation
- 2. Mr. Will Howes**, Vice President of Sales, APAC, TrustYou
Topic: Unlocking Loyalty Through Digital Guest Journeys
- 3. Mr. Abubakar Latif**, Chief Technology Officer, Beyon Cyber, and Board Member, DTS Solutions UAE
Topic: A Stakeholder Analysis of Cyber Risks in the Hospitality Industry

- Panelists: Ms. Ru Yi (Trip.com Group), Mr. Will Howes (TrustYou), Mr. Abdulla Ghiyas (Visit Maldives), Mr. Murad Hassan (Tourism Marketing Specialist)
- Moderator : Ms. Mathurot Chuladul (Marriott International)

2. Reimagining the Guest Journey: Digital Touchpoints from Booking to Post-Stay, talking about an in-depth discussion on how digitalisation enhances guest experience, engagement, and loyalty at every stage.

- Panelists: Ms. Heidi Grimwood (ELENA), Mr. Justin Swart (The Standard Maldives), Mr. Morten Junior (Kurumba Maldives)
- Moderator : Mr. Mohamed Shafraz Hafiz (Pulse Hotels & Resorts)

3. Aligning Investor Appetite with the Maldives' Long-term Tourism Strategy, talking about the insights on aligning investment priorities with the Maldives' sustainable growth goals.

- Panelists: Mr. Mohamed Khaleel (Pulse Hotels & Resorts), Mr. Shrikant Dash (Atmosphere Core), Mr. Amaan Ali (Bank of Maldives), Mr. Abdulla Thamheed (Sun Siyam Resorts)
- Moderator : Ms. Aminath Zaady (Brennia Maldives)

Charting the Course Ahead

As the Maldives continues to strengthen its position as a global icon of luxury and sustainability, the Hotelier Maldives GM Forum remains the country's premier thought-leadership platform—bridging innovation,



- 4. Mr. Aalim Mohamed**, Group Director of Human Resources, Pulse Hotels & Resorts
Topic: Leadership 5.0: Moving Beyond Resilience in Hospitality
- 5. Mr. Thanzeem Ahmed** (Manager – Technical) & Mr. Ismail Nishan (Senior Sales Executive), Dhivehi Insurance
Topic: Insurance Solutions for Emerging Risks in a Maldivian Context
- 6. Mr. Afrah Ahmed**, Director of Cards, Bank of Maldives



Digital Transformation in Maldives Tourism

Dynamic Panel Discussions included:

1. Destination Marketing in the Digital Era: Building Maldives' Global Presence Beyond the Beach, explores how the Maldives can strengthen its global brand positioning in an increasingly competitive digital landscape – shifting focus toward culture, community, and creativity.

collaboration, and the future of island hospitality.

With digitalisation reshaping global travel trends, the 2025 edition reaffirmed Hotelier Maldives' commitment to driving meaningful dialogue and empowering resort leaders to navigate the evolving hospitality landscape with foresight and creativity.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Baa Atoll Council of Maldives Enters Guinness World Records with Snorkelling Event



The Baa Atoll Council has officially entered the Guinness World Records by setting a new world record for the most people snorkelling simultaneously during the Baani Event held in Baa Atoll. A total of 623 snorkellers participated in this remarkable feat, highlighting the Maldives’ enduring connection to the ocean and its commitment to sustainable marine tourism.

Organised by the Baa Atoll Council with strong support from all island councils, local communities, and partner organisations, the record-breaking event brought together participants from 13 islands and 15 resorts, along with representatives from across the nation. Resort staff, international visitors, and local residents united in a shared celebration of environmental stewardship and community spirit.

Just ten minutes from Eydhafushi, the capital of Baa Atoll, Villingilifaru Finolhu provided a breathtaking setting for this milestone achievement. Its serene western lagoon and coral-rich outer reef—home to vibrant marine life and flocks of black-naped terns—offered an unforgettable natural backdrop for the historic occasion.

The official snorkelling attempt commenced at 16:30 hrs and

continued for one hour, as hundreds of participants entered the crystal-clear waters at multiple designated points across the pristine sandbank. Following verification, a Guinness World Records adjudicator presented the official record plaque to the Baa Atoll Council during a celebratory ceremony that featured live music, cultural performances, and a dazzling fireworks display.

In addition to the Guinness recognition, the record was also entered into the Visit Maldives Book of Records. To commemorate the achievement, Ibrahim Shiury, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Visit Maldives Corporation (VMC), presented a special plaque and commemorative coin to the Baa Atoll Council in honour of this historic success.

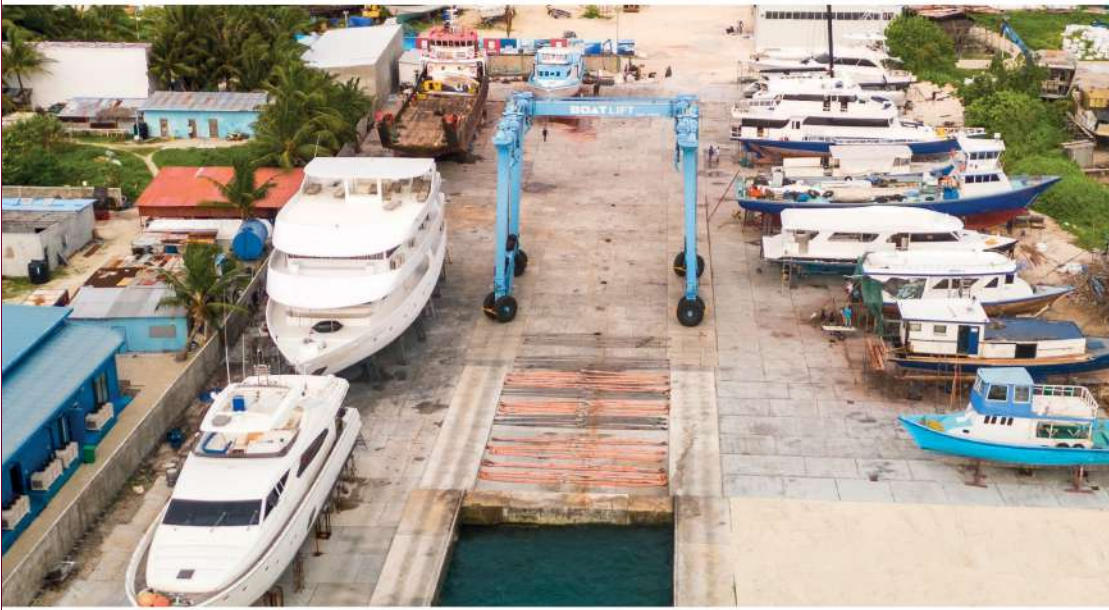
The Baani Event stands as a powerful symbol of unity, sustainability, and shared purpose perfectly aligned with Visit Maldives Corporation’s mission to position the Maldives as a global leader in marine tourism and environmental responsibility. It exemplifies how tourism and ocean conservation can thrive hand in hand, inspiring a future where community participation, ecological awareness, and visitor engagement work together to protect the Maldives’ marine heritage while celebrating its standing as the world’s leading island destination.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

Dhiraagu’s Solar Initiative Achieves 100% Electricity Offset for Dhiraagu Maldives Road Race 2025



The Dhiraagu Maldives Road Race (DMRR) 2025 marks a significant milestone in its journey toward sustainability by powering this year’s event with renewable energy. Through a grid-tied solar system that offset 100% of the event’s electricity consumption, the company demonstrates its ongoing commitment to sustainability, innovation, and community responsibility.

During the event, the onsite solar installation generated 1040 kWh of

renewable electricity, enough to offset 645 kilograms of CO₂ emissions.

By powering the event with solar energy, Dhiraagu has reduced their environmental footprint by demonstrating what is possible when technology and sustainability come together. The initiative aligns with global efforts to transition to renewable power and showcases how large-scale events can be both exciting and environmentally responsible. The solar panels installed at DMRR 2025 will be reused in Dhiraagu’s

ongoing solar projects, ensuring that these materials continue to support the company’s renewable initiatives. With solar installations currently across 95 islands, the company reduces ~ 2,053 tonnes of CO₂ emissions per year, with 19% of its total energy consumption generated from renewable sources.

Additionally, since 2019, the Dhiraagu Maldives Road Race has championed single-use plastic free practices, advocating for and encouraging participants to reduce single-use

plastics. Water stations are placed throughout the race route for runners, and these initiatives have helped avoid the use of ~18,000 single-use plastic bottles during the event that might otherwise have ended up in the ocean.

This reflects Dhiraagu’s strong commitment to sustainability and resource efficiency, reaffirming the company’s dedication to emissions reduction, environmental stewardship, and advancing renewable energy nationwide.

SO/ Maldives Celebrates Triple Triumph at 2025 Global Awards Season

The spotlight is on SO/ Maldives as the avant-garde island resort celebrates an extraordinary hat-trick of achievements, reinforcing its position as one of the Maldives’ most stylish and forward-thinking luxury destinations. In a year marked by innovation and excellence, SO/ Maldives proudly announces three major international accolades that highlight its design leadership, sustainable vision, and culinary artistry.

The resort has been named the Best Luxury Private Beach Resort in the Maldives by the Luxury Lifestyle Awards 2025, recognizing its bold approach to redefining modern island luxury. Set within the contemporary playground of Maldives, SO/ Maldives has captivated global travelers with its fusion of fashion-forward design, avant-garde architecture, and seamless connection to nature, an experience where couture meets coastline.

In a testament to its commitment to a

greener future, the resort also clinched the International Sustainability Award 2025, honoring SO/ Maldives’ efforts to lead the way in eco-conscious hospitality across the Indian Ocean. From mindful design and locally inspired architecture to eco-driven dining and renewable practices, the award celebrates the resort’s ongoing mission to blend style with sustainability.

Adding to its growing legacy of excellence, Hadaba at SO/ Maldives was crowned Maldives’ Best Hotel Restaurant 2025 at the 6th Annual World Culinary Awards. Known for its authentic Middle Eastern cuisine, breathtaking oceanfront setting, and immersive dining experience, Hadaba continues to elevate the culinary scene in the Maldives with artistry, elegance, and soulful flavor.

“These awards are not just milestones, they are a reflection of the creativity, passion, and dedication of our entire



team,” said Olivier MOIES-DELVAL, General Manager of SO/ Maldives. “From design to sustainability and gastronomy, every aspect of SO/ Maldives is crafted to inspire and offer experiences that are as meaningful as they are memorable.”

Since its debut, SO/ Maldives has redefined the rhythm of Maldivian luxury effortlessly fusing bold aesthetics with island soul. These prestigious recognitions reaffirm the resort’s vision to continue leading with purpose, innovation, and SO/ flair.

IN THE NEWS

Umair Badheeu Closes the Season with Three New National Records at Freediving World Cup 2025, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt



Maldivian freediving Umair Badheeu has ended his 2025 season on a remarkable high, setting three new national records for the Maldives at the Freediving World Cup 2025, held from 15–22 October in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt.

Organised by the Freediving World Apnea Center and certified by AIDA International (Association for the Development of Apnea), one of the world's leading governing bodies for freediving, the event brought together elite freedivers from across the globe to compete in a range of depth disciplines. Competing against some of the sport's best, Umair achieved the following new Maldivian national records:

- Free Immersion (FIM): 72 metres – new record (previous record 68 metres, also held by Umair) Using the rope to descend and ascend without fins.
- Constant Weight No Fins (CNF): 47 metres – new record (previous record 42 metres, also held by Umair) Diving without the use of fins or using the performance rope.
- Constant Weight (CWT): 72 metres – new record diving with monofins or bifins.

These accomplishments add to Umair's growing list of national titles. Earlier this year, he also set the



Constant Weight Bifins record at 68 metres at the Manado Depth Competition held in Indonesia in August 2025. Now he holds the records for all depth disciplines with AIDA.

Reflecting on his performance, Umair said: "It's been an incredible season, and I'm grateful to close it on such a high note. Each dive came with its own challenges, but they've helped me grow both physically and mentally. I'm looking forward to the next season and hope to push for even greater depths." A long-time ambassador for Kaimoo Resorts and Hotels, Umair credited the group's continued support as instrumental to his progress.

"Umair continues to make the Maldives proud with his record-breaking performances," said Mohamed Manih Ahmed, Managing Director of Kaimoo Resorts and Hotels. "His persistence, focus, and sportsmanship represent the best of Maldivian excellence. We are honoured to support his journey as he continues to elevate the Maldives on the global freediving stage."

With his latest records, Umair further cements his position as the Maldives' most accomplished freediver and a leading voice for the sport's development in the country.

mares extended range **XAR**

A REVOLUTIONARY APPROACH

The advertisement shows a diver in a black wetsuit and mask, holding a vertical pole, with a Mares XAR rebreather system. Below the diver are three different views of the rebreather: a side view, a front view, and a back view. The rebreather is black with red accents and has a digital display showing depth, time, and other data.

SIMPLICITY AND SAFETY BY DESIGN

Mares, in collaboration with rEVO, has developed this revolutionary Rebreather for diving. This design was born based on well-defined guidelines: a device which proves easy for everyone, simple to prepare, very light, totally safe, redundant, with amazing performance and top technology. The lightweight system makes it an ideal travel companion, without any need for cylinders and special weights. The Horizon computer is designed to be easy to use while having infinite data available. Limited bubble production allows underwater world lovers to live like a fish in the underwater world.

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IN THE NEWS

Ooredoo Maldives Partners with Maldives Immigration to Conduct ‘Mastering Customer Service’ Training to 160 Immigration Staff



in the Maldives, Ooredoo Maldives remains committed to sharing its expertise and supporting other institutions in building the knowledge and confidence required to deliver exceptional customer service. The company expressed its privilege in extending this knowledge to Maldives Immigration and supporting its officers in enhancing their skills. Together, the two organizations are fostering a culture of excellence that ensures exceptional service for every individual.

Through initiatives such as this, Ooredoo Maldives continues to reinforce its commitment to supporting national institutions, strengthening customer service standards, and contributing to the broader vision of a Digital Maldives.

Ooredoo Maldives, leveraging its expertise as the country’s first and only ISO-certified Contact Center, successfully partnered with Maldives Immigration to conduct a comprehensive training program titled Mastering Customer Service. The training, held from September 13 to 18, 2025, focused on empowering frontline officers with essential skills to deliver outstanding customer experiences.

Conducted across six batches, the program was tailored specifically to the needs of Maldives Immigration, with a total of 160 officers participating. The sessions emphasized service excellence, effective communication, and strategies to cultivate a strong service-first culture within the organization.

As the only ISO-certified Contact Center



MACL and MNU Partner to Develop Hotel School, Training Resort in Laamu Atoll

Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) and the Maldives National University (MNU) have signed an agreement to establish a hotel school and resort in L. Hulhimendhoo.

The agreement was signed on Tuesday during a meeting held in L. Maamendhoo as part of President Dr Mohamed Muizzu’s visit to Laamu Atoll.

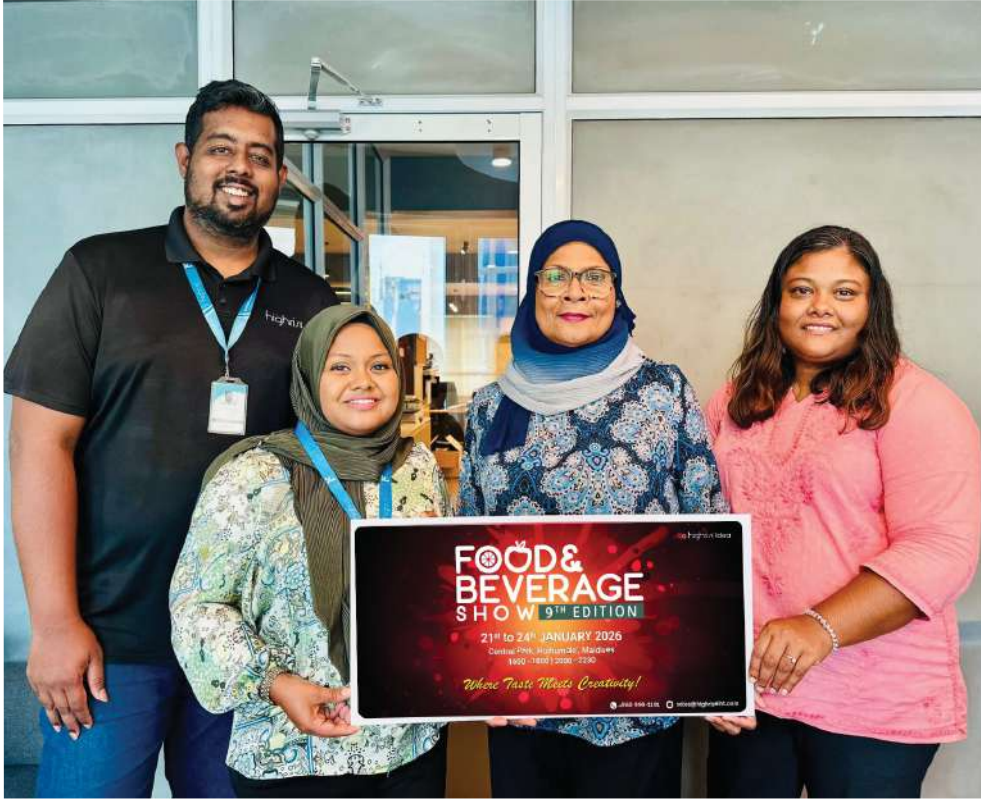
MACL’s Managing Director Ibrahim Shareef signed the agreement on behalf of the company, while Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research and Enterprise) Dr Raheema Abdul Raheem signed on behalf of MNU.

Speaking at the event, President Muizzu said the project would contribute to strengthening the country’s tourism sector by providing education and training opportunities for Maldivians in the hospitality industry.

The President said the project had been assigned to MACL as the company already operates within the tourism sector. MACL currently manages a resort in Meemu Atoll. He added that the development of the resort and hotel school in Hulhimendhoo would play a key role in supporting tourism development and human resource training, and that the project would be given priority by MACL.



CGM Joins as Supporting Partner for Food & Beverage Show 2026



Food & Beverage Show has announced its official partnership with Chefs Guild of Maldives

(CGM). This partnership will help promote the Maldives' long awaited annual event, the 11th edition of

Food & Beverage Show among the culinary community.

The Food & Beverage Show will collaborate with CGM to host special workshops and activities for people of all ages to partake in and enjoy.

Chefs' Guild of Maldives is the national culinary association of the Maldives endorsed by the World Association of Chefs Societies (WorldChefs). The organization was established in October 2014 as the first non-profit association for working chefs in the Maldives.

With just two and a half months remaining, preparations are underway for the upcoming Food & Beverage Show, which will highlight the latest trends, innovations, and

products shaping the food and beverage industry in the Maldives and South Asia. The event, which will take place from 21 to 24 January 2026 at Central Park, Hulhumale, promises to be an unmissable gathering for industry leaders, manufacturers, distributors, and food enthusiasts. The event will be an amazing platform to showcase your products before the Holy month of Ramadan.

Highrise Pvt Ltd, the organizer and manager of the Food & Beverage Show, is driven by passion, dedication, and over 15 years of industry expertise. Highrise invites all to visit the event at Central Park from January 21 to 24, 2024. Don't miss this opportunity to experience the finest flavors and discover innovative products.



BON APPÉTIT

Maldivian Octopus Carpaccio

Guacamole, Jalapeño oil, Fish roe



Brief Introduction of the Chef

As Chef de Cuisine at Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa, Chef Devin Rodrigues brings a fusion of innovation and tradition to the island’s vibrant dining scene. His culinary journey began in 2008 as a trainee at the prestigious Taj Mahal, Mumbai, setting the stage for a career defined by excellence. Over the years, he refined his skills with world-renowned brands such as Four Seasons, The Leela, and Atmosphere Resort, mastering the art of creating unforgettable dining experiences. With an unwavering passion for flavors and meticulous attention to detail, Chef Devin continues to craft gastronomic delights that captivate guests in this breathtaking island paradise. His dedication to excellence and love for flavors make him a true artist in the culinary world.

This refreshing salad blends tender octopus, creamy avocado, and spicy Jalapeño, creating a harmony of oceanic flavors and tropical zest—perfect for a vibrant and nourishing Ramadan feast.

INGRIDENTS :

Guacamole

- Ripe Avocado – 2 Nos
- Chopped Onion – 10 gm
- Chopped Maldivian chili – 1 no’s
- Lime juice – 5 ml
- Salt – 3 gm
- Extra virgin olive oil – 10 ml

METHOD:

- Peel the avocado and mash it with the help of fork and then mix all the remaining ingredients and mix it well

Jalapeno Infused Olive Oil

- Extra virgin olive oil – 100ml
- Fresh jalapeño – 1 no’s

METHOD:

- Warm the olive oil and then put in the chopped fresh Jalapenos and keep it of the heat

Jalapeño Dressing

- Chopped Jalapeño chili 10 gm
- Sea salt 5gm
- Chopped garlic 5 gm
- Rice vinegar 45gm
- Grapeseed oil 112 gm

METHOD:

- In a food processor, process the Jalapeño, salt, garlic, and vinegar until well mixed and the chili is finely chopped.
- Slowly add the olive oil and process until well blended.

To cook Octopus

METHOD:

- In a large pot, fill with enough water and toss in the onion, celery, carrot, peppercorns and bay leaves and bring to a boil. Holding the octopus by the head, dip the tentacles in the boiling water for a few seconds, remove and repeat to get the tentacles to curl up. 4-5 dips should work. Finally drop in the entire octopus and let simmer for about 45 minutes until tender and cooked.

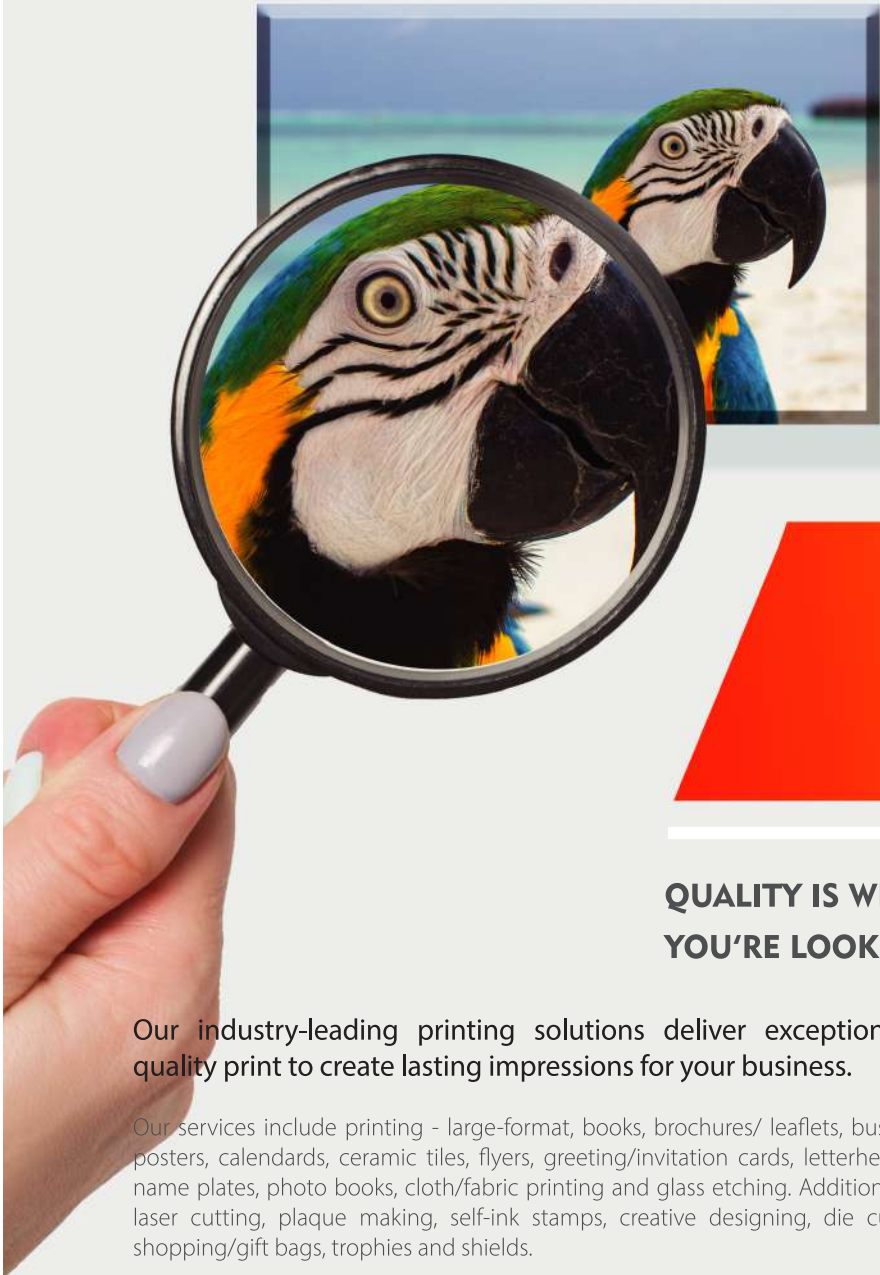


Courtesy of
Chef Devin Rodrigues
Le Méridien Maldives Resort & Spa



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While celebrating over 20 years in the business we provide full color printing services onto any type of flat surface, including wood, plastic and metal.

Frankly Speaking

The Tourism Goods and Services Tax (TGST) in the Maldives increased from 16% to 17% on July 1, 2025, impacting all tourism-related businesses. The new rate applies to all “time of supply” transactions on or after this date, meaning any invoice or payment made after June 30, 2025, will be charged at 17%. Will this affect occupancy and arrivals?



Ahmed Jihad (Jay)
Chief Operating Officer
The Cocoon Collection
Maldives

The increase of TGST from 16% to 17% is not expected to have a negative effect. Why? Because even with this adjustment, the tax rate remains reasonable compared to many other destinations. With new resorts opening, an expanded range of tourism products across the Maldives, and a strong collective marketing strategy, we are well positioned to tap into emerging markets and further diversify our visitor base. In addition, enhanced PR and marketing initiatives will support continued growth in both arrivals and overall revenue.



Ahmed Zahir
General Manager
Angsana Velavaru

We already have bookings secured until the end of the year, so there will not be much of an impact for now, as most hotels are likely to absorb the 1% increase since contracts were signed last year. However, from next year, we expect challenges in maintaining higher occupancy levels, as the Maldives continue to become more expensive while our competitors and similar destinations are becoming more affordable for travelers.



Mohamed Firaq
Managing Director
Inner Maldives

I don't think the small TGST increase will make a significant difference. The real issue is that we are not marketing our tourism products effectively relative to their potential. With stronger global promotion highlighting the Maldives' unique experiences, luxury resorts, and natural beauty, we could attract more visitors and avoid feeling pressure from such minor tax adjustments.

At the same time, the government should take a long-term view by projecting tourism capacity and bed growth for the next 3–4 years and structuring taxes in a sustainable, growth-focused manner. With smarter marketing, strategic planning, and capacity-based taxation, we can continue to grow arrivals, improve occupancy, and maximize revenue without overburdening the industry.



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