

The islandchief

travel news

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TAKING F&B SUSTAINABILITY TO NEW HEIGHTS

with *Dishan*

DISHAN WIJAYAWARDENA
Senior Business Development Manager
Nestlé Lanka PLC - Maldives Sales

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Dear Readers,

Hope everyone celebrated a fantastic Eid break with their families, friends and loved ones!

As an industry that is all about cooperating and engaging with people, it can be easy to focus solely on the customer experience and pay less attention to the hundreds and thousands of people that keep this industry moving forward. When life gets tough, it is tempting to hide your head under the pillow and stay there until your troubles go away or someone else resolves them. But the truth is that if you just hunker down and do nothing, the world and its worries will go on without you and solutions will be found that leave you and your business behind. Crises are definitely not for the weak-hearted and it takes tough determination to get through. Those with the guts get out from under the pillow, recognize they have to reinvent themselves, and dig deep to find the resilience and resolution to press on. They carve out a new, viable reality.

In this issue of the Islandchief, we have an exclusive interview with Dishan Wijayawardena, Business Development Manager - Maldives at Nestlé, where he elaborates on the strategic regional logistics and operational logistics that are best fit to provide quality products right on time without fail. He also shed some light on Nestlé's view on being positive towards long-term growth prospects, a testament to its commitment as a strong partner in the Maldives, starting from p 12. On p.23, we have our industry stakeholders sharing their expert opinion on the economic hardships of the COVID-19 pandemic and the loan moratoriums and additional concessions granted by several banks and financial institutions in 2020 as well as this year.

As you continue reading the pages of this issue, our industry is hurting. Tough decisions are being made and the most unpalatable of medicines swallowed. The challenges ahead remain considerable but surely the only way forward is through collaboration, creative conversations and strong, honest connections. To support this, we continuously collaborate with top industry stakeholders and experts to share their ideas and stories, seek opportunities and innovation. The most resilient and resourceful are already in action, reshaping what they do and leading the way. Together, piece by piece a positive future will take shape.

We hope you enjoy the issue. Stay safe out there!

Until next month,
The islandchief Team



Addu Nature Park:

Addu Atoll is the southernmost atoll in the Maldives atoll chain. There are altogether five inhabited islands, which form six administrative districts, in Addu atoll. The atoll consists of islands that have their very own unique characteristics that are quite different from the rest of the country.

Addu Atoll hosts the second largest wetlands area in the Maldives. The Addu Nature Park encompasses the beautiful Eydhigali Kilhi wetlands and protected Koatthey area in Hithadhoo Island. The Park features charming piers extending out to the lakes, mangroves and scenic cycling routes through the lush vegetation of the wetlands. Visitors can take a guided nature tour through the park and observe the unique fauna and flora of the rich habitat.



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Qatar Airways Expands IATA Travel Pass Trial



Qatar Airways continues to set the benchmark for innovation, safety and customer service, becoming the first airline to trial COVID-19 vaccine authentication through the IATA Travel Pass 'Digital Passport' Mobile App. As more travellers return to the skies, the airline remains committed to reducing paperwork and providing a more contactless, secure and seamless travel experience for its passengers.

The trial will be rolled out in phases from July, beginning initially with cabin crew returning to Doha travelling from Kuwait, London, Los Angeles, New York, Paris and Sydney. Cabin crew will be able to upload their Qatar issued COVID-19 vaccination credentials along with their COVID-19 test results to the IATA Travel Pass Mobile App and verify they are

eligible to travel. On arrival in Doha, crew will then be able to safely and securely share their vaccination certificate and proceed through immigration at the airport.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr Akbar Al Baker said: "Despite the significant challenges the pandemic has caused international aviation, our industry has continued to be a leader in adopting new technologies and innovations to ensure a safe, secure and seamless travel experience for our passengers. Qatar Airways is proud to lead the way by becoming the first airline to trial COVID-19 vaccine authentication through the IATA Travel Pass 'Digital Passport' Mobile App. I want to especially thank Qatar's Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Interior, Primary Health Care Corporation and Hamad Medical Corporation, whom without their ongoing support, this trial would not be possible.

"We know as more people begin making plans to return to their favourite holiday destinations, they will inevitably face the challenge of ensuring they have the right paperwork. Through trialling and supporting the development of new technologies,

we aim to provide travellers with a tool that will support them to seamlessly travel across borders with greater confidence."

Willie Walsh, IATA's Director General said: "Qatar Airways and the Qatari Government are showing leadership by becoming the first to trial the verification of passengers' vaccine credentials through IATA Travel Pass. Certificates of COVID-19 vaccination or testing status will be key to restoring people's freedom to travel. Trials by Qatar Airways and some 70 other airlines have demonstrated that IATA Travel Pass can efficiently manage test results. This important new trial focusing on vaccination status will build even more confidence in IATA Travel Pass as a complete solution for travellers, governments and airlines."

As travellers return to the skies with Qatar Airways, they can take comfort knowing that they are travelling with the only airline in the world that has, together with its state-of-the-art global hub Hamad International Airport, achieved four 5-Star Skytrax ratings – including the prestigious 5-Star Airline Rating, 5-Star Airport Rating, 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating and 5-Star COVID-19 Airport Safety Rating.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Emirates Increases Flight Frequency to Maldives for Summer

Emirates adds new daily flight, increasing frequency to Maldives. The airline is currently operating 4 scheduled flights, total 28 flights on a weekly basis to Velana International Airport.

The increase in frequency was administered following the significant growth in travel demand to cater for passengers during summer. The 4th daily flight will be in operation till August 31, 2021 as part of its summer schedule to the Maldives.

Emirate's flight EK652 will depart Dubai at 09:45hrs daily and arrive in Malé at 15:00hrs, local time. The return flight, EK653 will depart Malé at 16:30hrs and arrive in Dubai at 19:35hrs. The departure time of the return flight will be changed to 16:45hrs from July 11 onwards.

On July, Emirates connected will also connect the Alhosn app with its check-in systems, in addition to its existing integration with the Dubai Health Authority (DHA). Customers will have the advantage of digital retrieval and verification of COVID-19 medical records for a paperless experience regardless of where in the UAE they had completed



their vaccination, or COVID-19 PCR and antigen tests. Furthermore, Emirates reopened its dedicated First-Class Lounge in Concourse B for its customers on July 1 to cater to the surge in passenger demand,

particularly in the premium classes. With a seating capacity for 540 customers and more space between seating and dining areas, the First-Class Lounge offers a luxurious retreat before departure.

Trans Maldivian Airways Confirms Restructuring Under New Transaction



Trans Maldivian Airways (TMA) has finalized a restructuring with new owners Carlyle, King Street Capital Management (King Street) and Davidson Kempner Capital Management LP (Davidson Kempner). The transaction, approved by TMA's former equity owners, is intended to help provide a strong foundation for strategic business growth. The transaction is targeted at helping return the firm to solid financial footing and paving the way for TMA to focus on enhancing its world-class seaplane operations as it expands its key role in facilitating tourism and supporting jobs in the Maldives. TMA is

the world's largest seaplane operator with a fleet of 56 seaplanes transporting tourists from the capital Male' City (Velana International Airport) to nearby islands/atolls and luxury resorts.

Carlyle's Global Credit platform led the restructuring, alongside King Street and Davidson Kempner, and funds affiliated with Carlyle have become TMA's majority owner. The newly reconstituted Board of Directors include Lars Erik Nielsen, one of TMA's founders, representatives from the new owners and other industry experts. TMA management will remain

the same. Financial details were not disclosed.

Christian Schmitz, Managing Director, Carlyle Global Credit, said: "TMA is an operationally strong business with an experienced management team and clear competitive advantages. We are pleased to provide the strategic capital and expertise the company needs to return to growth. As vaccines continue to be rolled out globally, we expect travel to return to pre-pandemic levels in the Maldives, which remains as one of the most attractive vacation destinations in the world."

A.U.M. Fawzy, CEO of TMA, said: "This transaction marks the beginning of a new chapter for TMA. We look forward to the support of our new owners as we ramp up business and continue providing the world-class service our customers have come to expect. As we do that, the health and safety of our customers and employees remain fundamentally important to both management and our new shareholders and we will continue to follow our industry-leading protocols to ensure the welfare of those involved in TMA's operations."

Zachary Lewis, Managing Director at King Street, said: "Our deep experience working with aviation companies positions us well to work alongside our partners at Carlyle and Davidson Kempner as we help lead the company to a strong recovery and its next growth stage."



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IN A NUTSHELL

Baros Maldives Introduces Post-Lockdown Detox Programme



Iconic Baros has created a fabulous opportunity for their guests; the chance to indulge in a unique three-day detox programme in the heart of paradise. This extraordinary experience was created to make it easier for guests to ease into vacation mode after spending many months quarantined at home.

By specifically targeting internal inflammation, stress relief and overall wellbeing, this programme allows guests to better surrender to the island lifestyle and soak up the tranquillity of their exceptional vacation at Baros.

“The effects of a detox treatment go far beyond a physical cleanse or encouraging weight loss,” states Made Arsini, Spa Manager at the Serenity Spa at Baros. “A conscious detox programme is a powerful way to make changes on every level of your being, this includes your mental, emotional and spiritual health.”

The wellness professionals at Baros’ Serenity Spa are

committed to promote holistic wellbeing to their guests that extends beyond a singular massage or treatment. That’s why they have created this exciting new programme that centres on the ultimate balance of detoxifying treatments to set the tone for a much-anticipated holiday at Baros. On the first day, the skilled therapists will draw on the healing powers of ginger and lime for a scrub and detox massage. The careful combination of

ingredients and techniques will help to mitigate internal inflammation, promote anti-ageing and purify the skin. The detox massage is hugely powerful – during this experience areas of the body needed for overall waste removal are stimulated which encourages the body to release toxins.

During the massage, the therapist will apply alternating pressure on different muscle groups, which strengthens and relaxes the muscles, which further promotes the body’s detox response. Day two will begin on a tranquil note with a private yoga lesson. This session will involve poses and sequences that activate the intestines and stimulate a mental detox as well as inspire stress and anxiety relief. The day’s therapies will focus on the detoxing properties of green tea, which will be used in a fabulous full-body wrap. The detox wrap involves the use of Green Tea Balm which encourages skin health and detoxification. The treatment helps the elimination process of toxins and restores equilibrium and a sense of reinvigoration.

The final day of this beautiful “me-time” programme aptly embraces the powerful ingredients and substances brought to us by the sea. Algae, sea buckthorn and sea fennel are fused together in a detox bath, designed to be relished in the tranquil and tropical setting of the Serenity Spa. The process is enhanced by a detox juice that can be enjoyed during the bath itself.

Scented with juniper and lemon essential oils, guests can soak in the bath for 30 relaxing minutes before giving themselves into the therapeutic lymphatic drainage massage. The lymphatic drainage massage involves very light pressure and gentle, rhythmic strokes, to increase the circulation of the lymphatic system which stimulates the body’s own waste removal process to flush out the toxins. After three days of pampering and self-care, guests can truly relax into their holiday and indulge in the beautiful and bountiful nature of the island. By starting your holiday from a refreshed, calm perspective, you are better able to embrace the incredible experiences available at Baros.

The Post-Lockdown Detox Programme can be customised as per the guest’s requirements after an extensive consultation with the spa professionals.

THE PERFECT GIFT

Just in time for when many will be catching up on the travelling, they missed or their postponed honeymoons and milestone celebrations, Baros has launched an e-gift card platform. The e gift card makes it easy to send best wishes to loved ones while enhancing their stay at Baros, creating a truly memorable surprise for them. The gift card can be exchanged for something simple like a bottle of champagne, or for the three-day detox programme at Serenity Spa – the perfect gift for any occasion. The cash e-gift card can also be issued for any amount, allowing the lucky recipients to choose how they want to enjoy this wonderful gift during their stay.

Arrive at Kudadoo Maldives Private Island in Luxury and Style

Kudadoo Maldives Private Island, an ultra-luxury private island resort in the pristine Lhaviyani Atoll, has partnered with the leading private aviation provider, XO, to offer discerning travellers exclusive private jet experiences from global destinations to the Indian Ocean all year-round.

Getting to Kudadoo by Private Jet is a magnificent arrival experience unlike any other in the Maldives, which allows holidaymakers to bypass crowded airports and shorten the time spent waiting around. The private jet can land directly at Velana International Airport in Malé, just a 40-minute scenic seaplane journey from Kudadoo Maldives. Alternatively, it can also touch down at Maafaru International Airport, a 30-minute speedboat transfer away.

During the flight, guests can enjoy a personalized

service amidst luxurious surroundings, and all the private jet experience has to offer. Additionally, they can start planning the bespoke itinerary, which the resort’s personal butler will assist with. Experiences that will add another level to Kudadoo Maldives residents’ stay include: swimming with manta rays, snorkelling with sea turtles, paddle boarding with dolphins, and taking a private luxury yacht on a splendid adventure.

To learn more about private flight services available exclusively through XO and Kudadoo Maldives Private Island, please get in touch with kudadoo@flyxo.com or reservations@kudadoo.com

Defined by the philosophy ‘Freedom Reimagined’, Kudadoo Maldives is an ultra-luxury resort with a one-of-a-kind design that blends sophistication with



eco-sustainability in mind. Featuring only 15 overwater residences, each with a 44 sqm terrace pool, Kudadoo ensures a secluded hideaway purposefully crafted for the more discerning traveller – all accessible by a 40-minute scenic seaplane journey. The resort’s fully inclusive offering, ‘Anything. Anywhere. Anytime’, promises an unhindered enjoyment of luxuries, where every desire is granted and expedited by your personal butler.

Mystical Night Diving Experience at Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon



Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon, located in the North Ari Atoll is an iconic resort belonging to the Cinnamon Hotels & Resorts chain, renowned as one of the best spots for divers in the world.

Getting up close and personal with Marlon Robert, hotel manager at Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon by day, and an avid diver by night, shares his experience with the underwater world and his passion as a true explorer.

Marlon's story is gripping. "It's all about the adventure that you will come across; you will be in an entirely different world with colours and creatures from known to the unimaginable". During night dives, it is common to be acquainted with unfamiliar creatures that are bigger, smaller and even microscopic. Encounters with Eagle Rays, Sting Rays, Nurse Sharks, Gray Reef Sharks and Moray Eel are truly magical experiences. "It is the peacefulness, night diving that takes me into a different reality for just an hour as it is a crucial getaway, it's an amazing feeling and there's little that can compare."

Based on Marlon's experience on diving, he has shared different insights between night diving and day diving. During the night, the colors of the corals are more enhanced with the use of a torch light which is completely different during broad day light. It gives a new perspective to underwater life as more sea creatures and movement are seen, because of the perfect location of the hotel. Creatures such as the octopus, lobsters, turtles, sharks and moray eels are more likely to be seen at night time, and their natural colors are more vibrant and breathtaking.

Guests at Ellaidhoo Maldives get to curate a personalized diving experience to explore the reefs and by going for night dives afterwards. The first dive is a trial round without any charges and dive trainings are also offered if the guest requires it. As Marlon explains, it is because the resort is built on a coral bed with a diameter of almost a thousand meters and thirty meters in depth. This, unlike hotels built on sandbanks, gives the divers an unparalleled experience that leaves them mesmerized.

"Diving was never a part of my plan. One day, I dived with one of the dive-masters and fell in love with it" reminisces, Marlon. He now holds an advanced certificate in diving and has been a part of the Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon team for the past 20 years.

Preserving the 'Life on Land' and 'Life below Water' are key areas that are of vital importance in all operations at Elladthoo Maldives by Cinnamon. The resort has reduced its plastic consumption and wastage by using refillable water bottles, reusable bags and straws along with frequent beach clean-ups to conserve the underwater environment surrounding the resort. The resort has also generated 191, 563 KWh of solar energy and reduced carbon dioxide emission by 153, 250 Kg in 2020/21.

Ellaidhoo Maldives by Cinnamon is a true diver's paradise that not only offers exhilarating underwater experiences but also thrives to safeguard life amidst it.

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IN A NUTSHELL

Soneva Fushi Unveils All-New Food Journeys at Shades of Green



Soneva Fushi the award-winning barefoot luxury resort in the Maldives' Baa Atoll, has revealed a seasonal selection of new menus at Shades of Green. The plant-based dining experience is set within Soneva Fushi's organic island gardens, taking diners on an immersive culinary journey that ignites all the senses.

The five new menus by Danish Chef; Carsten Kyster, are based on the vibrant colours of freshly picked produce: Purple, Yellow, Orange, Red and Green. They fuse the flavours and fragrant spices of Maldivian and South-east Asian cuisine with Chef Kyster's Nordic heritage, prepared

using traditional techniques such as smoking, salting, fermenting and pickling to let the ingredients shine. Each colourful menu features six courses – Cleansing, Crispy, Raw, Grains, Fire, Sweets – with simple yet innovative dishes that showcase the finest seasonal vegetables, salads, fruit and herbs cultivated at Soneva Fushi.

Highlights include: the Purple menu's Cleansing hibiscus kombucha, blue potato chips and salted beetroots, and Crispy aubergine, with rouille, blue potatoes, prickly ash vinegar, amaranth, wild garden purslane and sweet basil flower; Raw pumpkin,



sour cream, black truffle and Japanese spring onions; Fire on the Green menu, with grilled pressed portobello mushroom, pea purée, salted lemons, raw asparagus, ramson flower, shitake, morels krapow and crispy holy basil; and the Red menu's Sweets, with chocolate, beetroots, almond cake, porridge ice cream, raw sun choke, caramelised ginger and garden herbs.

Every meal at Shades of Green begins with a tour around Soneva Fushi's gardens, inviting guests to find out more about the food featured on the menu. Surrounded by the vibrant colours and heady scents that fill the air, diners are seated at communal tables to inspire conversation with fellow guests and the Shades of Green chefs while they dine.

A focus on organic, plant-based dining is part of Soneva's SLOW LIFE philosophy, which champions holistic wellbeing and a healthier, more sustainable way of living. Red meat has been almost completely removed from Soneva menus across its resorts in the Maldives and Thailand, and the use of dairy products and refined sugars and flours has been significantly reduced.

orange beetroots, almond ricotta, leek ash, finger lime, garden flowers, carrot chips and herb soya on the Orange menu; the Yellow menu's Grain course, with triple-cooked carrot, fermented black garlic, Maldivian curry, coconut

Seaside Finolhu All-Access Pass: Your Barefoot Chic Private Island Playground Awaits!

For a limited time, Seaside Finolhu is offering an island-wide privatisation through its exclusive buyout where the host guest can plan an all-access, all-inclusive barefoot chic luxury escapade, corporate retreat, dream destination wedding or milestone birthday blowout, and turn Seaside Finolhu into their very own Private Island Playground.

With its kilometre-long white sand beaches, 125 newly transformed beachfront and overwater villas, award-winning dining experiences, vibrant performances at the Beach Club and a line-up of daily activities amidst a turquoise blue lagoon surrounded by some of the most stunning sandbanks in the Maldives, Seaside Finolhu is the place to be.

Located within the Baa Atoll, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the

Maldives, Seaside Finolhu is a barefoot chic resort that puts a playful twist on luxury. Top athletes, technopreneurs, supermodels, and celebrities have all called Finolhu their island home.

Privatization of Seaside Finolhu starts from USD 187,500 per night for the entire island, with a minimum stay of 4 nights.

About Seaside Finolhu

Finolhu was opened in June 2016 and consists of four islands with long beaches. It has 125 beachfront and overwater villas (more than half with private pool) and four restaurants. Whilst popular with honeymooners, the extensive resort is family-friendly, with a kids' club, wide choice of activities and world-famous entertainment.

Owned and managed by Seaside Collection, a Europe-based hotel group



with an exclusive portfolio of high-end resorts and city hotels, Seaside Finolhu Maldives is a luxury island resort. "Finolhu", which is a direct translation

of "sandbank" in Dhivehi is located in Baa Atoll, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve in the Maldives.

MOVERS & SHAKERS

Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives Appoints Hassan Sabree as Resort Manager



Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru, One & Only Reethi Rah, Fairmonth Maldives and Como Maalifushi. Prior to his latest appointment, Sabree filled the role of Director of Rooms at Fairmont Maldives.

He holds a tourism & hospitality management diploma from Berjaya University College of Hospitality in Malaysia. Sabree is currently pursuing his Master of Business Administration from London School of Commerce- Srilanka.

Graduated with Tourism & Hospitality Management Diploma from Berjaya University College of Hospitality in Malaysia, Sabree is currently pursuing his Master of Business Administration from London School of Commerce- Srilanka.

Welcoming Sabree as a team member, General Manager Raffaele Solferino said, "I am certain with his enthusiasm, experience and positive energy, Sabree will bring our customer experience and service excellence to the next level."

Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives has announced the appointment of Hassan Sabree to the position of Resort Manager.

Bringing over 17 years of experience in the hospitality industry with a Front Office and service experience background, Hassan Sabree will be "focusing on adding more values and enhancements to the resort's day-to-day operation", said Raffaele Solferino, General Manager of Grand Park Kodhipparu Maldives.

Sabree has worked for resorts such as

JEN Maldives Male' by Shangri-La Appoints Brice Lunot as General Manager



in Maldives, and to have been granted this opportunity to work with two fabulous teams."

Brice is a well-versed hotelier with his 29 years' work experience in the luxury hotel sector, working for brands such as Le Meridien and Lux resorts and Hotels. Brice joined the Shangri-La group in 2019 in Oman and Mauritius. Shangri-La Villingili is a private hideaway, in a world of its own, Shangri-La's Villingili Resort & Spa is the perfect setting for couples, with its secluded location as part of the Maldives southernmost atoll whilst the JEN is in the heart of the capital city, Male'.

The hotel will continue to provide guests with memorable experiences and uphold the traditions of JEN, while striving to further enhance service quality and brand value into the future.

JEN Maldives Male' by Shangri-La, has announced the appointment of Brice Lunot as the hotel's new General Manager as of June 21, 2021. Brice is currently the General Manager for Shangri-La Villingili resort and Spa, with this new appointment, he will be the cluster General Manager for both properties.

The recent General Manager of Shangri-La's Le Touessrok, Mauritius had the following to say about his new appointment: "I am very happy to be



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Villa Hotels & Resorts Appoints Ibrahim Nahid as General Manager at Paradise Island Resort & Spa



Paradise Island Resort & Spa, an iconic and stylish island retreat set on a lush natural island located in North Male' Atoll, has announced the appointment of established leader Ibrahim Nahid as General Manager of Paradise Island in the Maldives. Joining the resort at a pivotal stage in the Villa Hotels & Resorts new rebranding and transformational journey, Nahid will be leading the overall operation and strategic development of the award-winning resort in alignment with the company's new chic and contemporary vision. In his new role, Nahid will lead the Paradise Island Team to continue to create unrivalled guest experiences at the idyllic island, boasting 282 luxurious villas with a focus on indoor-outdoor living and a relaxed sociability.

Prior to joining the Paradise Island team, Nahid held the position of General Manager at Holiday Island Resort & Spa, part of Villa Hotels & Resorts Maldives collection. Nahid brings vast and diverse

experience to the role with an impressive record of success in contributing to the operational management of luxury resorts, while building exceptional guest relations and developing market performance in competitive and quality focused environments. He has previously held roles at global luxury hotel brands including Cheval Blanc Randheli Maldives and Six Senses Resorts in Oman and Koh Yao Noi, Thailand. Nahid holds an MBA from Anglia Ruskin University in England.

Providing invaluable knowledge from his extensive experience, Nahid will lead the activation of the new concept on property, in addition to instigating several sustainable initiatives in keeping with Villa Hotels & Resorts mission to preserve and protect the natural environment.

"The DNA of Maldivian hospitality and our beautiful but very fragile environment are the most precious things we have inherited from our ancestors. I feel it's our responsibility and duty to pass it onto the future generations. Therefore, the most important thing we shall do is to educate the younger generations about how to take care of and preserve the natural environment. Currently we coordinate with local entities and schools to deliver educational programs to the youths and students of today. We are planning to introduce further programs and involve the younger generations in regular sustainability and conservation activities," explained Ibrahim Nahid, General Manager, Paradise Island.

Lily Hotels Welcomes Desislav Gospodinov as Group Director of Sales & Marketing



Desislav Gospodinov has been appointed as Group Director of Sales & Marketing (GDOSM) for Lily Hotels' two award-winning luxury resorts, Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa, and Lily Beach Resort & Spa. He brings with him more than 10 years of sales management experience and an international record to match it, spanning across Europe and Asia.

Though he attended higher education in England, both at the University of Portsmouth and Cardiff Metropolitan University, it was in Bulgaria where Mr. Desislav's career in hospitality began. Since 2005, he has proven sales experience with luxury venues and big names, spending multiple years working at places like Hilton, Starwood, and Yastrebets in the capital Sofia. From Senior Sales Manager to Sales & Marketing Director, and even a stint as General Manager, Mr. Desislav is well acquainted with steering company performance, profit, and strategy.

He is not just capable for the GDOSM position; he is also a familiar face. Mr. Desislav previously served as Director of Sales & Marketing at Lily Beach Resort & Spa

from 2015-2017. During these two years, he cultivated better online business, oversaw the creation of Lily Beach's popular mobile application, and helped to diversify the overall market. He is very proud of these accomplishments and left a lasting and positive impact on the company.

Most recently, he was the Area Sales Director for Centara Hotels & Resorts overseeing their resorts in the Maldives. He was responsible for sales in their Maldivian properties and entering new markets in Asia and the Americas. Although he was based in Bangkok and enjoyed this position, the island life of the Maldives was never far from his mind.

Now that he is back in full force, Mr. Desislav has expressed pure excitement at starting his new role. Although Hideaway and Lily Beach are very different hospitality products, he views it as a fun challenge- especially during this period of unpredictability caused by the pandemic. There are many great qualities about both resorts, and he is ready with new perspectives to bring these to a higher level. With his understanding of the tried-and-true Lily model, familiarity with management, and knowledge about the properties, Mr. Desislav plans to re-engage markets that have been affected by the pandemic and increase the brand's competitive edge.

Lily Hotels welcomes their new (but not so new) team member with open arms, and looks forward to continued collaboration, picking up exactly where they left off in 2017.

Kandima Maldives Appoints Jean-Louis Ripoche as New General Manager



Kandima Maldives has announced the appointment of Jean-Louis Ripoche as its new General Manager. This French-born hotelier brings over 30 years of hospitality experience from hotels across the world, including Boston, Kuwait and Phuket, to name a few.

Jean-Louis has also launched new restaurant concepts, renovations and hotel openings in Indonesia and Thailand, served as General Manager at Le Méridien Jakarta and Le Méridien Khao Lak, and orchestrated the opening of a new Marriott Hotel in Kathmandu.

He's all about delivering exceptional service and next-level hospitality for all guests. As the new General Manager, he'll be curating the ultimate dining experiences, unforgettable activities and overseeing the island's daily operations. He will also ensure Kandima team members stay at the top of their game under his guidance.

Kandima Maldives is much more than just a holiday, it's an affordable lifestyle. This new game-changing destination offers 264 stylishly designed studios and villas, 10 extraordinary dining venues and

plenty of fun-packed activities to choose from. The resort caters for guests of all ages and on different budgets: families, couples, groups of friends and honeymooners. Whether you seek romantic escape, aquatic adventures, fitness activities, spa getaways or just family time, Kandima Maldives has something for everybody. Situated in the Dhaalu Atoll, the island is just a thirty-minute flight from Velana International Airport, which is followed by a twenty-minute boat ride to this seriously stylish island.

Recovering Markets

According to the Maldives Ministry of Tourism statistics on the Maldives Tourism Updates July 15, 2021 report:

Tourist arrivals to the Maldives, though slowed down during the month of May 2021 with the additional restrictive measures implemented to curb the COVID-19 situation in the country, data as of 7th July shows that market rebounding continues with strong positive growth rates in 2021 compared with the same period of 2019 and 2020.

In 2021 as of July 7th, while the Central/Eastern Europe and South Asia regions have made full recovery and performed above pre-COVID levels, Africa, Europe, and Americas are also showing signs of recovery.

Major markets to the Maldives such as Russia and India, which are among the top 10 markets over the years, are seen as star performers, making a strong comeback and recording growth rates of triple and double digits respectively in 2021, compared with the period in review for 2019. With the increased connectivity, some markets from Central/Eastern Europe emerge and make it to the top ten list, while some markets from South Asia, Africa, Americas and the Middle East also made full recovery and performed above pre-COVID levels.

Markets

From 1st January to 14th July 2021

	Arrivals			Growth (%)	
	2019	2020	2021	2019/2021	2020/2021
Kazakhstan	2,670	2,771	16,980	536.0	512.8
Ukraine	7,174	4,555	24,992	248.4	448.7
Russia	45,274	28,955	132,949	193.7	359.2
Romania	5,413	4,017	11,880	119.5	195.7
Pakistan	2,548	1,214	5,537	117.3	356.1
Egypt	1,770	725	3,662	106.9	405.1
Bulgaria	3,833	2,298	6,294	64.2	173.9
Brazil	5,376	2,572	7,530	40.1	192.8
South Africa	4,600	1,424	6,405	39.2	349.8
Czech Republic	8,019	4,375	11,009	37.3	151.6
United Arab Emirates	5,211	1,156	6,832	31.1	491.0
Poland	9,162	5,537	10,744	17.3	94.0
Hungary	5,853	4,736	6,820	16.5	44.0
Slovakia	4,339	2,894	4,709	8.5	62.7
India	87,519	34,871	90,212	3.1	158.7

Central/Eastern Europe	97,795	63,688	240,212	145.6	277.2
Africa	8,858	3,312	11,124	25.6	235.9
Middle East	30,928	13,461	35,591	15.1	164.4

Source: Maldives Tourism Updates 14th July 2021 / Ministry of Tourism



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DISHAN WIJAYAWARDENA

**Senior Business Development Manager
Nestlé Lanka PLC - Maldives Sales**



We have had the utmost pleasure of meeting people over the years, but we are absolutely thrilled to catch up with a true veteran in the industry for this issue's cover story interview. We sat with Dishan Wijayawardena, Senior Business Development Manager – Nestlé Lanka PLC - Maldives Sales – whose energy had sparked Nestlé to span its reach from the capital Malé to the far-flung islands.

This active fan of sportsmen is well-known for his amazing relationships with the local community representing Nestlé. He shares his unflinching dynamism, aspirational vision of the profession and more importantly, his vast experience which he has gained from the Swiss food giant, Nestlé.

Could you first tell us about yourself and your innate and strong interest for the Brand?

I completed my education at S. Thomas' College, Bandarawela which is tucked away in the beautiful low-lying hill town in the Central Highlands of Sri Lanka. My parents provided me with the best of education and facilities which laid a strong foundation for me to become who I am today. I grew up and spent my years away from home at the college hostel. I learned to associate and network with people as the college student diversity consisted of other religions, languages and culture. It was during my college life that I established my passion and love for sports, especially cricket and basketball. The moment the classes were done with, I would partake in sports activities, because there was nothing else to do. I believe taking part in sports is very important in becoming a well-rounded, and principled individual.

Soon after I completed my higher studies in Sri Lanka, I came to the Maldives and started working for Eastinvest Pvt Ltd, now known as BBM - Bestbuy Maldives Pvt Ltd. This was a life-changing experience, as my first corporate experience was in an overseas country. Here I would like to pay my gratitude to my late uncle Mr. Kamal Siriwardena who provided me this opportunity and got me into this industry. He guided me and helped me to learn the basics and he is responsible for the professional who I am today.

When talking about the strong bond that I have for Nestlé, it all started at a very young age. This is because

during my childhood I grew up with brands such as Milo and Maggi and in 2008 when I got the opportunity to work for Nestlé Maldives it was a childhood dream come true. Today 15 years later, I am proud to say that I lead the Nestlé Operations in the Maldives.

During these years at Nestlé, what have been your greatest challenges and accomplishments of which you are most proud?

For me, the priority has always been to ensure that the supply chain is a driving force in developing our business and in meeting the expectations of our customers and consumers. The challenges involved are therefore structural, operational and organizational; i.e., to plan, anticipate and adjust our organization as best as possible to maintain an agility that allows us to adapt quickly to our environment. I therefore remain proud of our teams and the agility and speed with which we have been able to adapt our model to the changing external business environment, while maintaining a service rate that meets the expectations of all our customers and consumers.

Speaking of my proudest moment and accomplishments, I would say it is none other than the strong link I have been able to create along with our brands specially Milo. The Nestlé success story in the Maldives is definitely attributed to the strong team we have in here, especially my sales team and the distributor partners. I would like to extend my special gratitude to the top management of Nestlé Lanka PLC who has been right behind me throughout these 15 years where I have seen how the

Maldives have transformed to a global tourist destination. I remember when I started working here, we had a very limited portfolio and today we have built up the business and added so many categories. We continuously strived to associate our brands to have a clear Nestlé footprint in the Maldives.

In your opinion, what are the main impacts on the Supply Chain approach for Maldives? How do strategic regional logistics and operational logistics best fit to provide quality products right on time without fail?

One of our driving principles when it comes to our Nestlé Maldives operation is that we want our products to reach our customers whenever, wherever and however. As you are aware, Maldives attract tourists from around the world. Hence, we need to cater to the needs of a wide range of consumers – both local and foreign. As we bring down the world's best Nestlé products to the Maldives, it is necessary that we maintain strong relationships with global Nestlé markets as well as a strong local distribution setup. So, in order to cater to the needs of both the tourists as well as the local community, having a strong end-to-end supply chain process is a must. Accurate forecasting, planning and in today's dynamic environment having contingency plans are mandatory requirements to ensure that our products are available to consumers in the most efficient and effective manner.

With the pandemic and disruption in business, what is a key category of focus at the moment for Nestlé?

I think all our categories continue to play a key role in supporting consumer's health and wellbeing, and in delivering pleasurable moments as part of a balanced diet. In this new reality, our Nestlé brands continue to be seen, more than ever, as trusted products which meet the needs of the whole family and different consumption moments, from early childhood to elderly age.

Nestlé's much-loved Milo brand has become the first Ready-to-Drink beverage in Sri Lanka to switch to paper straws. Do you plan a similar sustainable move for the Milo products distributed in the Maldives?

Yes, we have already done so. We launched paper straws for our RTD Milo packs during the Euro 2020 in the Maldives. This switch will help us to eliminate six million plastic straws a year and ensures our Milo RTD pack is 100% recyclable. This initiative is one of the many actions we are taking to reduce the impact of our packaging, and is part of our global ambition to make 100% of our packaging recyclable, and cut our use of virgin plastic packaging by 1/3 by 2025. We are proud to implement key actions that will have a positive impact on the Maldives' environment, and are committed to making products that are not only good for our consumers but also good for our planet.

To support the packaging change, our ongoing wide-scale consumer awareness campaign is expected to reach all across the Maldives by mid-August, with the goal of inspiring behavioral change and promoting responsible disposal.

Your brand has nurtured sports and many talented athletes across the Maldives. Can you tell us your involvement with the sports community?

For the past 15 years, Nestlé has played a vital role in nurturing sports across the Maldives. We believe that physical education and activities are a vital component in ensuring the health and wellbeing of a child, making it essential for them to engage in sports from an early age. It also teaches them essential skills like teamwork, leadership, discipline etc. and can motivate children to excel academically.

Encouraging children to participate in sports and providing opportunities to identify and nurture young sports talent also helps ensure the development and self-sustainability of our sports sector. They are our next generation of elite athletes, coaches, officials, volunteers, administrators and visionaries for Maldives.

Sports Scholarships was first introduced in the Maldives in 2014 and its primary objective has been to develop skilled young Maldivian sportspeople. This programme was supported and sponsored by Milo from the outset. Nestlé Maldives, as a part of this programme, held the "Milo Colors Award" event annually to acknowledge students who excel in the field of sports at a national level. Through our Milo partnerships, we remain committed to continue being a huge supporting driving force in helping to shape the youth of today for tomorrow's sporting needs.

What are the areas in which Nestlé stays different from other brands in the Maldivian market?

In order to have a competitive edge in the market, we differentiate ourselves locally through trust and relationships, quality, transparency, scale, and a strong vision supported by innovation and renovation.

Our strong bond with the local community is one of the key elements that helps the company thrive in the Maldives. The trust our consumers place in us is key, and we ensure we uphold this by ensuring the highest quality standards and offering transparent labelling information on all our products. Keeping the needs and preferences of our consumers at the heart of what we do is probably our biggest success. Our success also lies in our long-term relationships with strong and reputed distributor partners in Maldives, such as Lily Enterprises Pvt Ltd, Lily International Pvt Ltd, M H A Pvt Ltd & Seenco Pvt Ltd.

We also have the advantage of a very diverse portfolio from all over the world, catering to consumers from

early childhood to old age, for every consumption moment and need. Finally, while we focus on excelling in the current environment, where the margins are getting tighter due to higher cost of commodities and tough competition, we also don't lose sight of our vision for the future and where we want to be. Innovating new products and renovating existing ones is an ongoing process and one we do well as we have the largest R&D network of any food company in the world. Our innovations and renovations don't just focus on product recipes but also packaging and processes as we transform ourselves to ensure our products are not just good for consumers but also for the planet. All of these are what helps us to be a leading company wherever in the world we operate.

What would you like to say about the Tourism sector and its opportunities in the Maldives?

As the largest industry in the Maldives, tourism certainly plays a huge role in the country. What we see and read is that tourists are continually looking for new experiences, and we believe that good food can play an important role in shaping these positive new experiences. The pandemic has also increased the demand for trusted and familiar products more than ever. Nestlé is able to support the tourism industry in both these areas.

In addition to making a diverse range of our global favourites available in the Maldives, we have always been passionate about supplying food and beverage solutions that specially cater to the out-of-home culinary sector in making delicious food quickly and in large quantities for their consumers, and therefore have been an integral part of the Maldivian culinary industry since its inception. With our global expertise, our food service arm; Nestlé Professional, has been dedicated to being an inspiring growth partner to the local HORECA (Hotel / Restaurant / Café) industry. We have been delivering creative, branded food and beverage solutions to our ever-growing HORECA customer base across the Maldives - leveraging the strength of our brands and versatile product portfolio to drive profitable growth for them. In addition to product solutions, we have also placed focus on helping to develop the local culinary industry in the Maldives. We have been the platinum sponsor for the Food & Hospitality Asia Maldives (FHAM) culinary challenge continuously for over a decade. FHAM is the premier culinary industry event in the Maldives, which is organized in collaboration with the Chef's Guild of Maldives and Chef's Guild of Lanka where world-renowned Chefs and culinary judges get together and share their experiences with local Chefs, whilst also giving them the opportunity to compete, be recognized and receive feedback for improvement. This programme gives the young aspiring chefs in the Maldives to develop their skills which ultimately helps them to be employable globally. It's been truly an honor to be a part of this programme and give back to the Maldives.

We have also held a few culinary events in partnership with nearby resorts to Malé, to promote our products. This is something that we look forward to hosting in a much broader way, to offer resort guests a multi-sensory dining experience. It would be an initiative dedicated to food, that is designed to ensure that guests would enjoy a unique and unforgettable culinary experience.

As a veteran in the industry, what would be your key advice for those who want to join this industry?

I believe that when you wake up every morning, it's important you have a clear focus and mindset on what you have planned for the day. My advice to anyone wanting to venture into this trade is to ensure that you

enjoy what you do and success will follow you.

My philosophy is to follow the 3 P's:

Passion – To be successful in any industry, you must be passionate about what you do, so that you're fully focused on delivering what is expected of you. Also, when you're passionate about work you don't feel it's work. Even when you're in a crisis situation, you view the crisis as an opportunity.

Perseverance – The current market is very dynamic. It is truly a VUCA environment and the challenges you face day in and day out will try to weigh you down, but you have to be persistent in what you do, so that you come out of the challenges much strong.

People – This is the most important P, because this industry is built around people. You need to create a climate of trust with both internal and external stakeholders and for you to do this, you need to better understand and anticipate the needs of these people.

What role does self-care and work/life balance play in corporate success?

As the saying goes, "Health is Wealth" - I firmly believe that taking care of your mental health is as important as looking after your physical health. Therefore, work life balance is very crucial. I also think having time for yourself is very important in order for you to reflect and improve yourself as an individual.

I certainly could not have maintained a healthy work-life balance in my role in Maldives without the relationships that I have built. This includes all our distributor partners, advertising agencies, media and PR offices and office bearers from various ministries and sports associations and all key stakeholders in the industry.

Finally, as an expatriate living in the Maldives while my loving wife and two kids reside in Sri Lanka, I continue receiving their tremendous support throughout the years that have passed. It has been a key pillar of strength for my success both in my personal and professional life. In my view, this is also the most vital element for my success. Today's working world poses many hurdles in this area and I always believe that any happy employee will be much more productive and motivated with the support from their family and loved ones.

I would like to conclude by saying love what you do after all it's your masterpiece.



EVENTS & AWARDS

JOALI Maldives Receives 'Best Hospitality Hideaway Indian Ocean' Award

JOALI Maldives has won the Connoisseur Circle Hospitality Award 2021 in the category "Best Hospitality Hideaway Indian Ocean".

According to Connoisseur Circle, only JOALI can pride itself on providing a hand-picked library for each one of its 73 villas and residences. The resort heavily focuses on the creative side, providing the opportunity for art enthusiasts to participate in workshops with guest artists at the Art & Studio Gallery.

"We are beyond thrilled to receive the 'Best Hospitality Hideaway Indian Ocean' award! It is very significant to us, especially as we have achieved this during these challenging times. Above all, it is a voice to

the public, a voice to our dear guests - to receive such a wonderful recognition. Thank you to everyone who voted for us!" said Ismail Nasheed, Resort Manager.

Boasting a lavish range of culinary options, every dish at JOALI tells a story and every plate becomes a journey, a journey of savours, fragrance and joy - an immersive experiential dining, complementing intellectual and creative nourishment.

Treasure hunts and cooking classes at the Muramas Kids Club will leave the little ones with unforgettable memories. Selected kids treatments are available in the spa. Meanwhile,



adults hungry for relaxation are drawn to the dreamlike JOALI Spa by Espa, a wellness heaven inspired by the tropical surroundings with sauna, steam bath, power shower and hammam.

The resort is located on its own private

island in the picturesque Raa Atoll, which is a 45-minute seaplane ride to the island. Guests also have the option to transfer from Male' to Ifuru Airport by a 45-minute domestic flight followed by a 25-minute speedboat ride to the resort.

Maldives Butler Academy Concludes First Butler Training Held at OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI



The Maldives Butler Academy has concluded its first training session for Butlers held in the luxury resort of OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI in the Maldives.

According to Maldives Butler Academy, a large number of staff from different nationalities participated in the training session, conducted by President and Principal Trainer, Mohamed Yamany.

General Manager of OZEN RESERVE BOLIFUSHI, Luisa Lalli commended the efforts of participants and highlighted the role of butlers in ensuring guest satisfaction at the resort.

Maldives Butler Academy is the first Butler Academy registered and recognized by the Ministry of Tourism in the Maldives to develop and specialize professionals in the tourism and hospitality industry. With the input of ideas from like-minded veterans of the Maldives hospitality industry, the

Maldives Butler Academy focuses on the development of individuals who share the ideals of creating positive once-in-a-lifetime experiences for the people that they will serve.

Surrounded by a gorgeous natural reef and turquoise waters, OZEN Reserve Bolifushi exudes elegance, style, and timeless sophistication. From fabulous overwater villas with slides to exotic fine dining and ice skating by the beach, every experience is tastefully crafted to indulge leisure travellers with an unforgettable getaway.

The resort offers 14 iconic Reserves in 4 categories: Sunset Earth Pool Reserve, Private Ocean Reserve with Slide, Royal Reserve, and the newest addition, The OZEN reserve as well as 75 private villas across 4 categories: Earth Pool Villa, Sunrise Earth Pool Pavilion, Ocean Pool Suite, and Ocean Pool Suites with Slide - and 1 magnificent villa, the Royal Reserve.

Maldives Marks One Year Since Border Reopening



July 15, 2021 marks one year since the Maldives reopened its borders for all international travelers under stringent measures following the global border closures against COVID-19.

Since then the Maldives have safely welcomed over 715,600 travelers. The Maldives have established strong safety protocols across its tourist establishments, and ensured that over 72% of the tourist industry have been fully vaccinated.

Earlier this year, The Maldivian government also temporarily halted issuance of visas to travelers from South Asia following the spike in COVID-19 cases in this region. Effective from July 15, the Maldives has once again re-opened the borders to warmly welcome travelers from South Asian countries to the naturally-distanced scattered islands of Maldives.

Tourists traveling from South Asian

countries are not permitted to check-in or stay at tourist facilities in inhabited islands until July 30, 2021 to maintain a gradual and safe reopening for the region.

All travelers, including those who have completed the prescribed dose(s) of COVID-19 vaccines, must hold a negative result for a nucleic acid test (PCR test) for COVID-19, with a sample taken within 96 hours prior to departure to the Maldives from the first port of embarkation en-route to the Maldives. Children below one year old are exempt from the requirement of the PCR test.

Under much hardship, with the strength and support of the entire industry, the Maldives continues to adapt to a rapidly changing global travel environment in order to consistently provide a world class tourism product for our visitors.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Maldives Launches Art Competition Titled “Thasveeru: Maldives Through Art”



Visit Maldives launches an international art competition titled, “Thasveeru: Maldives Through Art” for the first time on July 15, 2021. The main aim of the competition is to promote the natural beauty of the Maldives by showcasing local and international talent through

art. It also hopes to inspire not only the international art community, but discerning travelers across the world to discover the unique beauty of the destination.

The competition invites local and international artists to paint and interpret the Maldives under the theme, “Celebration of Nature: Beautiful Ecosystems”, in collaboration with the Maldivian Artist Community (MAC). The

theme was selected to show that Maldives has a diverse range of natural habitats and offers more than the award-winning beaches it is known for. The competition accepts paintings, digital art, and mixed media as the mediums for the submitted artworks. All submissions

are to be submitted to Visit Maldives through the specially created microsite for the art competition (thasveeru.visitmaldives.com).

Out of all the submissions, the 12 best artworks (6 international and 6 local) will be selected by an independent judging panel based on creativity, concept, originality, completion and the fluency of the chosen medium. The 12 artworks will be posted on the Visit Maldives’ official Instagram page. The final winners are selected based on 50% of Instagram likes and 50% of the total score given by the judging panel for the artwork. The competition will select a total of 4 winners (2 international and 2 local). The 1st winner and 2nd winner from both the international and local category will win a cash prize of \$3000 (MVR 46,350) and \$2000 (MVR 30,900) respectively. The selected artworks will be used in the future promotional activities of Visit Maldives.

During the campaign period, the artworks of local artists, art murals in

local islands and artworks in various resorts of the destination are also promoted on the official social media handles of Visit Maldives. This is to provide further exposure to the artistic interpretations of the destination. A “like-and-share” contest will also be held on the Instagram page within the period and random winners will win a Maldives goodie bag.

The competition is a unique initiative launched for the first time under the social media strategies of Visit Maldives in order to promote the destination as a top choice for travelers in the global market and increase engagement on the Visit Maldives social media platforms. Additionally, it empowers the local artist community and utilises a variety of creative mediums to highlight the awe-inspiring beauty of the destination and its natural ecosystems.

To take part in or learn more about the competition, please visit thasveeru.visitmaldives.com. The final date for submission is August 15, 2021 before 12 PM. Visit Maldives looks forward to receiving the unique visions of the destination through the eyes of both local and international artists around the world.



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NEW OPENINGS

Naladhu Private Island Maldives to Relaunch in November 2021 with an Impressive New Look



Naladhu Private Island, the exclusive luxury island resort in the Maldives, has closed for six months for a complete renovation and is due to relaunch in November with an impressive new look and feel. The resort will undergo a total redesign with all the public areas and accommodation included in the renovation and the resort's top suite, the Two Bedroom Pool Residence, will reopen with its own 20m private beach. The island is located on the edge of a pristine lagoon in the South Malé Atoll, just 30 minutes by luxury speedboat from Velana International Airport.

Home to just 20 keys, Naladhu offers the ultimate in privacy and seclusion for the most discerning guests. The resort is being redesigned by New York based designer Yuji Yamazaki, with new sleeker furniture throughout and a lighter colour palette creating a modern colonial South East Asian look. Yamazaki has focussed on maximising the number of spots around the houses where guests can have a moment of pause, ranging from ocean-side seating for breakfast to pre-dinner cocktails on the chaise longue overlooking the pool. The restaurant, bar, wine cellar and gym are among the public areas receiving a complete new look.

The resort's two categories of 'Houses', each with 300 sqm of living space, are surrounded by tropical vegetation and invite a total immersion in nature. The Beach House with Pool has direct access to the white sands and lagoon, whilst the Ocean House with Pool and Private Beach Cabana has a large terrace with panoramic ocean view, in addition to its own dedicated cabana, where guests can relax on their superking-sized day bed and enjoy drinks, snacks or lunch served by their butler, to be known as a Kuwaanu.

The guest experience at Naladhu will be totally bespoke. The Kuwaanu, deriving from storyteller in

Dhivehi the Maldivian language, will be at their disposal 24 hours a day, both as their guide and to provide services ranging from unpacking or serving early morning coffee to organising a private island picnic. The resort will also be introducing some new experiences, including a snorkelling tour with the in-house marine biologist to see some of the 2,000 species of tropical fish and sea mammals and to understand more about the coral conservation programme.

The jewel in the resort's crown is the 600 sqm Two Bedroom Pool Residence. Sleeping up to six guests, this vast space guarantees both privacy and quality time with loved ones. The Residence benefits from both sunrise and sunset views, with its pool and large deck facing the ocean, along with loungers, alfresco dining area and a swing, and its new private beach offering direct access to the lagoon.

The resort will be expanding their no-menu dine anywhere concept, enabling guests to choose their favourite dishes and dining spots round the clock - whether it's in The Living Room with views over the lagoon, a Champagne floating breakfast in the pool or moonlight midnight snacks on the beach. The chefs are experienced in cuisines from around the globe ranging from Arabic to Italian, French to Sri Lankan or Japanese to Indonesian.

As part of the sustainability programme, Naladhu has started working with Parley Air to reduce marine plastic pollution and recycle plastic waste



and all single use plastic has been banned on the island. In addition, all the resort's old furniture has been donated to the Maldives' only hospital for mental health.

Naladhu Private Island will be renewing its focus on wellness with a new dedicated spa treatment area including a double treatment room and bathing and changing area and the introduction of a resident Naturopath and Nutritional Therapist. Guests are offered the opportunity to focus on their nutrition to help overcome stress, sleep issues and unhealthy eating patterns as well helping with immunity, digestion, weight management, hormones, skin and blood sugar balance.

Naladhu Private Island's General Manager Giles Selves said: "This substantial investment will ensure that Naladhu Private Island continues to be one of the most exclusive private islands in the Maldives. The resort already has a significant number of repeat guests, and I have no doubt the new-look Naladhu will entice many new travellers to experience the privacy, seclusion and bespoke personalised service that it's renowned for."

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IN THE NEWS

Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Maldives Pays Courtesy Call on Minister Mausoom



The Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Maldives, H.E. Matrek Abdullah Al-Ajalin Aldosari has paid a courtesy call on Minister of Tourism, Dr Abdulla Mausoom.

During the meeting held at Ministry of Tourism, Minister Mausoom and Ambassador Aldosari shared greetings and discussed tourism cooperation between Maldives and Saudi Arabia.

Following the lift of travel suspension of Saudi citizens to travel abroad, the national flag carrier of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, SAUDIA commenced four weekly services to Maldives on May 24, 2021.

Maldives holds close bilateral relationship with Saudi Arabia and has received financial and work support from the middle western country on various occasions.

SSI Maldives Conducts Lifeguard Training Course

At the beginning of this year, the Maldivian Ministry of Tourism announced a new regulation to be implemented by all tourist establishments by September 2021. This regulation should provide visitors to the Maldives with additional safety by making swimming and watersports activities safer with lifeguards on duty.

In preparation for this regulation, the General Manager for Sun Siyam Diving, SSI Instructor Trainer Koen Zuurbier, along with SSI Assistant Instructor Trainer and base leader of Sun Siyam Diving Olhuveli Ibrahim Mohamed (Jackie), attended on and completed their SSI Beach Lifeguard instructor training on an intensive five-day SSI Lifeguard course. The ultimate goal is to have lifeguards on site at swimming facilities around the Sun Siyam Resorts islands as well as a designated "Lifeguard on Duty" beach zone in a bid to make swimming and in-water recreation at their resorts safer.

The course, conducted by SSI Area Manager for the Maldives, Lifeguard Instructor Trainer and ex-paramedic Martin Langenberg, started with a grueling swim test of 400 meters, an underwater swim of 15 meters, and a rescue approach swim of 50 meters to make sure that the candidates are up to a swimming standard necessary to

be able to save lives in the water.

Upon passing the swim test, the course continued on with a combination of theoretical and practical training in and out of the water to first give them the knowledge on recognizing and responding to problems that can arise at the pool or beach. Once they had passed the requirements to become beach lifeguards the additional training to bring them up to SSI Lifeguard Instructors began. Due to their current levels within the SSI system this instructor training was a small step for them as they already have a very good knowledge of the SSI teaching philosophy - Comfort through repetition.

"It's amazing that in a country made of islands and surrounded by water there was never a regulation to have lifeguards on duty until now!" said Koen Zuurbier, SSI Instructor Trainer. To allow for a wider range of inclusivity of candidates, SSI put in a lot of effort early this year to get the SSI Lifeguard and React Right (first aid & CPR, Oxygen provider & AED) courses translated into the Maldivian native language of Dhivehi. This is a great new career opportunity for local youth looking for work in the tourism industry.





CERTIFICATE 4 IN MARINE OPERATIONS

PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

The overall aim of the course is to prepare students to work as responsible, competent and reliable junior officers on international seagoing ships, in accordance with the International Standards of Training and Certification for Watchkeeping (STCW) Code 1978 as amended. This programme will enable students to identify problems and generate workable solutions to a range of routine problems, and understand when further guidance is required as well as develop the appropriate knowledge, skills and behaviours that will enable the student to work professionally, competently and responsibly as part of a team, undertaking routine ship operations.

CAREER OPPORTUNITIES

- + Navigational Watch keeping Officer on international seagoing ships
- + Prospective careers in Shipping and Maritime Transportation Companies, Ship/Boat yards, Sea Ports

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS (NOTE: FOR CRITERIA 3 AND 4 LETTER OF ELIGIBILITY IS REQUIRED FROM MALDIVES TRANSPORT AUTHORITY)

- + Successful completion of Lower Secondary Education Completion of Key Stage 4 (Grade 10) of the Maldives National Curriculum Framework OR
- + Attainment of a Level 3 qualification in a related field; OR
- + Completion of grade 7 and 18 years of age and demonstration of 1 year experience in the maritime industry in an interview; OR
- + Have approved seagoing service of not less than 12 months as part of an approved training programme which includes onboard training that meets the requirements of section A-II/1 of the STCW Code and is documented in an approved training record book, or otherwise have approved seagoing service of not less than 36 months. During the period of sea service, the candidate is required to complete 6 months of bridge watch keeping under the supervision of a certified officer.



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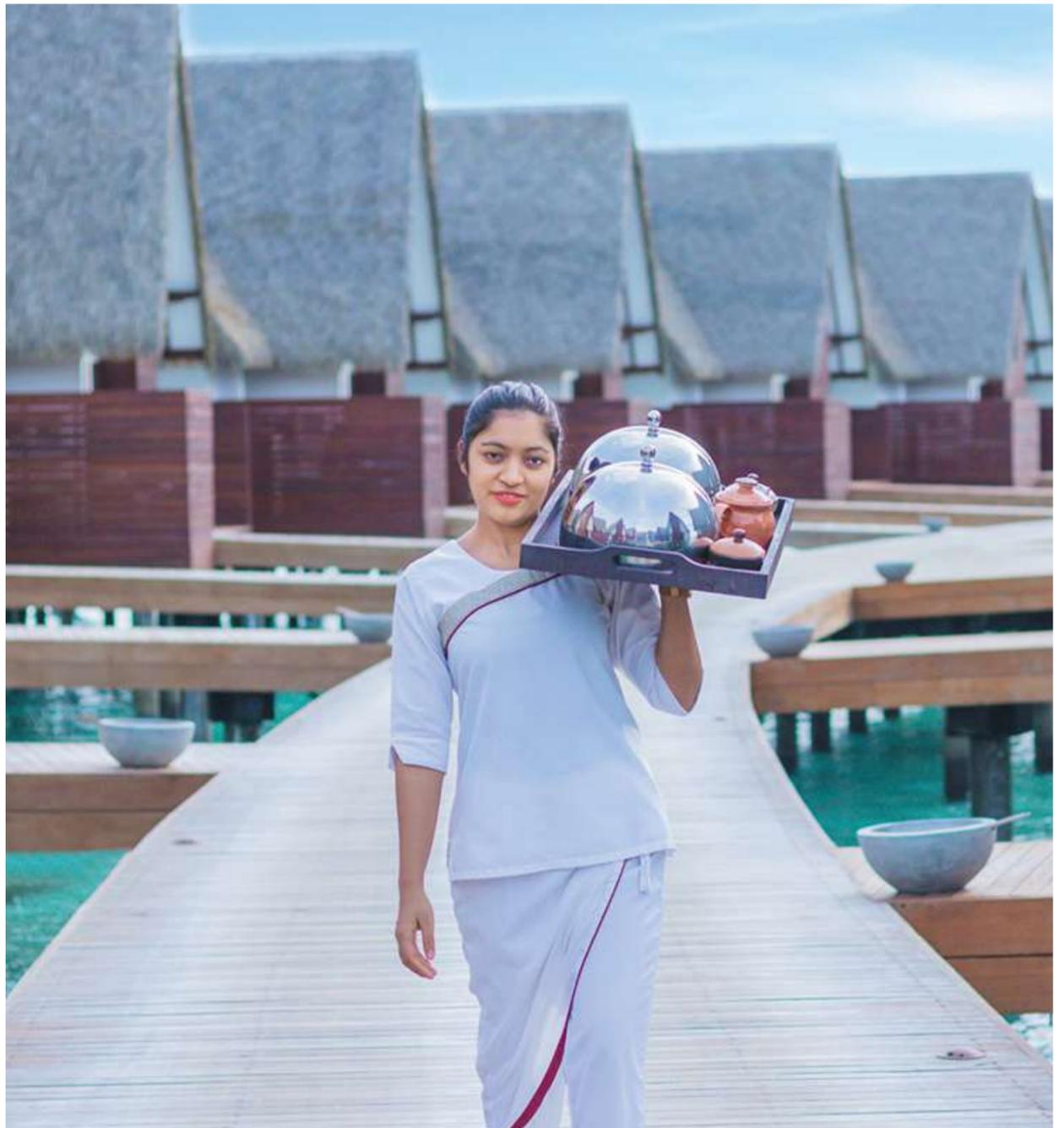
90% Employees Fully-Vaccinated at Heritance Aarah & Adaaran Resorts

As part of its efforts to enhance guest safety, Heritance Aarah and Adaaran Resorts reveals 90% of its ground staff has received the first and second dose of COVID-19 vaccine. This is in line with the heightened health and safety practices adhered to as part of Aitken Spence Hotels.

Susith Jayawickrama, Managing Director, Aitken Spence Hotels Group said, "As we continue to combat the challenges posed by the surprising intruder that has unsettled the world - COVID-19, we are inspired to make our resorts a safe haven for our guests. This optimism is carried through at all our hotels and resorts, as we welcome you back, with open arms and heartfelt smiles."

According to the Aitken Spence Group, the well-being of its guests and associates will be of top priority as various stringent measures have been implemented to enact elevated precautionary operational protocols that address heightened health and safety, to give their guests peace of mind regarding future stays. These protocols are based on international and local health and safety guidelines and have been enhanced by in-house experts to provide guests a safe environment.

Adaaran Resorts under Aitken Spence operates five properties in the Maldives, which includes Adaaran Club Rannalhi, Adaaran Prestige Vadoo, Adaaran Select Hudhuran Fushi, Adaaran Select Meedhupparu and Adaaran Prestige Water Villas. Whereas sister subsidiary, Heritance Resorts operates Heritance Aarah.



Maavarulu Airport Celebrates One Year of Passenger Operations

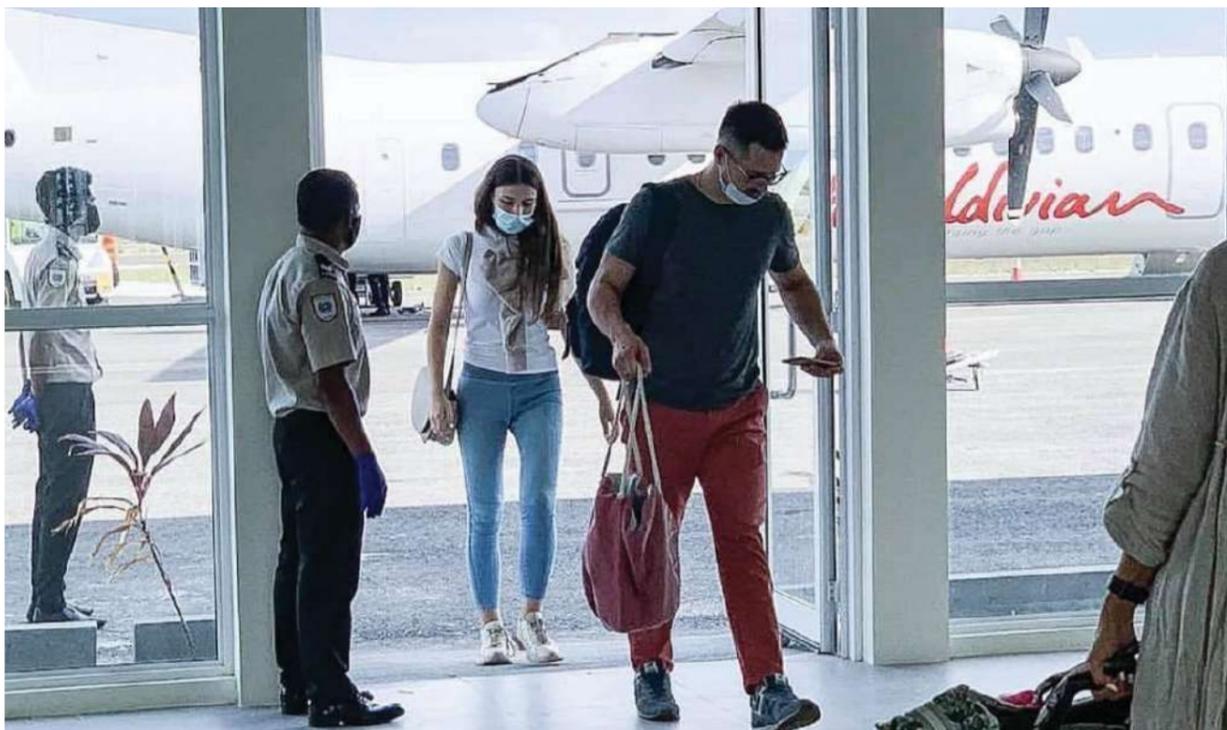
Maavarulu Airport has celebrated one year of scheduled passenger operations.

Maldivian operated first test flight to Maavarulu Airport on March 11, 2021, following the completion of the project after several delayed situations due to contract amendments.

The domestic airport officially commenced passenger flights on July 4, 2020. Since then, Maldivian national airline, Maldivian has been operating scheduled weekly services to Maavarulu Airport.

Maavarulu Airport is the 3rd and latest airport developed in Gaafu Atoll, providing the locals and guests with easier connection across the atolls of Maldives.

Gaafu Atoll boasts some the most exquisite diving locations and immaculate natural splendor including surf spots which attracts tourists all year round.



IN THE NEWS

Reward Points Bonanza for Border Miles Members in July

During two of the most festive local celebrations in the Maldives, members of the Maldives Border Miles earned bonus 30 points by visiting the Maldives, from 19th July 2021 till the end of the month. Members will be rewarded with 10 points for visiting on Eid Festival and another 20 points as a sessional bonus (visiting Maldives between 1st June and 31st August of each year).

The key purpose of this unique loyalty program is to promote and enable exciting opportunities for visitors to explore the Maldivian culture. Eid celebrations are festival times in the Maldives celebrated twice in each Islamic year, Eid ul-Fitr and Eid ul-Adha. With that in mind, members of Maldives Border Miles could earn additional points by visiting Maldives to experience these occasions.

Eid ul-Adha celebration is considered one of the major festive times in Maldives, during which local communities gather together for cultural events and huge feasts to make this local occasion a memorable one. There are a great number of folklores in the Maldivian history and culture that provides beguiling stories about magic, spirits, devils, monsters and sorcerers which are also depicted in roleplays, movies and even in books.

Other than that, eid celebrations allow locals living in the capital city Male' to escape from the heat and travel to local islands or their island homes where they visit family and friends. The day is started with the biggest gathering for Eid prayers followed by visiting

family and friends to greet them. Teenagers and youth engage themselves in activities such as 'Fenkulhi', another unique tradition where everyone splash colored water on each other and run around hiding within the island. Each household prepares a special feast for this occasion and invite neighbors, family and friends to dine at their homes. The day is filled with traditional games and usually ended with stage shows and other activities.

Among all, 'Bodu Mas' also known as big fish game is an anticipated celebration of the occasion, where a fisherman attempts to catch a giant fish made of braided coconut palm leaves. Apart from that, 'Maali Neshun' a traditional form of dance is performed by a group of individuals dressed as evil spirits and ghosts. This tradition is based on an old folktale where a Bodu Mas (a large fish) and Maali (ghosts) emerged from the water and battle to catch this fish. The people are claimed to have succeeded with the help of a holy man after a hard fight.

Bodu Mas is celebrated in combination with 'Koadi Kendun' (the cutting down of a wooden pole). Men from island gather to decorate the 'Koadi', a wooden stick made from a coconut palm and adorned with coconut palm leaves. The Koadi is then brought out in the evening and a cultural dance is performed around

it, wearing costumes made of coconut palm leaves and paint. Women will snatch the Koadi from there and will hide it from men somewhere in the top of a tree, with the help of a man whose identity will be hidden from the rest of the men in the island. After that, men are asked to find it and if they are unable to do so by the next morning, the man who helped in hiding the Koadi is rewarded with a seabath and a magnificent feast by all women of the island. As such, it will be a great idea to visit Maldives and explore the culture during Eid Festival.

Though the visitors will have the best experience of the festival by staying at a local island, resorts also celebrate the festivals mostly with Bodu Mas, Bodu Beru and some cultural games. Border Miles Members will also have the opportunity to earn extra points by staying with the partners of the program.



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BON APPÉTIT

Fired Octopus

(with warm hash potato salad, crème fraiche, boiled egg and arugula)



According to Bir Yadav, Executive Chef at Dhigali Maldives, the Maldives and Mumbai have been immensely special to him throughout his culinary expedition. His cuisine is a concoction of the flavors that he inherited from these places. He loves to do light and refreshing new-world cuisine with a blend of subtle spices, tropical fruits, aromatic herbs and quality produce.

"Octopus is unique in its flavor, texture and appearance and that's what I love about it."

Warm potato salad Ingredients:

- New potato 1 no. (around 60 g)
- Red onion (chopped) 10 g
- Tomato (chopped) 10 g
- Chili Green (chopped) 2 g
- Fresh coriander (chopped) 5 g
- Fresh Lime wedges 1 no.
- Maldon Sea Salt 1 g
- Table salt for potato

Method:

- A. Wash potato, rub it with some salt and char it on the flame for smokey flavor. Once nicely charred, cook further in the combi oven at 150*c if required.
- B. Once the potato is nicely cooked, take off the skin and crush it with fork.
- C. Add chopped seasonings, salt and squeeze lime to finish the salad. Keep aside in warm place.

Crème Fraiche Ingredients:

- Whipped Crème Fraiche 20 g
- Finely chopped Garlic chives 2 g
- Sarawak pepper (for seasoning)
- Maldon Sea salt (for seasoning)

Method:

In a small bowl, mix garlic chives with the whipped crème fraiche, season with cracked Sarawak pepper and sea salt.

Arugula salad Ingredients:

- Cleaned and washed Arugula 5 g
- Candied Cherry Tomato 10 g
- Lemon vinaigrette 2 ml

Method:

Make salad with Arugula, tomato, and Lemon vinaigrette.

Final touch:

Grill the marinated octopus on a nicely heated Charcoal grill and serve it on the warm plate assembled with warm potato salad, crème fraiche, boiled egg and salad. Bon Appetit.

Octopus Ingredients:

- Octopus tentacles 300 g
- Sarawak pepper (for seasoning)
- Cracked freshly roasted cumin a pinch
- Paprika a pinch
- Maldon sea salt (for seasoning)
- Lime wedges 2 no.
- Olive Oil 5 ml

Method:

- A. Clean and wash octopus under running water, please ensure the beak and eyes are taken off along with the black ink sac.
- B. Take a deep heavy bottom pan place octopus submerged in cold water and bring it to boil.
- C. Once the stock starts boiling bring down the temperature to simmering and cook till the octopus is tender but not over cooked (should take around 30 minutes from simmering point).
- D. Once cooked, lightly cool it with water bath and pat dry it before seasoning with sea salt, cracked pepper, cracked roasted cumin, squeezed lime wedges, paprika and olive oil. Keep aside.

6 Minutes Boiled Egg Ingredients:

- French farmed egg 1 no.
- Table salt (for boiling the egg)
- Sarawak pepper (for seasoning)
- Maldon Sea salt (for seasoning)

Method:

- A. Boil the egg for 6 minutes, to keep the yolk runny and luscious.
- B. Once perfectly boil, place it in the cold water till it cools down and peel of the shell.
- C. Cut it into halves, season with cracked Sarawak peppercorn and sea salt, Keep aside.



Courtesy of
Executive Chef Bir Yadav
Dhigali Maldives



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Frankly Speaking

Government has provided support with additional Covid-19 related financial aid to the tourism industry. But the current loan schemes are very strict on the requirements which prevents companies that are in dire need of them. As per the industry, it may be ideal for companies who do not have loans and would not want to take a loan on a low interest. Do you think that the industry needs easier access to finance and at a lower rate to revive and sustain or the procedures are fine?



Mohamed Firaq
Managing Director
Inner Maldives Holidays

This kind of loans will never been and will help us. To Support for businesses like travel agents should include amendments to the eligibility for the Work Sharing Program, which provides benefits to workers who agree to reduced normal working hours; a temporary wage subsidy equal to 10% of the remuneration paid during that period for small employers; more than such ,of additional support, largely targeted to SMEs; tax deferrals; lowering the Domestic Stability Buffer to allow local banks to inject more money of additional lending; subsidy for businesses; up to 50% lending for SMEs; stable funding to banks and mortgage lenders to continue lending; and providing up to eligible financial institutions to provide Government-guaranteed and funded interest-free loans to small businesses. That's how we can come up. Loans are not an option always.



Ahmed Afrah
President, National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM)
Managing Director, Canopus Maldives

The biggest barrier for businesses in Maldives is the difficulty in getting access to finance. The current facilities available from commercial banks are at a very high rate, with high mortgage requirements, and with a very difficult process.



Abdulla Nasheed
President
Guesthouse Association of Maldives

I feel that the criteria are very strict and many are unable to go through this.



Mirsaad Mohamed
Managing Director
Travel Connection Maldives

Support to SMEs who have suffered due to covid lockdown should have easy way to access to those loan with less barriers. Lot of SMEs have suffered loss and are not able to fulfill many of the financial requirements of the banks in vogue during normal situation. So government should bring easy way to access funds if the intention is to rescue the industry.



Abdulla Salih
Managing Director
Damas Group

The industry and the economy too, badly need easier access to finance and lower rates of interest



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