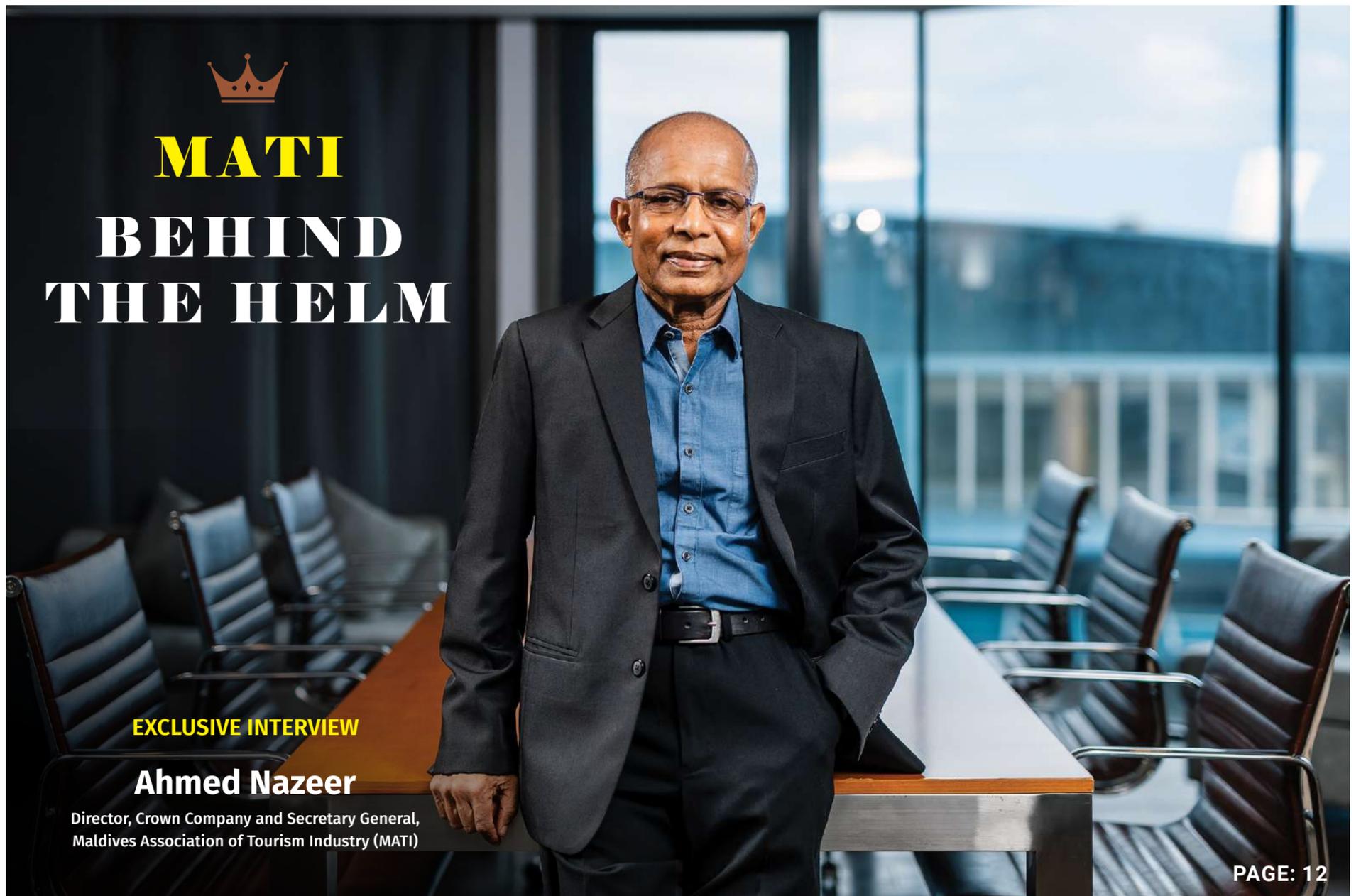


The islandchief

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Dear Readers,

WELL, IT IS FINALLY happening: Barriers to business travel are coming down - and about time too. The Red List has shrunk to nothing, testing requirements have been simplified and what a joy it is to land in a destination once more. Granted, the actual business of flying, navigating airports and steering through the minefield of coronavirus travel requirements is a serious faff. But when you remove your mask in the comfort of a hotel room and a vibrant city, an island hideaway or a luxe resort is just beyond the doorway, waiting to be explored, all the hassle seems worthwhile.

Airlines are ramping up their schedules, TMCs are rehiring and we've even seen a few new ones launch since our last issue. Couple that with all the industry conferences, awards, meetings and dinners that have been coming thick and fast (you'll find the highlights in this issue) and it feels like we're finally coming out the other side.

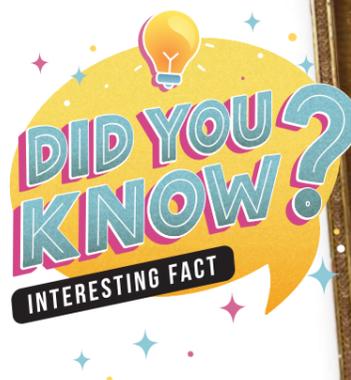
But, thankfully, all corners of the industry appear to be in agreement that we don't want things to go entirely back to the way things were. This is our chance to do things better and strong themes are emerging: making travel count, preserving work/life balance, duty of care and protecting traveler wellbeing.

In this year's final issue of the Islandchief, for the Bon Appetite section on page 22, we have Chef Richard A.Thompson bringing a truly magical meal, the recipe for Key West Onion-Crusted Prawn with Cuban Lentil Salad and Orange Habanero. We also have, Ahmed Nazeer, Director, Crown Company and Secretary General of Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) telling us the inspirational journey of how he began his own boutique shop to launching his own travel brand that transformed into one of the country's most renowned travel companies. He tells us about his extraordinary journey.

We all heard the pledges of our political and business leaders who gathered in Glasgow for COP26. Our industry, like many others, knows it must tackle sustainability head on. With this in mind, we're stepping up a gear with our sustainability coverage, with expert opinions on Frankly Speaking on page 8.

As we approach the end of what has been another challenging year, we hope you share our optimism for 2022. We're starting from near zero and that brings exciting opportunities. We can enjoy our new freedoms but we won't be taking anything for granted.

Enjoy the read!
The islandchief Team



MEDHU ZIYAARAIY SHRINE

Arranged close to the incomparable Hukuru Miskiiy in Maldives, Medhu Ziyaaraiy is the burial chamber of the renowned Morocco scholar Abdul Barakat Yoosuf Al Barbary. The burial chamber is a symbol of harmony which triumphs among the Maldivian populace. The Moroccan scholar is also credited for the arrival of Islam in the Maldives during 1153 AD.

As indicated by fables, Abdul Barakat Yoosuf Al Barbary helped individuals of the Maldives dispose of the sea demon to escape from whose anger, each month, a virgin young lady was left alone for him in the sanctuary, just to be tracked down dead the next day. As Abdul Barakat liberated the Maldivians from the dread of the evil spirit Rannamaari, the king consented to change himself and his people over to Islam. From that point forward, Maldivians visit Medhu Ziyaaraiy to extend regard towards Abdul Barakat for he illuminated their lives with the light of Islam.

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Win the Opportunity of a Lifetime with Qatar Airways “Fly and Win” Campaign



The new ‘Fly and Win’ campaign from Qatar Airways and Hamad International Airport, will offer passengers flying with the award-winning airline the opportunity to become a USD millionaire, experience the trip of a lifetime to the Maldives on a Qatar Executive private jet or sit behind the wheel of brand-new Porsche car.

To enter the raffle, passengers simply need to have enrolled into Privilege Club, the Qatar Airways Loyalty programme, and flying anywhere on the airline’s expanding network through Hamad International Airport, recently ranked as the World Best Airport by Skytrax.

For every ticket purchased and used between November 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022 on qatarairways.com or through a travel agency, passengers will have the chance to win one of the following prizes (Terms & conditions apply):

- USD 1 million
- Private jet experience with Qatar Executive to the Maldives with accommodation
- A new Porsche car

With these incredible prizes, there are even more reasons to fly with Qatar Airways. In addition to being voted the World’s Best Airline and the World’s Best Airport, both the airline and the airport have received Skytrax Five Star COVID Safety Ratings in recognition of their biosafety efforts to protect passengers and staff during the pandemic. Enter now at qatarairways.com / win and one winner for each prize will be drawn and announced in Feb 2022.

A multiple award-winning airline, Qatar Airways was announced as the ‘Airline of the Year’ by the international air transport rating organization, Skytrax, in addition to securing five additional awards including World’s Best Business Class, World’s Best Business Class Airline Lounge, World’s

Best Business Class Airline Seat, World’s Best Business Class Onboard Catering and Best Airline in the Middle East. The airline continues to stand alone at the top of the industry having now won the main prize for an unprecedented sixth time (2011, 2012, 2015, 2017, 2019 and now 2021). The airline’s hub, Hamad International Airport (HIA), was also recently recognized as the ‘Best Airport in the World 2021’, ranking at number one in the Skytrax World Airport Awards 2021.

In addition to this, Qatar Airways is the first global airline in the world to achieve the prestigious 5-Star COVID-19 Airline Safety Rating by Skytrax. This follows the success of Hamad International Airport (HIA) as the first airport in the Middle East and Asia to be awarded a Skytrax 5-Star COVID-19 Airport Safety Rating. These awards provide assurance to passengers around the world that the airline’s health and safety standards are subject to the highest possible standards of professional, independent scrutiny and assessment. For full details of all the measures that have been implemented on board and at HIA, please visit qatarairways.com/safety.



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ACROSS THE SKIES

Maldivian Commences Direct Flights Between Maafaru and Delhi

National airline, Maldivian has commenced operation of direct flights between Maafaru and Delhi starting November 4, 2021. The airline has scheduled 3 weekly flights to Maafaru Airport via its A320 and A321 aircrafts on Wednesdays, Fridays and Sundays.

With this new route set most-closest to the resorts located in the Northern region of Maldives, the direct flight will save on time and cost for passengers who had initially taken the option of travelling to their final destination via a domestic airline or a seaplane transfer.

Located in Noonu Atoll, Maafaru International Airport opened in 2019 is managed by Island Aviation Services Limited (IAS). As the atoll is home to several high-in-demand resorts and guesthouses, the new connection is expected to promote a surge in tourist arrivals from the targeted market.

Bird Travels, the airline management sub-company



of Bird Group is the General Sales Agent (GSA) appointed for Maldivian.

Speaking on the new route back in September, Vijay Bhatia, President, Bird Group said "We are

delighted to launch this new service connecting New Delhi with Maafaru. This direct flight will offer the fastest connection for Indian travelers looking to holiday in North Maldives luxury resorts".

SriLankan Airlines Strengthen Maldives Service with London- Male & Gan Direct Flights



SriLankan Airlines, the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance has expanded Maldives operations and the first London-Male' direct flight at Velana International Airport on 06th November 2021 and resumed operations to picturesque Gan Island in Addu Atoll of Maldives on 4th December 2021.

SriLankan Airlines announced that they will be operating 02 London-Male' direct flights a week with flight departing from London on Friday evening will arrive at Male' Saturday morning and Sunday evening departure to arrive at Monday morning. Male'-London flights are scheduled for Friday Morning and Sunday Morning accordingly. Due to non-availability of suitable slots at VIA; in order to increase more direct flights between London and Male', SriLankan has added afternoon UL115 flights from Colombo which will give immediate connection to London-Colombo service.

SriLankan Airlines also confirmed that they will operate weekly, with flight UL119 departing at 10:40 AM every

Saturday from Colombo to Gan, which would return from Gan at 13:05PM on the same day. Colombo-Gan-Colombo service will be code shared with Qatar Airways which would boost the global opportunity to increase traffic to the southern Region. Gan offers a distinct, off the beaten path experience to visitors. The island not only has pristine White sandy beaches, which Maldives is famous for, but lush greenery and opportunities to experience the local culture and its people. Travelers can enjoy day excursions to Addu Nature Park to see Maldivian wildlife or smaller, neighboring islands in addition to fishing trips; dolphin cruises; diving; snorkeling; surfing; canoeing; jet skiing; and paddle boarding. Tourists seeking a more luxurious getaway can easily transfer to nearby Gaafu atoll that has ten branded luxury properties.

In December 2016, SriLankan became the first and only international carrier to operate direct flights to Gan allowing travelers to fly direct to the Island and save on

time and money otherwise spent if travelling via Male'. Male' and Gan have been two of the most preferred holiday destinations in SriLankan's network for luxury holiday travelers from Europe, the Middle East and the Far East. The Airline was compelled to cease operations to Gan temporarily in March 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic but will reclaim its title as the only international carrier to fly direct to Gan with the resumption of flights this December.

SriLankan Airlines Chairman, Ashok Pathirage said, "We look forward to restarting operations to Gan, and being the only international airline once again to fly direct to this underserved travel destination. We are anticipating a relatively greater demand for flights to Maldives in the coming months with the relaxation of travel restrictions, and Gan is ideal for those seeking something atypical to the standard Male' experience," he added.

Travelers from London; Frankfurt; Paris; Doha; Dubai; and Dammam who choose to book with SriLankan to travel to Gan will benefit from a direct and hassle-free journey owing to convenient connections via Colombo.

"Compared with the same period last year, SriLankan Airlines has been gradually expanding operations by introducing new destinations, increasing flight frequencies to existing destinations and restarting flights to destinations such as Gan. Maldives has always been a premier leisure travel destination, and SriLankan will be the only international carrier to operate scheduled flights to two points in Maldives and we were also the only international carrier to continue operations to Male' without any disruptions even during the pandemic," said SriLankan Airlines Head of World Wide Sales and Distribution; Dimuthu Tennakoon.

IN A NUTSHELL

Mercure Maldives Kooddoo Becomes the First Ultra All-Inclusive Mercure Island Resort Worldwide



Maldivian flavours on Fridays as well as daily afternoon tea.

The generosity doesn't stop here. The longer guests stay, the more benefits which are on offer. Those who stay from five to seven nights can pick one excursion and one activity to experience during their stay, whereas guests staying for eight days or more are able to choose two. Excursions include sunset fishing, a dolphin cruise, or guided snorkelling along the house reef.

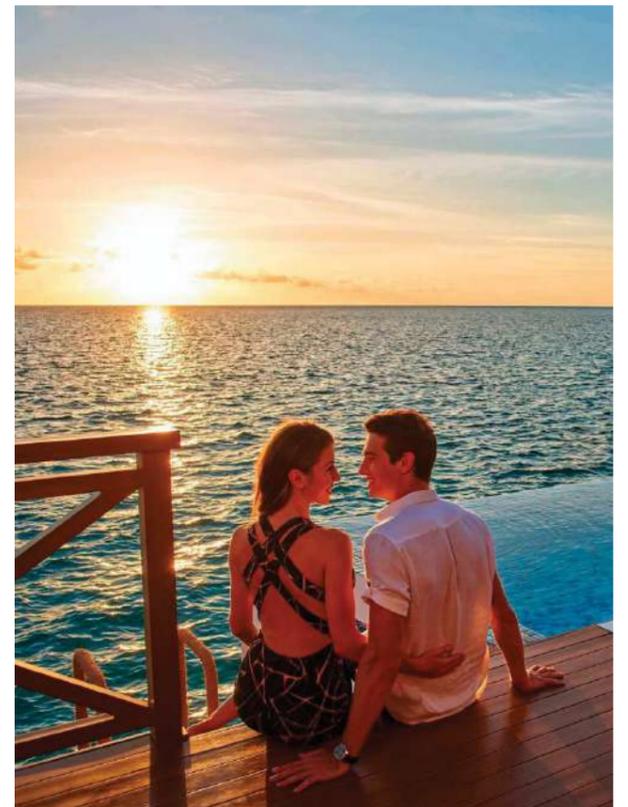
One of the hardest decisions is what activity to choose. There is the option of enjoying a relaxing spa treatment at the resort's Suvadiva Spa, experiencing an adrenaline rush on a jet ski or heading into the hidden depths of the ocean with the resort's five-star PADI Dive Centre to witness the Indian Ocean's mesmerising and rich marine life.

Mercure, the renowned midscale brand of Accor, is introducing an ultra-all-inclusive concept to the Maldives. Mercure Maldives Kooddoo launches its distinctive new concept from November 1, 2021, with guests invited to indulge in a generous array of dining and beverage offerings at no additional charge, as well as a selected collection of complimentary excursions.

Situated on the lush Kooddoo Island within the southern Gaafu Alifu Atoll, the 70-villa boutique-style resort is inspired by the lively energy of the Maldives. On land, villas are nestled beneath swaying palm trees alongside golden beaches, whilst guests seeking unparalleled views over endless horizons can discover the collection of overwater villas. Visitors to this tropical paradise are treated to an endless array of activities such as diving, jet skiing and paddle boarding, as well as indulgent spa treatments and creative dining concepts.

With the introduction of this all-inclusive concept, guests will be completely spoiled for choice and enjoy peace of mind without additional charges. The benefits include unlimited beverages throughout the stay with 40 international wines on offer, as well as daily buckets of beers – which will be refilled once per day. Guests will also be invited to personalize their minibar upon check-in, based on their preferences.

The resort offers tailored culinary experiences for guests to discover endless spirited flavours. From selecting pizza toppings or favourite pasta dishes at the Italian restaurant to pair with flavourful wines, personalisation is a key highlight of the all-inclusive offerings. Guests can also enjoy a wide variety of international flavours at Alita, the all-day dining restaurant with unobstructed views of the lagoon. As part of Mercure's Discover Local concept, guests can experience authentic



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IN A NUTSHELL

Sheraton Brings People Together Again with New Brand Campaign, “Celebrate the Community”



Sheraton Hotels & Resorts, part of Marriott Bonvoy's portfolio of 30 extraordinary hotel brands, unveils its new brand campaign, “Celebrate the Community”.

The campaign celebrates the communal spirit and invites guests to reconnect and share experiences, reinforcing the brand's commitment to be

“Where the World Comes Together”.

To lift the community spirit, Sheraton invites travelers and locals alike to celebrate the return of human interactions and create meaningful connections. To mark the launch of the campaign, Sheraton created a captivating video starring popular Chinese actress and singer Myolie Wu. Filmed at the newly opened Sheraton Mianyang in China, the video captures the moments of connection and shared experiences with like-minded travelers and guests.

“As the most global brand within the Marriott Bonvoy portfolio, Sheraton has always stood for community, and played a special role in serving and connecting people around the world,” said Jennie Toh, Vice President, Brand Marketing and Brand Management, Asia Pacific, Marriott International. “The pandemic lockdowns have created an increased awareness and appreciation of the importance of social interactions in people's lives. With ‘Celebrate the Community’ campaign, we hope to remind people of the power of collective and that we are better together.”

Russian Actress and Cosmonaut Yulia Peresild Vacations at Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa

After her space flight to the International Space Station (ISS), Yulia Peresild had touched down at Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa in the Maldives for a much-needed break from her busy schedule.

The Russian actress and philanthropist, who is a popular name in TV, movies, and theatre, is the very first actor in the world to become a cosmonaut after her flight to the ISS in early October this year. Her extremely successful career has made her one of the most in-demand actresses in Russia. She is best known for her roles in drama films such as “The Edge”, “The Bride”, and “Captive”. Her breakout role which was her rise to fame is her supporting role in the award-winning movie “In the Fog”.

She has just wrapped up filming for the movie “The Challenge”, to be released in 2022. The Challenge is the first feature-film shot in space. The crew returned to Earth on October 17, having spent nearly 12 days in space.

Following the successful shooting, Yulia is spending a well-deserved break with her family at the

luxuriously spacious and private Hideaway Beach Resort & Spa. This is notably the actress's very first time in the Maldives, and she could not be more excited. Her first Instagram post from the isles credits her dear friend Andrey Burkovskiy with planning the trip. She is captured gleefully walking along the shoreline just as the sun is beginning to set. In addition to that, she also shared on her social media a very interesting aerial photo of the resort island taken by her astronaut friend Pyotr Dubrov all the way out there in space.

Her fans showed their support on her social media and whilst enjoying seeing snaps and glimpses into her Maldivian vacay, they urged her to take care of herself so that she can get a good rest before coming back to be her best. A sentiment echoed by many fans was that they are looking forwards to



what new roles might be in store for future projects that the actress might embark on after her break.

The island's private setting and its curated experiences made possible by impeccable Butler service, makes it the ideal escape for celebrities. Those who have vacationed at the resort include Sharman Joshi, Agata Mucinieci, and Dieter Bohlen. Furthermore, the abundance of marine life around Hideaway is second to none. This makes the resort a prime location for snorkelling and diving.

SriLankan Airlines Appoints Aviation Industry Specialist Richard Nuttall as Chief Commercial Officer



SriLankan Airlines, the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance, has appointed Mr. Richard Nuttall as the Chief Commercial Officer (CCO), effective from November 1, 2021. Mr. Nuttall, an aviation industry specialist with over

three decades of experience, has held various senior management positions at many leading airlines and entities. His expertise and experience range from airline turnaround and growth, strategy development, digital strategy, mentoring, global leadership, revenue

management, network planning, airline distribution and sales.

Mr. Nuttall has a wealth of experience, having held CEO, CCO and board member positions in entities across 5 continents, with an exceptional record of delivering turnaround and driving sustainable growth. Some of the leading stints of his career are; Vice President-Sales of Saudia Airlines, Executive Board Member of Skyteam airline alliance, Chief Commercial and Strategy Officer of Royal Jordanian, Chief Executive Officer of Bahrain Air, Commercial Director of Kenyan Airways, a Board Member of Philippine Airlines and Vice President Sales and Marketing-Americas of Polar Air Cargo Inc.

Under his commercial leadership, Saudia Airlines initiated 'Vision 2020,' a project encompassing product

improvement, major growth and improved profitability, which was able to achieve an overall growth of 30% in three years. During his tenure at Royal Jordanian, the Airline showed an improvement in net income by USD 80 million, achieved through his strategic leadership for senior business personnel and external consultants. Mr. Nuttall has played various advisory roles to consultancies and entities, which includes but not limited to Alvarez & Marsal and Amadeus Saudi Arabia Ltd.

He joins the SriLankan family at a time that the National Carrier has embarked on a progressive journey in supporting the country's tourism revival efforts through connectivity enhancements and promotion of destination Sri Lanka across its extensive global network, on its path to effective and sustainable business recovery.



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

MACL Appoints Darren Williams as New Chief Operations Officer



Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) has announced the appointment of Mr. Darren Williams as its new Chief Operations Officer.

Mr. Williams brings over 20 years of experience in Airport Operations Management, Airport Compliance Management and Airport Services. He joins MACL after spending 10 years at Dubai International Airport, one of the world's busiest International Airports, where he was the VP Airside Operations. He also has extensive UK Airports experience acquired at Aberdeen

International Airport and London Stansted International Airport. More recently he was working as the Director of Operations at a British helicopter operating company, Babcock Mission Critical Services Offshore.

With his extensive knowledge and expertise in Airport Operations Management, Mr. Williams will be a fantastic addition to the company, where his knowledge and experience of capacity constrained airports like Dubai, will be invaluable to VIA and passed on to the wider MACL Airport Operations staff.

As Chief Operations Officer of MACL, Mr. Williams will be responsible for all Airport Operations with a goal to continuously improve the Operational Efficiency and Standards of Customer Services at the airport. He will also work closely with Operational Readiness and Airport Transfer (ORAT) team, to ensure the readiness of the New Terminals and Airside Operations as MACL rolls out its ambitious expansion plans.

Kandolhu Maldives Announces Key Appointments to its Management Team



Kandolhu Maldives has announced the appointment of a new management couple at the forefront of the award-winning island resort. Guillaume Aublet helms the role of Resort Manager while his second-in-command and real-life partner, Monika Angliker takes over as Guest Services Manager.

Born in France, Guillaume is an accomplished hotelier who has garnered over 26 years of experience in a globe-trotting journey across Switzerland, the United Kingdom, Fiji, Seychelles, the Caribbean, and the Maldives. An oenology enthusiast, he has held several positions in F&B operations before advancing to senior management roles. In 2017, he joined Baros Maldives Resort as Executive Resident Manager and then moved on to become the Resort Manager of Vakkaru Maldives

Resort. Prior to his appointment in Kandolhu, he served as General Manager for a luxury island resort and marina accommodation in Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.

remarking about living and working for a small and intimate property, "Kandolhu is exactly the type of property I was looking for. A good size to deliver intimate service while working with a team that you can help and see growing," says Guillaume.

A Swiss national, Monika leads the Front Office team lending her valuable skills in guest service management. She paved her career as a flight attendant for Swissair before changing directions in the hotel sector. She has served as Guest Services Executive and then as Guest Relation Manager in Baros Maldives Resort. With her distinctive vantage in hospitality, she aims to contribute her aptitude in understanding guest expectations to help form memorable and lasting impressions.

Amiable and perceptive, the new island hosts complement the dynamic team of Kandolhu. Together they aim to make unwavering connections and continue steering Kandolhu towards greater heights.

Gili Lankanfushi Appoints New Resort Manager and Director of Food and Beverage



Gili Lankanfushi has announced the appointment of Matthew Senyard as its new Resort Manager and Rodrigo Buanafina as the new Director of Food and Beverage.

Matthew has worked with IHG for the past 14 years in various roles across his native Australia. Prior to his new appointment at Gili Lankanfushi, Matthew worked as the Operations Manager at Crown Plaza Hunter Valley.

At the island, Matthew will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the resort's 45 overwater villas, whilst also working closely to promote the resort's ethos of sustainability, wellness, and barefoot luxury, together with Nicolas Khairallah, the General Manager of the resort.

In his free time, as an active scuba diver,

he will no doubt be looking forward to taking advantage of the Ocean Paradise Dive Centre, located close to world-renowned diving sites including Mantra Point.

The recently promoted Director of Food & Beverage, Rodrigo Buanafina joined the resort in May 2018 and leads a 43-person team to deliver personalized and unique culinary experiences to the resort's guests, including the launch of dining experiences such as a 'Brazilian Churrascaria theme night' and 'Dining for the Senses'.

Rodrigo will continue to enhance the resort's ocean to plate philosophy, looking after the resort's wide variety of dining and destination options, including modern European-Maldivian fusion, Japanese seafood, lantern-lit feasts on the beach, and private sunset cruises.

Welcoming the new appointments, Nicolas Khairallah, General Manager, said: "I am delighted to welcome Matthew to the team and to be able to reward Rodrigo for all of his work over the past couple of years. I am confident that both will contribute to the continued success of the resort, providing guests with a uniquely laid-back experience like no other".

Aminath Hameed Promoted to Chef de Partie – Pastry & Bakery at The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands



The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands has announced the promotion of Aminath Hameed from Demi Chef – Pastry & Bakery to Chef de Partie – Pastry & Bakery effective from November 1, 2021.

Aminath started her career as a Commis one and Chocolatier working in various luxury resorts in the Maldives. Most recently, she worked with Waldorf Astoria

Maldives Ithaafushi as its Commis one Pastry Chef.

She has proven herself multiple times by winning numerous international and national awards. She found her passion for designing, baking and cooking in the early-stage of her childhood and her family has been supportive since. Her flexibility during difficult and challenging times combined with her "CAN DO" attitude brought great success to Pastry Team. Aminath's experience as well as her enthusiasm and keenness to grow has made her ready for the next level of her career.

"We are honoured to have her as part of The Ritz-Carlton Family and we look forward to her future successes and growth in this field," stated The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands.

'GOLD 100 GALA' Successfully Concluded



Mr. Ahmed Rasheed, Founder and Chairman of The Hawks Pvt Ltd

The 5th edition of Corporate Maldives "GOLD 100 GALA" has been held at CROSSROADS Maldives on November 16, 2021.

"GOLD 100 GALA" is an annual invitation-only networking event bringing together top executives of the Maldivian business community. This year, the event was graced by chief guest, His Excellency President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, along with high delegates including ministers, high commissioners, and senior government officials. The event was

attended by chairmen, managing directors, CEOs and key decision makers within the business community of Maldives.

The Platinum Partner for this year's "GOLD 100 GALA" was Bank of Maldives, the largest bank and leading financial institution of the Maldives. Gold partners included Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC), Ooredoo Maldives, Medtech Maldives, The Hawks, Al Shaali Marine Maldives, Housing Development Corporation (HDC), and CROSSROADS Maldives.

Speaking at the event, President Solih highlighted the economic challenges in the country, and underscored the important role played by businesses in sustaining the economy. He further thanked Corporate Maldives, for recognizing and empowering the business sector of the Maldives.

At the GALA function, "GOLD 100" companies were presented with an award & the "GOLD 100" magazine was launched. "GOLD 100" is a list of leading 100 business entities in the Maldives, published by

Corporate Maldives every year. Through a transparent and unbiased selection criterion, "GOLD 100" is devised as a selection of the leading

business entities, rather than a ranking. As such, the list has been published in alphabetical order. Corporate Maldives also awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award to recognize visionary business leaders who have made significant contributions to their respective industry. This year, the two award recipients were the Founder and Chairman of The Hawks Private Limited, Mr. Ahmed Rasheed Hassan, and the Chairman and Managing Director of Bison Maldives, Mr. Abdul Majeed. These gentlemen have been awarded for their businesses and philanthropic activities, which have enhanced the overall development of the Maldivian business community.



Mr. Abdul Majeed, Managing Director of Bison Maldives



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

EVENTS & AWARDS

The Marina at CROSSROADS Maldives to Host its First Trade Expo on December 3, 2021



The Marina at CROSSROADS Maldives hosted its first Trade Expo on December 3, 2021 at the Artificial Beach on Male' City. The event took place from 4:00pm to 9:00pm - and was open to the public.

The objective of The Marina Expo was to promote the CROSSROADS Maldives as a destination HUB for all walks of life - the first extraordinary multi-island and fully integrated lifestyle destination hub offering rich combination of dining options, shopping, recreational & leisure experiences and a lot more. The event definitely provided opportunities between The Marina entrepreneurs and Visitors for networking, discovery and awareness - all converge to explore the objective.

During the event, visitors look forward to a variety of exciting exhibitions from the Retail Outlets (Candy Shop, Compass and Moodhu) entrepreneurs of The Marina - starting from diverse of culinary experiences (Sansation Beach Club, Hard Rock Cafe Maldives, Kinkao, Kebab & Kurry, Jiao Wu, One Waan, Kalhu Odi, Submore, bean/Co at The Marina, Movenpick, Ministry of Crab Maldives, Nihonbashi Blue and Carne Diem Grill by Dharshan, Island Lounge), great value shopping sprees (Raidha's Maldives, Rip Curl, Island Breeze, Sifani and Frella) and to the amazing water sports and marina (Best

Dives and Yacht Marina) with exclusive Marina Concierge Services, The Junior Beach Club and Camp and Len Be Well Spa.

In addition to that, the two premium resorts at CROSSROADS Maldives namely Hard Rock Hotel Maldives and SAii Lagoon Maldives will also showcase its products and services with packages. In terms of sustainability development programs, the Maldives Discovery Center and Marina Discovery Center will facilitate educational presentations during the event. And last but not the least, CROSSROADS Maldives' job fair in one of the exhibition stalls will provide ample of job openings for the local community.

It is expected that a large number of people will visit The Marina Expo. The Marina at CROSSROADS Maldives is open daily from 11:00am to 11:00pm and visitors can book their tickets via the mobile application of CROSSROADS Maldives.

Maldives Living Expo 2021 Concluded Successfully



Maldives Living Expo 2021 concluded successfully with more than 8000 visitors in 3 days at Hulhumalé from 18-20 November 2021.

The 9th Annual Maldives Living Expo was planned and implemented in response to growing demand in housing, lifestyle and condominiums due to the upcoming housing projects whereas the participants believe that it was a great success, with having a good number of target oriented visitors as attendees on each day of the event. Grand Lucky draw prizes and amazing discounts were offered by all the exhibitors during the three days as well.

Key exhibitors of the Maldives Living Expo 2021 included service providers for home and living, real estate, construction and the resort industry (Mohan Mutha Exports Pvt Ltd), Housing Development Corporation who manages the overall planning and building of Hulhumalé, 1 Malaysian property (Space Residency - Linbaq), leading real estate properties in the Maldives (Aquavita Residencies, Blue Haven - RCC, The Creek View - SAS e Glut JV Pvt Ltd, Solitaire - Sandal Mauritius), leading lift providers (Interlifts

- Otis and Aitken Spence Elevators) and leading furniture and fittings service providers (Muni Homecare, Epic Shelter, High End Furniture, Palm Tree Marine, STO, Fahamas, Linkserve, Ooredoo, Refcool, Medianet, Villa Hakatha, Handy Water, Azmyl Design House, Rainbow, D Décor, Trending Home and Maldivian Gas).

Moreover, India's leading block manufacturers Renacon AAC Blocks and Medtech delighted the event with their presence by offering various products for home and living. In addition to this, banking and insurance companies such as Housing Development Finance Corporation (HDFC), Maldives Islamic Bank (MIB), Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives and property management company INM Maldives participated at Maldives Living Expo too.

The Platinum Partner Mohan Mutha Exports Pvt Ltd (India), is joining forces with the Maldives Living Expo for the third consecutive year and the Gold Partner for the Living Expo this year is, Sandal Mauritius. The event is endorsed by the Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure and



Housing Development Corporation (HDC). Medical partner - Medtech to ensure all safety protocols are met and Epic Shelter by Luxe as Supporting Partner. Other partners include, Insurance Partner Allied Insurance Company, Printing Partner Print Lab, Set-up Partner Asaree Services, Sound & Light Partner Official Events, Beverage Partner Coca Cola Maldives, Security Partner Absolute Security & Advance Protection (ASAP), Online Media Partner Adhadhu, ONE Online, Vaguthu, Avas, Haftha and Tho, Photography and Videography Partner Half Court Maldives,

Maldives Living Expo is an annual event targeted for Home, Living and Lifestyle. 10th Edition of Maldives Living Expo will be held during November 2022.

Highrise is among the leading event companies in Maldives, delivering Maldives Living Expo, Vacations Expo, Food & Beverage Show, Print & Advertising Service Show and the South Asian Travel Awards annually. The company has done events in Male', Colombo, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai, Bangalore, Kerala and Mumbai.



REASONABLE PRICE

Maldives Tourism Recovers

As the Maldives recovers from the COVID-19 situation, tourist arrivals to the Maldives bounce back. On 29th October 2021 Maldives reached one million targets. By 24th November 2021 the total arrivals to the Maldives stood at 1.1 million with an increase of over 150% compared with that of 2020. Daily average arrivals remain above 4,700 as of 24th November 2021.

While major markets such as Russia and India made full recovery with strong positive growth rates, new markets emerged from the European Region and the Middle East. As of 24th November 2021, top ten source markets to the Maldives were, India with 22.4% shares, Russia with 18.0% shares, Germany with 7.2% shares, U.S.A with 4.2% shares, United Kingdom with 3.8% shares, Saudi Arabia with 3.1%, Spain with 2.9% shares, Ukraine with 2.8% shares, France with 2.1% shares and Switzerland with 1.9% shares.

Recovering Markets / Regions

From 1st January to 24th November 2021	Arrivals			Growth (%)	
	2019	2020	2021	2021/2019	2021/2020
Kazakhstan	4,022	3,5589	20,834	418.0	485.6
Russia	73,081	43,791	202,276	176.8	361.9
Ukraine	11,453	7,067	31,406	174.2	344.4
Brazil	8,701	4,487	18,170	108.8	304.9
India	141,379	42,069	252,546	78.6	500.3
Saudi Arabia	24,111	7,481	35,452	47.0	373.9
Czech Republic	11,714	5,390	16,612	41.8	208.2
Poland	18,068	6,182	20,495	13.4	231.5
U.S.A	47,048	16,391	47,312	0.6	188.6
Spain	32,441	5,399	32,612	0.35	504.0

Central/Eastern Europe	155,087	86,013	349,318	125.2	306.1
Africa	15,220	4,282	25,593	68.2	497.7
South Asia	164,671	48,026	272,653	65.6	467.7
Middle East	53,671	20,972	81,582	52.0	289.0
East Mediterranean Europe	19,100	4,537	20,491	7.3	351.6
Americas	73,773	26,468	75,985	3.0	187.1

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MATI: BEHIND THE HELM



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

Ahmed Nazeer

Director, Crown Company and Secretary General of Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI)



“ Entrepreneur and outspoken advocate for the tourism industry on a number of critical issues, Ahmed Nazeer first arrived capital Male in 1960 to pursue a better education – from starting a boutique shop to launching a travel brand that transformed into one of the country’s most renowned travel companies.

He tells us about his extraordinary journey. ”

Mr. Nazeer, please tell us about your journey into hospitality and what got you inspired.

I consider myself as very fortunate. That I come from a very humble background, I’m not a person from male’ and my parents brought me to study in male’ way back in 1960. Back then, the education was very basic even in Male’. English was still taught as a second language. Our medium of instruction was still Dhivehi. But soon after I joined Majeedhiyya it all changed. Under the leadership of President Nasir, Majeedhiyya and Aminiya became English medium schools. Teachers were recruited from Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) to teach English, Mathematics, Science subjects, etc. Mr. Hill from Sri Lanka was appointed as the principal of Majeedhiyya School. Mr. Umar Zahir was appointed as the Headmaster of Majeedhiyya School. It was an exciting time to be at Majeedhiyya. Both Schools offered GCE (London) exams. I sat for my ‘O’ Level exams in 1969 and top scored in my batch of students. As a result I got awarded a Government scholarship under Colombo Plan to study in New Zealand. That was in December 1969. At the end of third year of studies in New Zealand I returned to Male’ for a holiday in December 1972. By then Kurumba had just opened as the first tourist resort. I was fortunate to be able to visit Kurumba. Soon I realized the future of Maldives was in tourism. I went back to New Zealand in early 1973 to complete my studies and came back in 1975. I had to serve the Government for 5 years as a scholarship bond. So, I joined Government in 1975 and served the Government for 7 years before leaving the Government in 1983 to start a business privately. During the period from 75 to 83 I had formed a friendship with my future partners who were going to form this company called Crown Company. That was Mr. Afeef, Mr. Saleem and Mr. Ghani. Crown Company was established in May 1983 with four partners. I was made a partner with a free share. I owe a very special thanks to other three partners. We rented a prominent shop called Goldhill at the corner of Chaandhane Magu and Orchid Magu and started a Boutique shop selling high end readymade garments and solar products like solar panels, solar pumps and solar refrigerators.

In early 1984 Government announced Veligandu Island in North Ari Atoll for resort development. We put in a bid and won. That was the start of my journey into tourism. Strangely Veligandu bid was submitted in the name of Mr. Saleem (Crown shareholder) and Mr. Abdulla Mohamed (Dheyliya) who were considered more experienced in resort development that the newly formed Crown Company. We managed to open the resort in December 1984 with 17 rooms. We were the first to introduce open air bathroom concept to resorts. We offered fresh water to all the guest rooms and all rooms were air-conditioned. At that time it was considered a boutique resort even though there were more than 50 operational resorts.

Among your successful projects, can you tell us more about how you established resort and travel agency operations back then? Crown Company, Crown Tours were like no other positioned and performed as role models of the Industry.

In developing the resort we faced many challenges in the form of finding the funds, finding contractors with any experience, finding staff and with transporting materials, supplies, etc to the island. With finance we got support from State Bank of India and some of our friends helped us. SBI gave us a US\$300,000/- loan subject our equity of US\$300,000/-. So, we had to develop the resort with about US\$600,000/-. That was a huge challenge and without the support of our friends we would not have completed the construction in 1984 and opened the resort in 1984. Communication was also a very big challenge as we had no phone service to Ari Atoll. Special radio sets were used to communicate with the resorts. We were fortunate in that we had Mr. Saleem who is an architect and Mr. Ghani who is an electrical engineer and Mr. Afeef was there giving us guidance on construction and finance as he was already heavily involved in tourism. Mr. Saleem was the first qualified Maldivian architect. So it was natural that he will be our architect for Veligandu project. In those days we had very few masons, carpenters, etc. It was a huge challenge to find the right people to do the masonry work; carpentry work; electrical work and even to cook for the contractors. Equally challenging was to find the staff to manage the newly opened resort.

Despite these challenges we managed to open the resort in December 1984 and moved on to open another property in Lhaviyani Atoll in 1988. It was Kuredu. Then in 1993 we opened Rangali Island Resort in South Ari Atoll. Crown Company became a major player in tourism and our foreign tour operators had a lot of confidence in us. As a result we needed to establish a travel agency to support our foreign tour operators. That was how Crown Tours was born.

What were the main stumbling blocks for your startup, especially during the first few years, and what would you do differently from today's perspective?

It was very difficult to do anything during the 70s. Even during the early 80s everything was very basic. Today's young people can't imagine what it was like to carryout resort development in those days. During the early 80s we had to depend on small fishing dhonis for transport. During rough weather it was not possible to use these dhonis for transport. Another challenge was to find the finance required for resort development. There were two banks (SBI and Habib Bank) in the country. Both banks had very limited resources to lend to resort development. There were very few large businesses or people with resources that could help develop resorts. Given all this, I am very surprised to think that Crown Company managed to build a resort in 1984. Finding skilled masons and carpenters was another big challenge. During the early 80s there were only a handful of skilled people. We were fortunate that our shareholders, especially Mr. Saleem and Mr. Ghani played a very active role in the development of Veligandu by being present on the island to supervise the construction staff.

Can you tell something about the business model and how it has changed? Crown stays unchanged among the leading and stable establishments in Tourism Sector.

You have to understand that even though we started as a trading company it was our intention to move into tourism. Once we got the resort in 1984, our business model was based on as a company that owns and operates resorts and we continue to be like this even today. Our involvement in travel, trade was also based on the same philosophy. We started Crown Tours with Mr. Ally Ahmed as a partner in order further develop the tourism in the country. So, our business model has always been to make sure that we do everything to ensure our tourism product is on the right path in moving forward.

What were the main challenges in educating the public and stakeholders about tourism development in early 80s?

As I pointed out earlier the 70s and early 80s were very challenging time in that everything was very basic in those early days of tourism. By the time we developed our resort in 1984 more than 12 years of tourism was behind us. Yet we had very few trained man power to work in a resort. Every resort had to take on unskilled people and train them to be waiters, room attendants, kitchen staff, powerhouse staff, etc. Fortunately in those days new recruits were very keen to learn new trades and they were very enthusiastic about working and living in a resort. This attitude was fundamental in our success in developing and managing resorts in those early days.

A little over a year ago, you emphasized the need for direct flights to source markets as it will be the preferred option in the future (especially after the pandemic). With tourist arrivals figure crossing the 1,000,000-mark, we are inching closer to our tourist arrivals target for 2021. Please share with us your thoughts on the current state of tourism in the Maldives?

Direct flights to all source markets are important for all countries that are heavily dependent on tourism like Maldives. At the moment we enjoy direct flights from India, Turkey and even from European destinations. But we should not forget the services of airlines from the Gulf countries like Emirates, Qatar and Gulf Air serving the Maldives by bringing tourists from Europe. Similarly, Singapore has been serving us for a long time, both as a director flight and as a second carrier. But I would like to see our domestic carrier, Maldivian, playing a bigger role in future in our tourism like Mauritius Air for Mauritius. With our arrivals for this year hitting the 1.2 million mark, the outlook for 2022 is very promising and I look forward to all airlines serving the Maldives to continue to play a vital role in bringing the tourists to this country.

Please share with us your thoughts in the current state of tourism in the Maldives.

Currently I have to say that our tourism is very mature that is world class with a very diverse portfolio of services starting from guest house business, safari business to world-class luxury resorts. Add to this the concept of one island one resort and that completes the picture of tourism in the Maldives. We have very few to offer to our tourists and yet what we have in the

form of sun, sand, beach and the beautiful undersea world appears to be plenty for our visitors to enjoy. We are also very conscious of serving our guests and all tourist establishments are doing a fantastic job of looking after their clients. Food and beverage concepts offered in the high end resorts are now considered world-class and all signs are that we are a mature destination serving the tourists who want to visit this country. But I warn you all not to be complacent about our achievements or else we will lose our status in world tourism.

Which of the challenges of the pandemic you see remaining in the short/mid-term? What about the opportunities the pandemic has brought which Maldives was among the few countries which took the risk as well as the bold step to open up borders?

As we all know the pandemic created lot of restrictions like border closures, social distancing, etc. These were alien to travel trade and yet we had to find solutions to address these issues and attract tourists to this country. I salute the Government and industry stakeholders in making the bold decision to open our borders in July 2020 when the whole world was closed. This bold step played a crucial role in keeping our economy from a total collapse. By now we have overcome the short term and mid-term worries by learning to adapt to do our business in this pandemic and unless the pandemic turn's ugly it is unlikely we will be adversely affected in the near future. Worldwide vaccination programs have helped tourist destinations to open up for business and the travelling public are getting more and more confident in taking a holiday to another destination.

What novelties shall we be expecting for the coming year? What are some of the new strategic directions you are looking at as the nation celebrates golden jubilee of Maldivian Tourism?

2022 is our golden jubilee year of Maldives tourism. The Government and the private sector have great plans to celebrate this event on a grand scale. I am hopeful these activities will have a very positive impact on our tourism as it will draw more and more tourists to this country. These days the dominant players in our resort sector are foreign investors and not locals. This is an indication of the profitability of this sector. That is to say it is still feasible to build new resorts in this country. As a result we are likely to see a lot more luxury resorts being developed in this country and some of these will always come up with a surprise wow factor. The future is looking brighter for our tourism.

Having successfully engaged in numerous tourism development projects, and among the leading figures in spearheading the tourism sector, what advice would you offer to newcomers who want to follow your example?

The number one thing is to have a dream. Next in hard work in trying to achieve your dream. I don't believe in short cuts to getting to be successful in doing anything. The same is true if you want to be successful in the tourism industry. The opportunities are there. Our tourism product is diversified enough to create opportunities to all who want to follow a carrier in tourism starting from being a successful staff to becoming an owner of a tourist establishment. I am convinced hard work will reward all those who want to succeed in being part of our tourism.

NEW OPENINGS

New Resort Under Alila Brand to Open in Raa Atoll



Hyatt's brand offering luxury authentic experiences, Alila Hotels has announced the opening of a new resort located in Raa Atoll of the Maldives. The new addition, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives is expected to make its debut in late 2021.

Prior to Alila's affiliation with Hyatt, the brand opened Alila Maldives Hadahaa in 2009. Not long after in 2011, Hyatt acquired the management of Alila Hotels and the property was renamed to Park Hyatt Maldives Hadahaa. Later in 2018, Hyatt brought the management company of Alila properties, Two Roads Hospitality under its umbrella.

The new resort offering total 80 villas; 36 overwater villas and 44 beachfront villas, will be managed by Hyatt.

Surrounded by a stunning house reef, Alila Kothaifaru Maldives will offer guests serenity and adventure in Raa Atoll, a scenic 45-minute seaplane journey from Malé. Guests will also be offered to venture on dive excursions to Hanifaru Bay, a UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve during their visit to the island amongst many other soon to be announced leisure activities.

Currently, no announcements have yet been made regarding reservations and pricing details of the property. However, we are all keenly waiting for further details to be unveiled as Hyatt pampers guests with utmost hospitality during their escape to an idyllic destination.



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BEST READ

10 Reasons to Visit Maldives in 2022

Looking ahead to 2022, one thing seems clear: Travel is back on the cards. With COVID restrictions easing and vaccination rates rising, many are no doubt already dreaming of the coming months, seeking to satiate two year's worth of repressed wanderlust, topped with a hefty dose of emotional recovery.

Just for a moment, break away from reality and imagine walking on a pristine stretch of white sand, where you can view spectacular sunrises and sunsets. Picture gradient azure waters as far as the eye can see. Think of verdant foliage enveloping breathtaking landscapes of all shapes and sizes. Indulge in the prospect of gastronomic pleasure as balmy tropical air wraps around you. With 1,192 coral islands, the warmest people on Earth and a multitude of activities for every sort of traveler, it shouldn't come as a surprise that Maldives are at the top of many people's list of places to visit once the pandemic is over.

To help make your decision easier, we've compiled 10 reasons why you should visit the Maldives in 2022.

Wellness Tourism: Rejuvenate body, mind and soul



The Maldives has always been a favorite vacation spot for adventurous travelers for its beautiful beaches and crystal blue waters, and is now one of the top destinations for rejuvenating wellness journeys. To guide our guests towards a more balanced and authentic life - from one-on-one consultations, through daily yoga and meditation classes, guided breath-work sessions, bespoke treatments, holistic healing, alongside wholesome meals and essential oil making workshops to create remedies to take home from the ultimate wellbeing-focused holiday - we got you covered. From private decks of guest villas, through stand-alone yoga pavilions, and floating yoga's - enhanced by uninterrupted views of the Indian Ocean.

We are vaccinated!



Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Maldives closed its borders in late March 2020 and re-opened its borders to international visitors on July 15, 2020. And the archipelago is looking even more appealing now after a recent nationwide campaign resulted in a whopping 93 per cent of the resort employees and 79 per cent of the eligible Maldivian population had received both doses of the Covid-19 vaccine - inoculated in just over eight months.

This stunning achievement is the centerpiece of an efficient pandemic response by the Government of Maldives for initiating the landmark "Covid-19 Dhifaau" campaign on 1 February 2021 to vaccinate the entire population against COVID-19. Maldives is on the cusp of and becoming the first 100% fully vaccinated tourist industry in the world.

Pop the question in a place you know will never be forgotten



If you're still debating which resort to pop the question, Four Seasons will exceed your wildest proposal experience! When you have found the one, only one place will do, and for marriage proposals that end with a yes, Four Seasons Maldives at Landaa Giraavaru can help set the stage at one of their many Instagram-worthy water villas with a romantic and ultra-luxe 'pool of rose' proposals.

Indian Ocean's Leading Destination 2021



The Maldives consistently wins awards for its majestic beaches, dive tourism, and more at the World Travel Awards 2021. Maldives was honored as Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination; Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination; Indian Ocean's Leading Tourist Board in addition to Indian Ocean's Leading Destination, voted by travel and tourism professionals and consumers worldwide.

The Maldives was also crowned as the World's Leading Destination at the World Travel Awards 2020, the coveted awards are the ultimate Oscars of the travel and tourist industry accolade and recognize each winner's commitment to excellence.

Set sail into the sunset



When the sun sets over the far southern horizon, cap off your day for a romantic sunset cruise on board a traditional dhooni or luxury yacht in the middle of the Indian Ocean. Relax and stretch out on the deck as sorbet-colored rays reflect off the water, and winds whip tresses all around with beachy gusto. Maldives boasts a plethora of liveaboards offering exquisite locations for celebrations. Spend the night onboard and be rocked to sleep by the gentle lull of the waves. If you are lucky, you may be rewarded with a dolphin sighting during the cruise as sunset tends to be a good time for dolphin-spotting.

BEST READ

Golden Jubilee Year of Tourism 2022



The story of Maldives is one of transformation, innovation, and resilience. 50 years ago, no one could have imagined that our minuscule islands scattered across the Indian ocean would transform itself into a destination that captures the imaginations and dreams of millions across the globe. It began in the year 1972 with the opening of Kurumba Village, the country's first resort. Entrepreneurial young Maldivians with a dream were able to kickstart the Maldivian tourism industry with barely no resources and nor infrastructure. A team from the UNDP concluded that tourism could never succeed in the Maldives as there were barely any facilities and infrastructure. Yet against all odds, the Maldives did it.

Today, we anticipate for 2022, to celebrate 50 years since the inception of the tourism industry. Several promotional and celebratory campaigns have been initiated with more to follow in the upcoming year. The government projects 1.5 to 1.8 million tourist arrivals for next year.

Boduberu drum and fire ritual

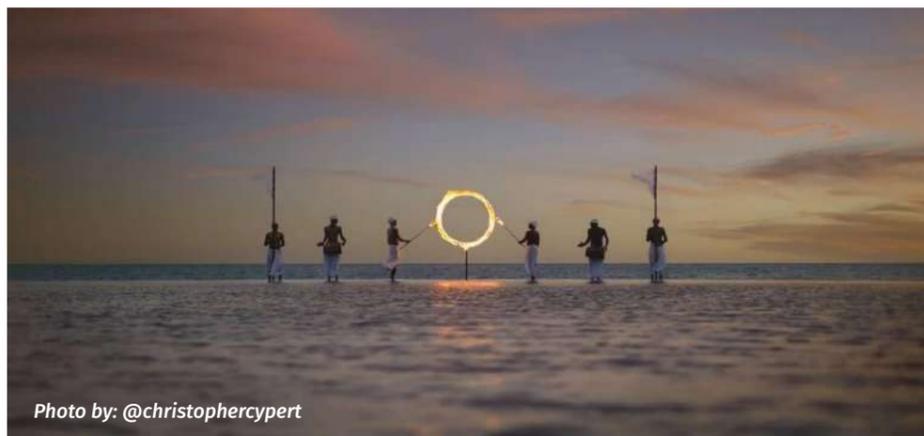


Photo by: @christophercypert

For the Ladies and Gentlemen at Ritz Carlton, serving their guests is all about creating unforgettable and glamorous experiences. By reviving legendary traditions, immersed into the history and heritage of its destination, where commitment to impeccable service meets innovation and timeless luxury.

The drum and fire ritual at Eau Bar is the signature ceremony of the Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands. The soul-stirring performance begins early sunset, with a troop of boduberu drummers walking the edge of a circular infinity pool, torch lighting a fire ring backed by a fading horizon.

Get your thrills at Indian Ocean's biggest floating water park



Siyam World Maldives

There's something for everyone: A blissful sunshine adventure in a spectacular Indian Ocean setting awaits at Siyam World, an awe-inspiring all-inclusive getaway in Noonu Atoll. The resort opened its doors for guests in late October debuting Indian Ocean's biggest floating water park, which spells out the name of the resort offering unlimited free access for guests aged 6yrs and above with an enormous carrying capacity. The water park promises endless aquatic escapades. Linked by banked curves and treacherous bridges, the slippery circuit of challenging obstacles includes halfpipes, slides, a climbing tower and a 3.2-metre springboard – not to mention 'Flip', the first free-floating human catapult on the water.

Shopping for Arts and Crafts



Raidha's Maldives at Crossroads

Maldives' vibrant local shopping scene encompasses everything from artisans making traditional handicrafts to young makers shaking up contemporary fashion and design. Whether you're looking for a tote bag, a hand-woven hammock, or a cute top and handmade jewelry, the meandering shopping avenue at Marina @ CROSSROADS creates a remarkable lifestyle destination bursting the ultimate shopping experience. From unique and intriguing, local and international collection of exclusive brands, incorporating authentic island design and beautiful ambiance. Indulge in an exciting retail adventure at some of the country's premium shopping outlets, featuring extraordinary fashion-forward clothing, accessories, beauty products, souvenirs and luxury items.

We are threatened by Climate Change



Sheraton Maldives Full Moon Resort

The UN Climate Change Conferences are not a new phenomenon. They have been held for the past three decades, yet Maldives has still not received adequate attention along with many other vulnerable countries.

Rising ocean temperatures have accelerated the overall coral bleaching in the Maldives. Sea anemones contains symbiotic single-celled algae within their tissues that provide the coral with up to 90% of its energy. Once stressed, the coral expels these algae, providing shelter, and gives coral reefs their colors. Hundreds of resorts across the Maldives already has its own coral protection and regeneration programmes, aimed at providing a safe environment in which life on the reef can thrive. These programmes are headed by in-house conservationists, marine biologists and ecologists whose mission is to reduce threats and promote sustainable management of reef ecosystems. Visitors at most of the resorts are welcomed to relaunch coral regeneration projects.

Article by Ahmed Ijaz

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Honda Marine Engine Showroom Launched by Marine Vibe in the Maldives



A dedicated Honda Marine Engine Showroom and a Service Center has officially opened last night by the Honorable Minister Aishath Nahula, Transport and Civil Aviation.

A special ceremony was held in front of the showroom; attended by key

industry stakeholders and special invitees. Mr. Salah Shihab, Managing Director, Voyages Maldives was a Special Guest and Minister Nahula attended as the Chief Guest.

A Brief of Honda Marine was presented by Mohamed Haneef,

Director, Marine Vibe Pvt Ltd, a speech was addressed by the Special Guest, Salah Shihab, Managing Director, Voyages Maldives and ending remarks were given by Ismail Mohamed, Chief Engineer, Marine Vibe Pvt Ltd. This is the first time for Honda Marine to have officially opened a showroom and a service center in the Maldives; in affiliation with dBlue and Marine Vibe Pvt Ltd.

During the opening function, Mr. Mohamed Haneef, Director, Marine Vibe Pvt Ltd stated: "Customers in Maldives can pre-order for Honda Marine Engines. We assure Honda to be the best fuel consumption engine in the market. It took us time to research, experience by ourselves prior to conveying the products to our valuable customers".

With over 55 years of marine expertise and leadership technology, Honda Marine delivers one of the top features in its outboards – there is a reason why consumers have faith in

the Honda name. When it comes to choosing power for your new boat, or repowering your current one, consider the experience that will take you over the water with that quiet, efficient operation and reliability only Honda can deliver. Honda was the first marine manufacturer in the world to offer full-line, dependable, 4-stroke outboard options in 1964.

Honda range of reliable 4-stroke outboards feature exclusive Honda technologies developed over decades of research combined with automotive technologies to deliver great fuel-efficiency and reliability to power your adventures on the water, whether it's a portable on a tiller, a 150 on your pleasure craft or a V6 on the back of a dedicated fishing boat.

Marine Vibes Pvt Ltd is a subsidiary of dBlue Pvt Ltd, a veteran service provider in the marine industry; led by industry pioneers and visionaries who have contributed to the Maldivian marine industry.

RCC Unveils its Latest Residential Project, Blue Haven Residencies

Rasheed Carpentry and Construction Pvt Ltd (RCC) has launched its most-anticipated project in Hulhumalé phase 1, Blue Haven Residencies.

During a special ceremony held at Jen Maldives Malé by Shangri-La, the 3D model of Blue Haven Residencies was unveiled by the Chief guest, Hon. Minister Mohamed Aslam, Ministry of National Planning, Housing and Infrastructure, Col (rtd) Mohamed Nazim, Chairman of RCC and Ibrahim Rasheed, Managing Director of RCC.

A special video was also presented to the guests, showcasing the amenities and special features of the apartment complex that sets it apart from other luxury residences in Hulhumalé. Afterwards, Minister Aslam and the first buyer, Farhath Jaleel got to take a closer look at the residential units through a Virtual Viewing (VR) experience.

Speaking at the ceremony, chief guest, Minister Aslam highlighted the contribution of RCC to the Maldives construction industry and commended the efforts of the company that led to its current success. He ended his

speech with positive hopes for the people of Maldives to secure safe and suitable housing with such projects as Blue Haven Residencies.

In May 2021, the construction company initially signed with Housing Development Corporation Ltd (HDC) to develop the Mixed-Use Residential Complexes in Plot S1-1 Hulhumalé, later introduced as the Blue Haven Residencies. Since then, the residential project has been developed to a 14-storey building, that is expected to set a new standard for luxury residences in the Maldives and become a defining feature of the Hulhumalé skyline.

Set within the lush, green foliage of Hulhumalé, the tower resonates a sense of savoir-vivre with its exquisite craftsmanship, modern flair, and time-honoured architectural excellence. Each of the 116 apartments offered are masterfully designed to utilize maximum space and to showcase a well-defined flow between living, dining and other private areas. Designed for luxury and grandeur, Blue Haven is as lavish as it gets.



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MALDIVES



IN THE NEWS

Government Announces Minimum Wage for Businesses

The government has announced minimum wages for Maldivian employees. According to the Economic Ministry, the new wages will become effective starting January 1, 2022.

Economic Minister. Uz. Fayyaz Ismail said that the Wage Advisory Board had proposed the figures after extensive research. Adding that the proposed wages will not overburden for small businesses resulting in layoffs while protecting the rights of the employees.

The declaration of a minimum wage is a presidential pledge of President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, with the President instituting the Salary & Wage Advisory Board on May 1, 2019.

Economic Ministry announced the minimum wage for businesses in Maldives on November 8 and has

been set as follows;

- The minimum wage has been set at:
 - Small businesses: MVR 21.63 hourly rate, MVR 4,500 monthly wage
 - Medium businesses: MVR 33.65 hourly rate, MVR 7,000 monthly wage
 - Large businesses: MVR 38.46 hourly rate, MVR 8,000 monthly wage

By implementing minimum wage, the economy will benefit as follows; Reduce the wide wage disparity in the economy and promote inclusive growth

- Increase labour force participation rate – encourage discourage workers and voluntary unemployed people to join the labour force

- Increase labour productivity, job retention and efficiency in the long term



- Increase in domestic demand and stimulate growth – similar kind of post-pandemic policies are being used by other countries to stimulate growth

Laamu Atoll Designated as a Mission Blue Hope Spot



Laamu Atoll has been designated as one of the planet's Hope Spots by the international non-profit organization, Mission Blue. The Hope Spot designation highlights Laamu's unique marine ecosystems and benefits they provide, along with the conservation work done by Six Senses Laamu and its partners within the Maldives Underwater Initiative (MUI) to protect them.

Hope Spots are special places identified by Mission Blue's scientific council as being critical to the health of the ocean. These areas are proven to hold significant ecological, economic and cultural importance, and so hold the potential to reverse damage from negative human impacts. From its rich reefs, vast seagrass meadows and culturally significant mangroves, Laamu Atoll ticked all the boxes for Mission Blue as an area worthy of the highest protection.

"Looking from 2011, when Six Senses Laamu began collecting information, to now as we're celebrating the designation of the atoll as a Hope Spot – it's truly a reason for hope," says Dr. Sylvia Earle, founder of Mission Blue. "It's so important that we protect the ecosystems there, especially the seagrass meadows

that we now understand are vital for generating oxygen, capturing carbon and providing a home and security for so many creatures not only within the atoll but throughout the depths beyond."

Laamu's mangroves act in a similar way to the seagrass meadows by storing carbon. They are also fundamental to local traditions such as making coir rope out of coconut husks. This craft, which has been passed down amongst Maldivian women for generations, relies on healthy mangrove systems as areas where the husks can be soaked. "This Hope Spot provides us with hope that Laamu's marine ecosystems and the livelihoods and traditions relying on them will be safeguarded for generations to come," explains Ismail Ali, Atoll Council President of Laamu Atoll.

Alongside the seagrass meadows and mangroves, Laamu's coral reefs also provide key ecosystem benefits. "Unlike other atolls in the Maldives, Laamu has very few reef passes, leading from the outside to the inside of the atoll," says Philippa Roe, MUI's Head Marine Biologist. "These areas are home to healthy populations of critically endangered and endangered species such as napoleon wrasse, grey reef sharks, mantas and green and hawksbill turtles just to name a few."

In 2013, Mission Blue declared the entire Maldives Archipelago as a Hope Spot to highlight the nation's rich marine biodiversity and its fragility in the face of the climate crisis. "By declaring Laamu Atoll as its own, smaller Hope Spot within the Maldives, we have the opportunity to lead and inspire the nation in the realms of local marine protection," explains Adam Tholhat, Sustainability and Community Outreach Manager at Six Senses Laamu.

The Maldivian government has pledged to protect at least one reef, one mangrove and one uninhabited island from each atoll by 2022. In 2018, Laamu Atoll council pledged to protect five ecologically significant areas in the atoll. Recently, significant progress has been made on these goals and the designation of nationally protected areas within the Hope Spot is expected in the coming months.

"Our mission has always been to leave a legacy in the Maldives, to leave this beautiful and unique part of the country better than how we found it," says Marteyne van Well, the resort's General Manager. "Today we make a significant step towards achieving this goal."

"At Six Senses, sustainability is not about sacrifice, rather it is a celebration of abundance. It ensures that future generations can enjoy this unique ecosystem with Six Senses for years to come and the Laamu Atoll Hope Spot is a realization of this vision," adds Neil Jacobs, Chief Executive Officer of Six Senses.

This Hope Spot declaration results from an application by MUI, an initiative created by Six Senses Laamu in partnership with three NGOs: the Manta Trust, Blue Marine Foundation and the Olive Ridley Project. MUI's mission is to lead the tourism industry in the Maldives by undertaking meaningful marine conservation focused around the three pillars of research, education, and community. Thanks to its extensive research projects over the last few years, MUI provided crucial evidence to Mission Blue on the ecological importance of Laamu in this application.

BON APPÉTIT

Key West Onion-Crusted Prawn with Cuban Lentil Salad and Orange Habanero Vinaigrette



At Dusit Thani Maldives, Executive Chef Richard A. Thompson delights your senses through unforgettable epicurean experiences. He boasts more than 25 years in the food industry, with a career that has spanned the globe from the US to Asia and the Indian Ocean. Chef Richard brings his culinary creativity to unique menus throughout the hotel, providing an exquisite gastronomic journey in the heart of the Maldives.

"I was inspired to create this dish while in Washington DC working on a concept menu for a boutique hotel. I was thinking of the experiences that had really excited me during my travels and work in the Caribbean. Cuban cuisine has bold, unmistakable flavors and combining a traditional Cuban lentil salad with their love for fried food led me to this creation. It features a large Key West prawn wrapped with sweet yellow onion from south Florida and I finish it with a modified version of a mojo."

Onion Prawn:

- 4 lg. prawns U15
- 2 lg. yellow or white onion
- Flour all purpose
- Corn meal (rough polenta)
- Seasoning

Peel prawns and clean, roll these in seasoned flour and then into a milk egg bath, drain slightly and then place again into the flour, gently wrap the thinly sliced onions around the prawn and chill. When ready to serve, place the prawns in a deep fryer 150°C till golden brown and fully cooked, place on a paper towel to remove excess oil.

Cuban Lentil Salad:

- ½ Le Puy green lentils
- ½ ripe pineapple, peeled and cut into triangles
- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 green bell pepper
- 1 lg. sweet red onion
- Finely chopped ginger
- Orange segments
- Cuban spices (cumin, garlic granules, chili powder)
- Coriander leaves - whole (not chopped)
- Lime juice
- Sea salt
- Grape seed oil

Cook the lentils till al dente, dice all the vegetables same size as the lentil, mix these together with spices, coriander, lime juice and salt, add enough grapeseed oil to mix into the salad and reserved for plating. Pineapples to be cut into triangles and then quickly caramelized in very hot pan, while still warm mix into the pre made salad and chill. Garnish with the orange segments.

Habanero Vinaigrette:

- 1-2 Habanero pepper (depending on how spicy you require)
- 1 cup orange juice
- In a sauce pan reduce these ingredients and reduce till orange juice is thickened, cool it and add in a blender.
- 1 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 100 ml lime juice
- 50ml honey
- 2 tsp Egg yolk (pasteurized)
- 3 lg. garlic clove
- Salt, white pepper
- 2 cups+ grape seed oil
- ¼ bunch cilantro

At full speed add in the oil slowly and seasoning, till it binds. Last, pulse in the coriander leaves so that they remain visible. If this is too thick, thin slightly with a little water. Chill and keep for service.

To serve, place some of the vinaigrette on the plate, place a small portion of the lentil salad on top and then place the prawn, decorated with cilantro leaves.



Courtesy of
Executive Chef Richard A. Thompson
Dusit Thani Maldives



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Frankly Speaking

The Maldives with more territorial sea than dry land depend on resources almost entirely from the sea. The coral reefs, which built the country, play a vital role in the economic and social well-being of the country. Today, we are exposed to the risks of intensifying weather events, and with future sea levels projected to increase in the range of 10 to 100 centimeters by the year 2100, the entire country could be submerged. Whilst many resorts across the industry have initiated its own coral regeneration programs and similar projects, our calls for help at many climates change conferences have not received adequate attention. What are your views on emphasizing for help from our visitors?



Saazu Saeed
Vice President
Divers Association of Maldives



Hussain Rasheed (Sendi)
First PADI Course Director

When developing Resorts and island harbors many of our coral reefs are being destroyed but the resort industry does coral restoration and replanting projects. But we don't have enough time to regenerate an ecosystem but we can preserve the remaining ecosystem that store high amounts of carbon. We can change the methodology of coastal developments using the best science and technologies

Coral regeneration is old, it was tabled during the 70s. We only need to give a break stress free Maldives for the corals. Coral plantation is an impossible mission, reefs are large scale.

We need more research on the damages? Just planting corals does not solve the problem.



Fayyaz Ibrahim
Director
Divers Lodge Maldives



Shaahina Ali
Executive Director
Parley for the Oceans (Maldives)

Give message to the visitors and their countries to help lower carbon emissions and about other harmful human activities that lead to global warming.



Shaha Hashim
Maldives Project Manager,
Blue Marine Foundation (BLUE) &
Maldives Resilient Reefs

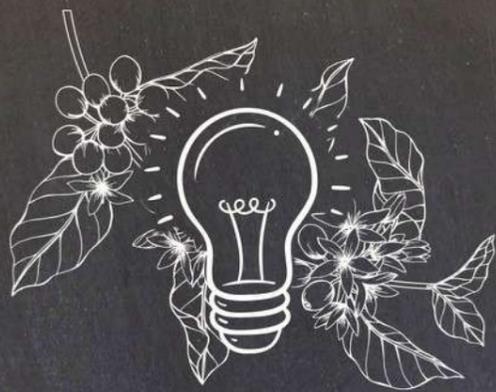
Being the largest resource user in the country, the tourism industry must step up to ensure that their operations have a minimum impact on the environment. Tourists who visit the country can help to promote reef resilience by choosing operators that have high sustainability standards such as those protecting their carbon burying, island protecting seagrass meadows, managing their coral fisheries and not destroying the coral reefs during the development phase. Also, look out for social indicators such as Maldivian staff employment rate and community projects funded by the operator. The industry must also do better in ensuring that the Green Tax are utilized better- for conservation and livelihoods diversification projects.

Climate change is happening and we live its impacts daily. Coral restorations, and other things we do as a country is too small to reverse a global eco system that is disappearing faster than it can be restored naturally or artificially. Governments are unable to act and has no consensus or drive to take action. It is a waste of hope for any small country to wait for governments to keep to their commitments of global goals to reduce global warming and climate change. Maldives is a highly sought destination for the global traveller. All visitors to the Maldives are taken away by the beauty and yet does not have much of a connection or an understanding of the fragility nor the vulnerability of their dream destination or their countries or their carbon foot prints. These visitors also include a high number of very influential people, that can definitely communicate and address this in a way it can impact global change. Maldives needs to educate the visitors and each resort, each live-aboard and each guest house can become a place where the visitor can also understand the realities of the issue. The closer and personal it becomes, the easier and faster for someone to believe and act. We have to be the showcase for climate change impacts before the we disappear and becomes extinct.

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