



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF MALDIVES

EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW
with
MARIYAM NOORDEEN
Founder and President of
the Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM)

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Publisher's Note



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Dear Readers,

As we embrace the start of a new year, things feel, on the one hand perhaps, depressingly similar to the same time in 2021, but reasons to be cheerful are more plentiful than last January.

Most of us are double- if not triple- vaccinated (which allows us to travel to destinations near and far), there is no ban on international holidays (at least not at the time of writing), most countries are open and welcoming UK tourists, cruise ships ply across the world's oceans and rivers, and there are no flight bans. Moreover, we are getting used to the now not-so-new requirements for travel. Whilst still onerous, all the form filling and testing procedures have become part and parcel of the 'travel experience'. In short, despite the challenges we are travelling again, albeit in different ways to previously.

In this issue, we sat down with Ms. Mariyam Noordeen, Founder and President of the Chefs Guild of Maldives to hear about the philosophy behind her experience and work. She is a well-known face in the Maldives culinary and hospitality industry, her presence is almost mandatory at any food-related event across the country.

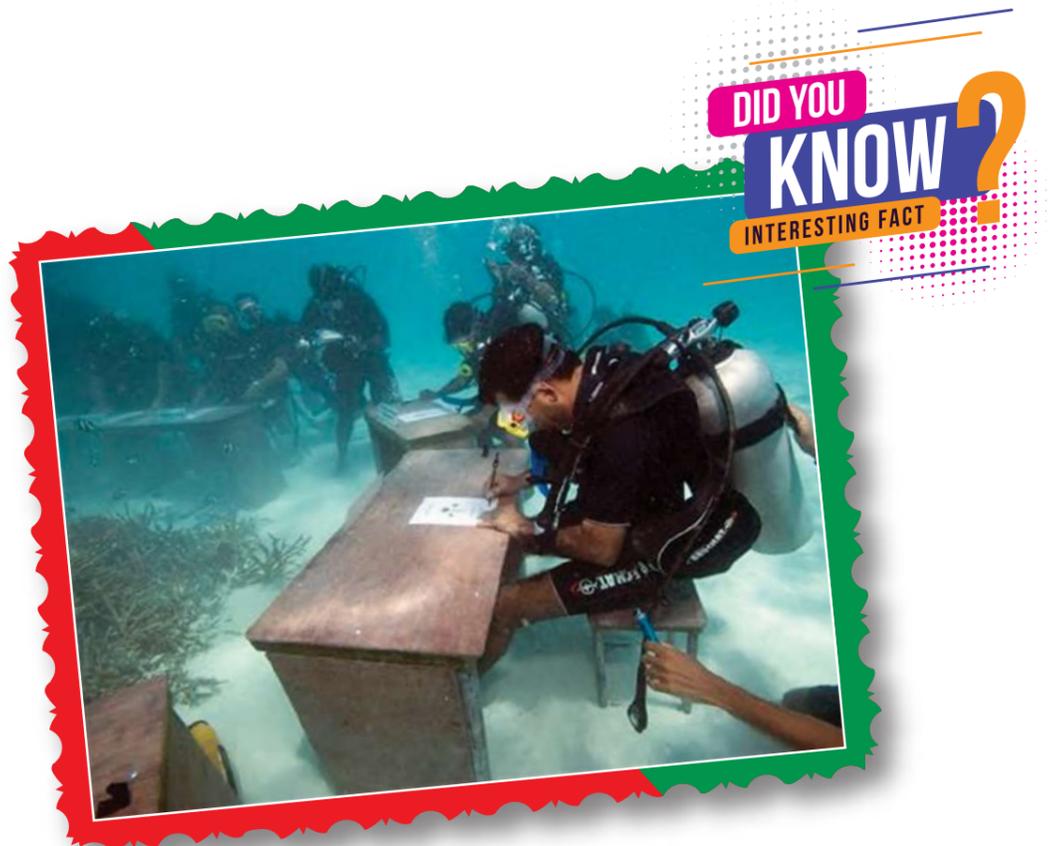
On our issue's most delicious and drooling section on page 22, we have "Chicken Curry Pide", courtesy of Executive Chef Olivier Portret from Lily Beach Resort & Spa, bringing you a recipe that you can try during this festive season for any dinner night at home.

With the country's busiest time of the year, over the past few days, the tourism industry voiced about the growth and shortage of rooms for the New Year period, as well as unavailability of parking slots for aircrafts. Amidst current demand for tourism, the black market for United States dollar has skyrocketed. We asked our industry experts for their opinions on page 23.

This first issue of The Islandchief for the year 2022, seeks to entertain you – to say the least; We've covered the most happening events taking place in this lovely collection of islands, as well as the gastronomic adventures you can indulge in this festive season. As always, we vow to share exhilarating stories to keep everyone entertained and informed every month.

Have a wonderful and fruitful New Year!

The islandchief Team



UNDERWATER CABINET MEETING

If you have already heard about it, then what you heard is definitely right. In the year 2009, Hon. Mohamed Nasheed, the former President of Maldives organized and held a meeting with all the cabinet ministers at the sea bed, to bring issues to light with regards to the risks that the world is facing, while highlighting on how human activities are interfering with freshwater resources. During the unorthodox meeting held underwater, 11 ministers signed a document calling to cut carbon emissions globally. In addition to this, the signed wetsuits of the ministers who took part in the meeting were sold to raise funds for coral reef protection as well.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

Scheduled Flights of Winter 2021 / 2022

Source: Maldives Tourism Updates 23rd December 2021 / Ministry of Tourism



- 1 BRITISH AIRWAYS
- 2 EDELWEISS
- 3 LUFTHANSA
- 4 AZUR AIR RUSSIA

- 5 TURKISH AIRLINES
- 6 QATAR AIRWAYS
- 7 FLY DUBAI
- 8 EMIRATES

- 9 ETIHAD AIRWAYS
- 10 GOAIR
- 11 INDIGO
- 12 AIR INDIA
- 13 SRILANKAN AIRLINES
- 14 AEROFLOT
- 15 SINGAPORE AIRLINES
- 16 AUSTRIAN AIRLINES
- 17 AIR ASTANA
- 18 GULF AIR
- 19 UZBEKISTAN AIRWAYS

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- 21 AIR VISTARA
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- 23 CONDOR
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ACROSS THE SKIES

Qatar Airways Marks 20 Years of Operation to the Maldives



A colorful celebration was held at Velana International Airport to commemorate Qatar Airways' **20th Anniversary** of flying to the Maldives. Qatar Airways has been a strong associate to the Maldives since its inception back in 2001.

To mark the anniversary, Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) in collaboration with Qatar Airways, welcomed Qatar Airways' first flight to Velana International Airport with a water salute and traditional Boduberu on December 17, 2021. Dr. Abdulla Mausoom, Minister of Tourism, and Mr. Ibrahim Thoha, acting in charge of MACL was present at the welcoming event. A ceremonial cake

was cut to celebrate the occasion.

Minister Dr. Abdulla Mausoom states the importance of Qatar Airways in bridging the world to the Maldives. "Congratulations and Best Wishes to Qatar Airways on their 20th Anniversary of flying to the Maldives. From the commencement of its flights to the Maldives, Qatar Airways has played a very important role in bridging the world to Maldives. We convey special appreciation to Qatar Airways for being the first airline to resume flights upon Maldives reopening its borders on 15th July 2020. We hope that Qatar Airways will continue its ever-engaging contributions and be a strong partner

in Maldives Tourism Development and Promotion".

Qatar Airways resumed scheduled flights with 21 flights per week following the reopening of the border. With the steady and strong demand to Maldives, Qatar Airways now operates 28 flights per week. Carrying over 1,000 passengers per day and over 36,000 per month. It has been recognized as the link between Doha and the Maldives, as well as the world's connection to the Sunny Side of Life.

Moreover, **Qatar Airways Privilege Club** continues to honour the loyalty of its valued members by extending their tier status. This initiative will benefit all Silver, Gold and Platinum members whose tier status is due for renewal between December 2021 and December 2022. The tier validity of these members would be automatically extended to December 31, 2022.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive, His Excellency Mr. Akbar Al Baker, said: "At Privilege Club, we remain steadfastly committed to our members. Their loyalty means everything to us, and we will continue to honour their choice to fly with us. As the Official Airline of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022, Qatar Airways will continue to innovate in rewarding and recognising our members. We sincerely look forward to enriching our members' travel experiences, and offering them more time to enjoy the incredible benefits of their tier as they plan for their travel with us in 2022, to over 140 global destinations".

SriLankan Resumes Flights to Gan Island - Maldives

SriLankan Airlines, the National Carrier of Sri Lanka and a member of the oneworld alliance, resumed operations to picturesque Gan Island in Addu Atoll of Maldives from December 4, 2021. SriLankan operates weekly, with flight UL119 departing at 1040 hours every Saturday from Colombo to Gan, which would return from Gan at 1305 hours on the same day.

Gan offers a distinct, off the beaten path experience to visitors. The island not only has pristine white sand 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. We were also the only international carrier to continue operations to Male' without any disruptions even during the pandemic," said SriLankan Airlines' Head of Worldwide Sales and Distribution, Dimuthu Tennakoon.

SriLankan Airlines became the first carrier in the



South Asian region to receive the 'Diamond' rating from the Airline Passengers Experience Association (APEX) and SimpliFlying, a standard received for the extra safety measures and comprehensive hygiene precautions adhered to since the onset of the global pandemic. SriLankan Airlines is an award-winning airline with a firm reputation as a global leader in service, comfort, safety, reliability, and punctuality.

Etihad Launches World's First Green Loyalty Programme: Etihad Guest to Reward Members for Making Sustainable Choices



Etihad Guest, the award-winning loyalty programme of Etihad Airways, has introduced a series of sustainability-focused initiatives to reward members for making 'green' choices and providing options to reduce their own carbon footprint.

Conscious Choices, the new range of sustainable initiatives offered by the Etihad Guest programme, has been created to support Etihad's overarching sustainability ambition to achieve net zero emissions by 2050, and halve 2019 emissions by 2035. Travellers wishing to fly and spend more consciously and sustainably can now earn Tier Miles, and other rewards, for making sustainable choices.

Empowering Etihad Guest members to travel with a lighter carbon footprint, Conscious Choices rewards travellers with Tier Miles and additional benefits for carrying less baggage on board and offsetting their flights' carbon emissions using Etihad Guest Miles. In their daily lives, when not flying, members can earn Tier Miles by offsetting everyday emissions such as driving, with options ranging from one month to one year worth of offsets, as well as emissions such as cooling your home or cooking your dinner for a month up to a year; donating miles to a green cause; and by purchasing sustainable products from the Etihad Guest Reward Shop in partnership with Collinson and CarbonClick. Members can also choose to 'go green', by opting for a digital membership card instead of physical.

Rewarding members with Tier Miles helps them on their way to maintain their existing tier or upgrade to the new tier to unlock even more benefits.

Etihad is the first airline in the world to reward frequent flyers for being more sustainable in the air and on the ground. Members' sustainable behaviours are already being captured so they can be rewarded for offsetting their flights with Miles and purchasing sustainable products in the Reward Shop, while the full programme and benefits will go live in January 2022.

Tony Douglas, Group Chief Executive Officer, Etihad Aviation Group, said: "Etihad's commitment to sustainability sits at the core of our business, and we're pleased to welcome our 8 million members to jump on board this journey to sustainability. Empowering our Members to offset their personal travel or shopping in a sustainable way, and be rewarded for it, gives the Etihad sustainability programme even more weight.

"While Etihad has focused on developing technology and innovative solutions for operational efficiency that will actively reduce the CO2 emissions of flying, we have placed an equal focus on the guest. To that end we have been developing our sustainable loyalty programme for the last year, listening to member feedback and taking into account their priorities and expectations for travel.

Through this we have refined a programme that will provide members with the ability and incentive to travel more sustainably, while further reinforcing our position as a planet-conscious travel and lifestyle brand."

Over the last two years, despite the challenges of COVID-19, Etihad has introduced a number of significant CO2 reduction initiatives under its Greenliner sustainability programme. This includes adopting thousands of mangroves, using sustainable fuels, reducing contrails, flying optimised flight paths, operating more electric vehicles and working with partners who share its vision for cleaner skies.

At the recent Dubai Airshow, Etihad expanded its strategic sustainability programme to unite industry leaders including Boeing, Airbus, GE and Rolls-Royce in the most comprehensive, cross-organisational aviation sustainability initiative ever undertaken.

In October, Etihad operated its most sustainable flight ever, leveraging the learnings and efficiencies developed over the last two years to reduce carbon emissions by 72% in absolute terms compared to the equivalent flight operated in 2019.

The EY20 Sustainable Flight is an example of what the future of commercial air travel looks like. The fact that sustainability has stayed on the agenda during the pandemic is testament to just how important the topic is to Etihad.

Throughout 2021, Etihad expanded its carbon offset programme to support Peru's Cordillera Azul National Park project and Indonesia's Katingan Mentaya Project in partnership with Respira, Shell and CarbonClick. At the same time, Etihad offset the emissions of its signature Greenliner aircraft for the entire year, the equivalent to approximately 80,000 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

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IN A NUTSHELL

Rockin' Festive Season at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives & Saii Lagoon Maldives



Hard Rock Hotel Maldives and Saii Lagoon Maldives rings in the New Year with exotic celebrations, live entertainment and tropical delicacies.

Hard Rock Hotel Maldives was ready to rock n' roll this Christmas with an array of music-themed festive activities on offer throughout the holiday season. Think pink as the resort decks its halls with rose-coloured decorations, accessories and beverages, inviting guests to complement the theme and dress pretty in pink.

The festive season is all around at SAii Lagoon Maldives, as the resort celebrates its first SAiisational winter with a series of fun-filled activities for guests of all ages. Decorations of blue and silver will echo throughout the resort, bringing festive cheer to the island paradise.

The festivities at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives and at SAii Lagoon Maldives kick off on December 22, 2021 with an Island Food and Wine Fun Fair, where delicacies of the world are combined with fragrant wines from the resort's cellar to create a bountiful island feast. Guests were invited to adorn a chef's hat and apron at Sessions and learn the tricks of the trade behind each chef's live cooking station, featuring an assortment of exotic flavours from Indonesia to Japan, to Saudi Arabia. At SAii Lagoon Maldives, as young ones join the resort's chefs to craft and decorate their very own gingerbread house at Miss Olive Oyl

On December 23, 2021 little Rock Stars were invited to rock around the Christmas tree with the resort's Tree Lighting Ceremony at Octagon Lawn, accompanied by delicious Christmas cookies, fruit punch and heart-warming mulled wine for adult Rockers and glühwein were served to the sound of joyous SAiiarollers.

On Christmas Eve, at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives families and friends came together to enjoy Christmas In The Sand at Sessions, a unique dining experience on the peaceful shores of Hard Rock Hotel Maldives. Colourful and creative festive

dishes were prepared by the resort's chefs, set against the beautiful backdrop of the Indian Ocean. On Christmas Day, jingle all the way to The Elephant and The Butterfly, where rosé and pink hats are aplenty and a pink Christmas brunch like no other awaits.

At SAii Lagoon Maldives, little ones make their way to Santa's Wishing Counter at Koimala & Maalimi's Junior Kids Club and Camp, where Santa's helpers were ready to make wishes come true on Christmas Day. Christmas Eve Dinner will be served at Miss Olive Oyl, where wholesome delicacies and fresh ingredients will come together to create a mouth-watering feast fusing the flavours of East and West.

The festivities resume on December 27, 2021 with La Vie en Rosé Fridays; sip rosé, savour seafood, soak in the sunshine and dance to live music throughout the day at The Elephant and The Butterfly and on December 29, 2021 celebrate the delights of the Indian Ocean with a Seafood Market,

showcasing the finest in Indian Ocean cuisine with daily fresh catches at Sessions at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives.

SAii reignites the festivities with a Seafood Market at Miss Olive Oyl, showcasing the freshest local catches of the day. This bountiful banquet of the Indian Ocean features everything from yellowfin tuna to mud crab and oysters, paired with delectable Bloody Mary shooters.

On New Year's Eve, Hard Rock rings in the New Year with all things pink, where a sumptuous feast at Sessions tickles the taste buds, and everything from gin, to cocktails, to champagne and beer, are all served in shades of pink. Live entertainment ensued by the beach with latino band Sugar, followed by renowned acoustic guitarist Luca Stricagnoli. The resident DJ bid adieu to 2019, delivering top tunes into the early hours. The festivities concluded on January 6, 2022 with a Season Closing Pink Party, where ample pink drinks, festive delights and live entertainment were featured at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives.

At SAii Lagoon Maldives, guests enjoyed an exotic celebration; an enchanted evening filled with aromatic flavours, fairy tale lighting and live entertainment. The celebrations continued after dinner in Café del Mar Maldives with a Countdown Party till late. The season's festivities are rounded off with One Night in Moscow on January 6, 2022 where family and friends enjoyed a Christmas buffet fusing Eastern European and Mediterranean delights, nodding to festive Russian traditions.

Just 15 minutes by speedboat from Male', Hard Rock Hotel Maldives and SAii Lagoon Maldives, Curio Collection by Hilton opened on September 1, 2019 as part of CROSSROADS Maldives, the first integrated resort destination of the island nation. On December 15, 2021, three months after the official reopening of The Marina at CROSSROADS Maldives to the public, the visitor count to The Marina reached a remarkable 10,000 visitors.



IN A NUTSHELL

Sun Siyam Iru Veli Celebrates its 3rd Anniversary



To celebrate the past three years of exciting adventures and frolicking on the sandy shores of Sun Siyam Iru Veli elevated their signature par-for-the-course Gala Night to the next level, on the evening of December 15, 2021.

To make this unique occasion a day to remember, they closed their à la carte outlets and hosted a series of events starting with a special evening management cocktail at Fresh Water, an exceptional pool bar where guests were greeted with a rose

petal entrance. Colorful light decorations, pyramids, complimentary champagne cocktails, white and red wine sangria, cocktails, mocktails and other beverages were served. Aside from the standard fare, a noteworthy selection of hot and cold Canapés were served as traditional dancers swayed to live Bodu Beru Drums.

The next event was a special dinner buffet at Aqua Orange, the lagoon side restaurant where guests were offered welcome drinks upon arrival along with a marvelous selection of sweets. A special tea station was set up at Aqua beach for those who don't imbibe, and free henna hand art was offered to restless kids during the extravagant dinner, where an exceptional curation and combination of culinary delights from all over the world were offered to guests as they relaxed near the beach.

For the season finale, guests were welcomed to Chemistry, a beachside bar where guests were treated to welcome drinks and a local delicacy; fruit skewers, champagne, sparkling wine, cocktails and mocktails flowed freely as guests grooved and danced to the choice selections of the live DJ, before the official Sun Siyam Iru Veli birthday cake was cut. To top it off and seal the deal, a special raffle was held afterwards for all attending guests where they had the opportunity to win prizes including wine, champagne, spa sessions and more.

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IN A NUTSHELL

Award-Winning Singer, Pianist and Model Clarita De Quiroz at Lti Maafushivaru this Festive Season

Lti Maafushivaru spiced up its 2021 festive season program with live music entertainment by award winning Singer Clarita De Quiroz. The model-turned-musician entertained the resort guests with live performance on Christmas Eve and the following evenings closer to New Year's Eve.

Bringing her passion for vocals and a highly styled stage performance in the Maldives, Clarita is a classically trained pianist and percussionist. She has appeared in the 'City of Life' movie in the UAE featuring Jaaved Jaafri and Jason Flemyng and Dubai Global Tourism Commercials and awarded 'Best Singer of the UAE 2012' by GR8! TV and Magazine Awards. On the same year, she supported Sir Elton John at his Abu Dhabi Yas Arena performance.



Her performances in Dubai have included the Grazia Style Awards 2009, Time Out Awards and Esquire Magazine Launch 2009, Arabian Business Awards and Emirates Woman of the Year Awards 2009.

Maafushivaru team expressed excitement to



welcome Clarita and elevate guests' experience with lots of excitement and fun during this festive season.

Becky Hill and DJ Duo Mel Blatt & Jaime Winstone Headlined Siyam World on New Year's Eve



Siyam World, Maldives is a bold new world of possibilities, a quirky, carefree playground promising an eye-popping array of options and "never-seen-before" experiences across land, sea and sky. Siyam World's arrival is set to transform the monotonous Maldivian holiday mould with its striking new vision of the Indian Ocean archipelago's rich natural wonders. Eliminating preconceptions of monotonous dining in the Maldives, Siyam World offers guests to enjoy the resort's revolutionary WOW!

Festive season was packed with memorable island escapades - including a dazzling array of 'Global Thrills and World Adventures'- themed celebrations; DJ set by celebrity duo Mel Blatt and Jaime Winstone; and an exclusive headline performance by British singer and songwriter, Becky Hill. Over the course of Siyam World's blockbusting festive

fortnight, guests found themselves transported into the worlds of some of the greatest and most exhilarating TV and movie hits of all times, from Peaky Blinders and James Bond to Money Heist and The Beatles' Yellow Submarine.

Becky Hill rang the New Year with an exclusive headline performance. She is a British singer and songwriter from Bewdley. She rose to prominence after appearing on the first series of The Voice UK, auditioning with John Legend's "Ordinary People". In the beginning in 2021, Becky Hill released the singles "Last Time" and "Remember" with David Guetta. They peaked at number thirty-nine and number three respectively, the latter becoming Hill's fourth top-ten hit. Celebrity DJ duo, All Saints Star Mel Blatt and Actor Jaime Winstone took the decks to keep the dancefloor going with a show-stopping set of party anthems.

The festive season kicked off with an eye-popping array of sports activities and contests, including football, volleyball and tennis competitions, fun family games and challenges that really release the inner child and create bonds with fellow festive guests. Kids were also invited to participate in a range of activities from fashion shows, mermaid masterclasses and mocktail-making, to coral planting, coconut bowling, t-shirt tie-dyeing, and of course meeting Santa.

Evenings were full steam ahead with themes including The Beatles' psychedelic adventure 'Yellow Submarine', and a sophisticated and suave 007 Christmas cocktail beach party. Guests were treated to a Christmas Day brunch and an array of Festive Gala menus at the resort's restaurants, from Asian fusion at The Wahoo Grill and Mediterranean at Andalucía, to Lobster & Champagne dinners and wine and cheese nights. The celebrations started early on the last day of 2021, with a Shelby's private pool party - by order of The Peaky Blinders!

Guests made a splash at the Indian Ocean's biggest floating water park with the Siyam Water World Warrior challenge, as well as unlimited access and numerous water-based activities to keep everyone entertained and active throughout the season. Think fun parkour challenges, banana boat rides, beach parties and funky sounds played by the resort's resident DJs. Exuberant adults meanwhile can live their best lives at Siyam World's epic beach pool and foam parties, or get wet and wild with exhilarating seabob rides, electric jet surfing, flyboarding, snorkeling and diving at the resort's watersports centre, Shipwrecked.

IN A NUTSHELL

Timeless Festive Journey at Paradise Island Resort & Spa



underlying inspiration for the vibrant and urban-style celebrations. The resort will host an electric lineup of performances from live sets by world-renowned DJ's Danny Avila and Emirali to exceptional fire shows, Boduberu dance performances, traditional Maldivian Maali parades, sparkling cocktails parties and much more.

Guiding guests on the wondrous journey, celebrations began with the Christmas tree lighting ceremony unveiling impressive decorations and a giant gingerbread house. Christmas Eve party takes place at the brand-new infinity swimming

pool showcasing an energetic performance of electric house music by world-renowned DJ Danny Avila alongside other impressive performances.

Festive culinary journeys take on the form of elegant cocktail evenings and indulgent five-course dining experiences with remarkable attention to detail. Discover a taste of island life with unlimited fresh seafood and lobster BBQ's or fine dining steak and wine extravaganzas; all experienced with boundless ocean views. Paradise Island Resort & Spa is

celebrated for authentic hospitality, signature Indian Ocean experiences and personalized exploration and this joyful season guests are sure to be in awe of the Polaris Festive journey.

Usher in the New Year 2022 with unforgettable glitz and glamour at the ultimate New Year's Eve party. Ease into the celebrations with an indulgent Gala dinner, flowing champagne and epicurean delights at the Bageechaa Restaurant before heading down to the poolside where the party is at. Embark on a magical night to remember with an exhilarating mix of hip hop, soul and funk jazz by DJ Emirali followed by a spectacular fire show and mesmerizing fireworks that will illuminate the sky.

Paradise Island Resort & Spa is a chic island retreat surrounded by turquoise waters, idyllic pearl-white beaches and lush coconut palms, located in North Male' Atoll just a short 15-minute speed boat journey from Velena International Airport. The resort boasts 282 luxurious and spacious villas, whether on a secluded pearl-white beach, suspended above the turquoise lagoon or nestled by lush coconut palms, tropical indoor-outdoor living spaces offer unprecedented privacy to reconnect and restore balance while discovering memorable encounters with nature.

Against the spectacular backdrop of the Indian Ocean, Paradise Island Resort & Spa has begun the Festive season set to amaze guests with a magical journey of a lifetime under the theme of Polaris; the brightest star in the constellation and also known as the guiding star. For centuries the Polaris has been a guiding star used to navigate through a world of wonder as sailors navigate the seas using the stars in the night sky as a guiding compass.

The buzzing vitality of this stunning island is the



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MOVERS & SHAKERS

Dusit Thani Maldives Appoints Paul Elliot King as New Executive Chef

Dusit Thani Maldives, a luxury Thai-inspired resort on Mudhdhoo Island in Baa Atoll appointed a British Chef Mr. Paul Elliot King as its new Executive Chef to lead an exciting new era of culinary creativity at its already renowned restaurants.

Chef Paul brings to his role more than 30 years of experience leading culinary teams for luxury hotels and resorts in the United Kingdom and Asia. He started his illustrious career in the late 1980s in London, UK, where he honed his skills working for iconic city landmarks such as The Savoy and The Dorchester. Since 2009, he has continued to expand his horizons – and his palate – with executive positions at award-winning properties in Asia.

His gastronomic adventures outside of England began with stints as Executive Sous Chef at Hilton hotels in Vietnam and the Maldives. From 2013, he then oversaw the culinary operations of Jumeirah Vittaveli in Malé, where he managed a brigade of 51 chefs, followed by Kuredu Island Resort and Spa – the second-largest resort in The Maldives – where, alongside taking up the mantle as Executive Chef, he was appointed as the HACCP Chairman, responsible for driving excellence



and HACCP (Hazard Analysis and Critical Control Point) accreditation for the resort.

His passion for health and safety in the food space led him back to his native England during the COVID-19 pandemic to work in an executive role for J Sainsburys Plc, the second-largest chain of supermarkets in the United Kingdom, where he was responsible for ensuring high-quality food standards for customers.

Now, with island life calling once again, he joins the team at Dusit Thani Maldives to bring his passion for culinary excellence to the table.

“We are delighted to welcome Chef Paul to lead our talented culinary team and help to elevate our already high standards by creating exciting new culinary experiences for our discerning guests and customers,” said Mr Thomas Weber, General Manager, Dusit Thani Maldives. “Having won numerous awards for the quality of his cooking, he knows full well the recipe for success, and we are sure he will deliver even more accolade-worthy fare at our highly esteemed restaurants.”

The Making of a Grand Hotelier Featuring Hassan Shihab



As Shakespeare rightfully wrote, “time travels at different speeds for different people. I can tell you who time strolls for, who it trots for, who it gallops for, and who it stops cold for.”

For Hassan Shihab, time has been a teacher, friend and foe that made his years at Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives an adventure, an epic journey in the making. For the past 20 years, he has grown alongside the resort, collecting stories of a lifetime.

Joining the hotel in 2001 as a young Junior Receptionist, he had instantly fallen in love with the industry of tourism and hospitality. Growing up in the Maldives, he was no stranger to the luxury resort scene but his journey in becoming a leader in the business was merely a distant dream. His first year as a naïve hotelier has been nothing short of challenging.

Understanding the industry etiquettes, embedding himself in the culture of it was a novel experience to young Hassan. Amongst the many mistakes and learnings, he relentlessly pursued his love for hospitality. His approach was methodical; a myriad of workshops, trainings and creating connections and relationships with hoteliers across the world inspired him. “It gave me a sense of purpose, making me better at what I love to do”, Hassan says with a hint of nostalgia in his voice.

After his years of being in the front-lines, time picked up speed. He was now a management employee and found himself, again, in uncharted territory. The transition itself was challenging enough yet, being one of the few Maldivians in the team created a new drift for him to get used to. Gaining trust, credibility and embedding himself in a competitive and swift workspace took time, and utmost resilience. “With every new day, there were new challenges to deal with”. While time moved slowly for Hassan then, his quiet ferocity kept him battling all odds, moving forward with all the strength he could summon.

Halfway into his uphill battle, Hassan was now leading the Coral Propagation Program at Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives. The project was awarded ‘Best Sustainability Initiative – Biodiversity Category’ at the Cinnamon Resorts Awards of Excellence and reader, we can only imagine what he felt as he held his accolade; the tangible token of victory of a long, intangible struggle. “It was a moment so spectacular; it was overwhelming” Hassan joins the narrative.

Fighting uphill battles led him to winning the war. Through the Management Acceleration Program at Cinnamon, he was appointed as the Resident Manager of the resort. The wide-eyed Junior Receptionist from

20 years ago, was now a leader to the rest and a mentor for the young-hoteliers just like he was. He was now managing a hotel he once worked the front-desk at and leading it to success, nevertheless.

Hassan finally takes a breather from his journey. Besides being the resident manager, he is now a father of four splitting time between work, family, playing tennis, badminton and gym. “Tourism and hospitality is the largest economic industry in the Maldives and an integral part of our everyday lives. I always wanted to be able to inspire young Maldivians with big dreams. Someone the young hoteliers could look up to” he says with pride as he realized that he has indeed, made his dream come true.

Hassan’s mindset gave him the freedom and courage to fail. Between the losses and the wins is his story of relentless pursuit of dreams. His unapologetic nature of fearless passion is what he will pass on to his successors in the years to come. For Hassan, this is more than a tale of rags-to-riches but his fortitude; a celebration of his life’s work. His story will be re-told to the young hoteliers to join Cinnamon Dhonveli Maldives and he will remain an icon, a proud Maldivian, a grand hotelier standing tall in the test of time.



TRAINING & DEVELOPMENT IN THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY OF MALDIVES



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

with

MARIYAM NOORDEEN

Founder and President of
the Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM)

“Show your pride in your whites, be respectful to it and be proud of wearing your white uniform, that is only how you can portray your passion”

We stood in the busy dining area of Maldives Marine Expo's food fest early last month, watching the slow death of a feisty Maldivian lobster as it plunged into an aromatic hell of fragrant broth. A swift movement at the corner of our eyes made us turn towards the action, and we gave a little start as the mind registered the form of one of the renowned faces in the country, Ms. Mariyam Noordeen (Marie) - Founder and the President of the Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM). In addition, she's a visionary; a professional in Tourism and Hospitality consultancy and training. We had the absolute pleasure to sit with her for an exclusive interview for this year's first issue of the Islandchief.

What sparked your interest in food and hospitality industry?

In 1982, I started my Higher Secondary education at boarding school in London, England. I initially wanted to study nursing with the contextual of science knowledge. However, with the sentimental emotional reaction and feeling light-headed at the sight of blood, I had to forgo my interest.

Back in the early 80's, career guidance was not a norm. But since I was a service-minded people person, I wanted to trust my own instinct and engage myself in something which I have a passion for. Hence, I flack-backed to the days I was pursuing my secondary education in Sri Lanka. I was privileged to discover and experience some traditional dishes from the late Ms. Dhondheedhi of Athagashoshuge. Extremely inspired, I attempted at authentic Maldivian dishes like pirini, dhal curry and pumpkin curry with my own creative twists. Since then, I had constantly relished the Tourism and Hospitality Industry and followed years of training in London achieving a Diploma in Hospitality and followed on to a Degree in Hospitality Management. I strongly believed the motivational quote from Steve jobs - "the only way to do great work is to love what you do".

How was your professional journey? Did a formal education help you to advance your career?

After my education, I wished to work more independently and away from home-in a resort. But back then, the hospitality industry was too male-dominated, that it was a taboo for girls to be a part of it. I distinctly understood that there were reasons for it; there were widespread rumors

within the society, proper facilities and other factors were not in place for females to work at the resorts. And of course, like most parents my family was very protective.

However, the prospects enlightened for me with the opening of Maldives Hotel School in 1987, under the Department of Tourism. I was one of the two Maldivians who joined the UNDP consultant team as a Trainee Instructor - assisting to progress the curriculum, provide trainings and run the school efficiently and effectively. I was more captivated in career development and spellbound in advocating and training more people in the Hospitality industry.

The Hotel School proved to be a thrilling and productive place with mentors, lecturers, tutors acquiring advance knowledge overseas along with the students. After 3 years when the UNDP project was over, myself with the Maldivian team were competent to conquest and continue the operations without any hitches.

The initial course offered at the Hotel School was a one-year programme with professional on-the-job training in the industry. I initiated discussions to further develop and enhance training sessions, and even affiliate the programs to conduct it under a professional body - as a campus for Birmingham College of Food Tourism and Creative Studies (now University College Birmingham). Education system at the Hotel School boomed with Higher Diploma and even block mode Degree and Masters programmes.

After the transition of the UNDP project, I wanted to emphasized on the development of our staff. Therefore, I proposed to provide them the opportunity to enhance their career by completing their Bachelors or Masters Degrees in Maldives an overseas. Key emphasis was given, as the Maldives College of Higher Education was formed under ADB project.

While taking key responsibilities at the college, I completed my own studies and graduated with a Masters' degree in 2003. I learned the task of balancing priorities for my family, work and studies. Yes, it was challenging, but surely my determination and dedication triumphed.

As there was a high demand for training and development, I got the opportunity to work with the Employment Skills Training Project (ESTP) and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) team. I was accountable to execute the different components of the project with the ESTP consultant and TVET team for development of skills and occupational standards of not just hospitality tourism industry, but also the social sector, fisheries, agriculture, and so on.

My contextual was from training to curriculum development and my heart and passion has always been in development and training. Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM) as an NGO came to existence in 2014; as a much-needed platform to explore more opportunities and participate in international and local events to showcase their creative cuisines with the artistic fusions. Currently I am conducting Training and Development workshops, in addition to

the NGO; Chefs Guild of Maldives (CGM). This NGO provides chefs working in the Maldives a much-needed platform to explore more opportunities and participate in international and local events to showcase their creative cuisines.

Advocating, Training and Development has been the biggest strength over the years with passion. Currently I am conducting training and development for the millennials and youths and exploring more opportunities for the Maldivian Chefs to showcase their talents. I am proud to say that - Today we have very talented professional Maldivian Female Chefs in our community. CGM existence was steadfast and we are a proud Member of Worldchefs and work closely with Chef Guild of Sri Lanka.

You have been a voice of lot of Professional Chefs and Empowering Women in the Food & Hospitality industry, what are the key aspects that can be changed in order to develop the industry?

As an association, we advocate to the industry challenges in seeking solutions for culinary professionals across the vast spectrum of the Maldives' Tourism and Hospitality industry.

We strive to break the norms and ideas which traditionally suggests that Maldivians are inactive and unaccountable. Although this concern has been frequently voiced out at industry events, I believe action is unspoken. Trainings and development programs to accelerate employee growth is a key neglected area.

With the development of new projects and resorts, the other key area industry stakeholders should focus is staff retention. A comprehensive employee retention program can play a vital role in both attracting and retaining employees. Action should speak louder than words. Nowadays you see a lot of apprenticeship programs from the resorts and I would like to highlight one of the best and successful apprenticeship programs offered by Four Seasons Maldives Resorts.

As tourism in the Maldives is booming, the need for career growth pathway in this industry is demanding. Apprentice programs needs to be structured more towards the needs of the industry and more youths should be attracted towards these programs. Personally, I can foresee that every resort could be a training platform for our future millennials. Maldives National Skills Development Authority (MNSDA) can play a pivot role by providing more assistance to these apprentice programs.

If there is a hardworking chef, I would like to shed some light on that face, while connecting them with relevant bodies in order to make profiles and interviews of these potential people. I like to bring people out of their comfort zones to showcase their talents in the international market. You don't have to be a chef to be able to head an Association. In fact, I am not a chef. But if you have the passion for it, that is all that matters.

Equal opportunity for women and to work with different nationalities and cultures should be given for locals and foreigners in the Tourism and Hospitality industry of Maldives. In this regard, CGM will always welcome all the Chefs in the Tourism Hospitality to be part of our chef family. We have created a gateway for networking and opportunities. I believe we need to advocate our youth and industry more.

We are the pilots of our own journey and it is our responsibility to invest time for ourselves. Recognition and appreciation should also be a key factor to consider by the private and public sector, especially at government level as well. Hardworking chefs are also professionals in the industry.

Considering the Maldivian Chefs in the Hospitality industry, do you think there are enough opportunities available for locals to excel in this profession?

With the inception of CGM in 2014, various opportunities and platforms have been created for

the benefit of the Chef community. We have played a key role in changing the public's perception about culinary; now this is a generally acceptable career field in the eyes of many. CGM mainly focuses on to provide various platforms to recognize themselves in the international market and provide training and development for the aspiring chefs to broaden their knowledge about the field and participate in international webinars/seminars. Since CGM is a member of Worldchefs, I believe we can explore and expand more opportunities benefited for the Chefs and local community.

Below are the key main objectives of CGM; to foster friendships among culinary professionals and associated individuals and institutions in the Maldives, to promote the culinary profession throughout the country and to increase awareness in accordance with and with the advice of the relevant government authorities, to develop professional occupational standards and improve training, education, technical knowledge and work ethics, to assist relevant authorities in improving food supply and storage conditions as well as hygiene and sanitation standards, to support the Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism Studies in their endeavor to create professionally trained hoteliers and Chefs, to advocate the development of a national Culinary Team to represent the Maldives in international competitions and forums, to create and maintain close relationships with the local and international hotel, catering and tourism industry, to develop and maintain close relationships with other culinary associations worldwide, to foster communication, training and professionalism throughout the national and international hospitality industry and to participate in other activities that may be of benefit to the association, its members and society.

Being a Chef may be the toughest job you will ever love. If you have the passion and love the work you do, you have to allocate some time for your development. Make it a habit to utilize training sessions and allocate some budget. We as an association, will also facilitate sponsorships for those interested in being trained and developed. Our platform is to provide that link for people to go international as well as to assist the chefs.

Currently, we have limited professional courses in Maldives for Culinary industry. But the perks of being with CGM and WorldChefs; the chefs and interested candidates can have access to the many free webinars and other countless opportunities. I strongly believe that Chefs are expert consumers, transformers and vendors. They touch every layer of society as influencers, trendsetters and innovators. Becoming an accomplished chef is a journey of constant learning and improvement, it takes time, dedication and hours of hard work. But the reward is worth the sacrifice. We need to educate, network, compete and engage chefs in sustainable initiatives.

Though hospitality and tourism is still a male-dominated industry, I am proud to say that more women are breaking the stigma and joining the workforce every year. Alongside men, women are also working in the service industry, and even in the professional kitchens.

Destination dining is becoming increasingly popular in tourist destinations? What are your thoughts on this unique segment for Maldives?

The Maldives has a reputation for being the most romantic destination in the world. But there's relatively a small percentage of tourists visiting the Maldives for destination dining. A variety of cuisines are available in most high-end resorts, but I feel that we lack incorporating "Authentic Maldivian Cuisines" into the menus. Most of the resorts have bandwagon of Maldivian nights with local cuisines. But these dining events are not authentic Maldivian gastronomies, it is mostly a fusion of Asian cuisines. I have experienced this in lot of resorts.

Our cuisine is so rich, we have so many varieties that are associated to the different atolls and islands in the Maldives. I believe Maldivian Authentic Cuisine Restaurants should be introduced in the Resorts; which will in turn give more opportunities for the talented local Chefs to showcase their talents. In fact, we are planning to have a Food Festival as part of the Tourism Golden Jubilee Celebrations this year. Competitions and training sessions will also be held during the festival. I believe many resorts will be interested to take part in an event like this.

Talking about creativity, how challenging is it to offer chefs solutions without compromising on their freedom to be creative?

The opportunity to be creative is widely given in the industry and there are well known chefs who are dedicated to explore and deliver new ideas to the table. More opportunities need to be openly given to the public to welcome individuals to the industry.

When you see adverts it is mostly opened to a certain level, some recruiters advertise chefs positions only to a certain level. Senior positions such as Executive Chefs are not advertised for application, and these positions are given usually to foreigners. However, I believe that the opportunities should be given to showcase their skills. Equal opportunities should be given for the potential candidates to show their creativity and passion.

What were the key takeaways from last year's events and exhibitions?

Last year's virtual event was a huge milestone for us. Previously, virtual culinary competitions were never endorsed by Worldchefs. CGM took the initiative and compiled a rulebook that Worldchefs slightly amended and endorsed. Worldchefs was grateful for our inputs and efforts given for the rulebook and they were interested in publishing it on their official website for other Chefs' Associations' reference. It was quite a difficult task to have a virtual cooking competition, as we will be lacking the aspect of tasting. However, we managed to successfully pull it off and it was a huge honor to get it accepted by the Worldchefs.

What are the sustainable initiatives which can be implemented by the Chefs and key stakeholders in the Food and Hospitality industry?

For sustainable initiatives, Waste Management is a vital area of focus. There are webinars and seminars that address this issue. We need to educate, advocate and engage more people aware of the Waste Management procedures, and the food materials that can be recycled and reused.

Do you have any plans to expand your current portfolio or anything special that you are looking forward to in the coming years?

My primary focus is growth and development of youth and existing chefs in the Maldives' Hospitality and Culinary industry. I would like to see my own "Culinary and Hospitality School" for the future millennials to build a strong foundation as a stepping stone for their career.

Any words of wisdom for aspiring chefs and millennials looking forward to change the taste buds in the culinary industry?

Those aspiring chefs seeking a career in the culinary industry should be proud of what they are doing and they should always have the passion to cook and to be in this hospitality industry. Show your pride in your whites, be respectful to it and be proud of wearing your white uniform, that is only how you can portray your passion. As a Woman; stand tall in the community - Be enthusiastic, passionate, honest and positive.

EVENTS & AWARDS

SriLankan Airlines Bags IT Silver Award at the FITIS Digital Excellence Awards



digitaltransformationawards.lk / themorning.lk

SriLankan Airlines won the Silver Award in the “Corporate IT Awards” category at the Digital Excellence Awards organized by FITIS (Federation of Information Technology Industry in Sri Lanka) which was held recently.

The “Corporate IT Awards” recognizes and rewards companies that deliver outstanding operational

excellence, measurable business advantage, tangible customer experience or outstanding impact through leading-edge implementation and usage of information technology. The assessment criteria is chiefly based on how Digital Transformation is achieved through a given product or system. Further, “Corporate IT Awards” aims to identify and celebrate IT organizations that go the extra mile to sustain their

new technology and operational capabilities in the long run by addressing the critical business needs of their organization and people.

‘Digitalized Flight Operations through AeroOps (Tech Crew VR) and CabinOps (CCVR – Cabin Crew VR)’ was the entry forwarded by SriLankan Airlines, which mainly highlighted the operational transformation achieved onboard with the automation of Voyage Report processes related to both Tech and Cabin Crew members. This enabled productivity and efficiency in the operations while streamlining the back-office support services for improved user and passenger experience.

Digitalizing the flight crew Voyage Report (VR) capturing process; safety details capturing and analysis process, workflow configurations and providing comprehensive management information for decision making in terms of safety, regulatory and operational aspects are the main benefits. Regulatory information capturing, sharing, and storing electronically in secure and reliable form has aligned this system with compliance requirements. A strategic decision was taken to develop a solution with in-house software engineering resources who possess expert knowledge in airline domain, systems integration & mobile app development. Through this initiative the airline has saved 2M USD cash outflow.

Hurawalhi Wins Prestigious Accolades at Hotel Travel Awards 2021



Hurawalhi Maldives has been announced as the winner of multiple prestigious Hotel Travel Awards 2021, bringing a fantastic end to the year!

The Hotel Travel Awards recognises and rewards hotels worldwide based on the exceptional service and facilities they provide to their guests. Their world-class inspectors were thrilled with the exceptional facilities and outstanding service they experienced while inspecting our resort and we

couldn't be more proud. Awards such as these are only possible due to the dedicated and professional team we have here at Hurawalhi and a huge thank you goes to each and every one of them.

Hurawalhi Maldives received the following awards:

WINNER: FINEST LUXURY SUSTAINABLE HOTEL RESORT WORLDWIDE – ‘Luxury Treading Lightly’ ethos underpins its environmental efforts.

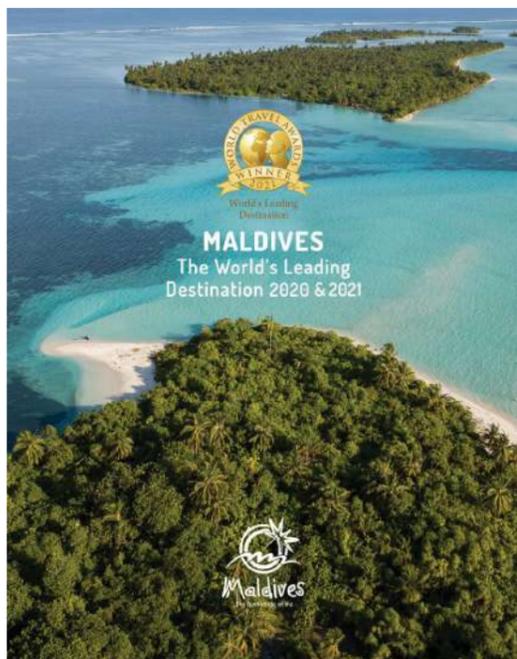
WINNER: BEST GENERAL MANAGER WORLDWIDE – Brad Calder has been at the helm of Hurawalhi, and neighbouring Kudadoo Maldives Private Island by Hurawalhi since 2017.

WINNER: FINEST LUXURY UNDERWATER RESTAURANT WORLDWIDE – 5.8 Undersea Restaurant has scooped many accolades and the exquisite dining experiences that its guests enjoy, are cited as holiday highlights never to be forgotten.



EVENTS & AWARDS

Maldives Consecutively Secures the World's Leading Destination Title and More Accolades at WTA 2021



It was a triumphant night for Maldives as the country once again secured the World's Leading Destination title and other accolades at World Travel Awards 2021. The announcement was made at the WTA 2021 ceremony held virtually on December 16, 2021.

Established in 1993, World Travel Awards is the most prestigious honors program in global travel. The award is recognized globally as the ultimate hallmark of industry excellence. The distinguished award is of great value to the destination, especially as it was achieved during such a challenging time. Maldives won the title by competing against 18 destinations including Dubai, Indonesia, Spain, Vietnam, USA and Greece.

Speaking about the achievement, Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations (MMPRC)

Thoyyib Mohamed expressed his sincere gratitude to everyone who voted for Maldives. MD Thoyyib noted that the achievement is possible due to the concerted efforts of the Government of Maldives, the Ministry of Tourism, other authorities, associations, NGOs and all tourism sector stakeholders. He particularly acknowledged the tireless effort of MMPRC employees in maintaining

destination presence, marketing the destination as a safe haven, promoting our tourism products and our unique geography and experiences which promoted travelers confidence towards the destination post covid.

This is the second time the Maldives won the World's Leading Destination in a row. The Maldives won the prestigious award last year during one of the most challenging periods for the tourism industry. The award is a testament to the strength, dedication, effort and planning shown by the Maldivian government during the pandemic.

During the marketing efforts, emphasis was placed on promoting the unique geographical formation of the Maldivian islands and the key USP 'one-island-one-respect-concept'. These characteristics make Maldives one of the safest destinations to travel to, thus making it a 'safe haven' for all travellers.

Several marketing activities and campaigns were carried out in 2021, providing a platform for tourists from around the world to relive the happiness and rediscover the wonders of Maldives. MMPRC carried out 209 different marketing activities in 24 global markets in 2021. These include 109 marketing campaigns in 24 markets, 60 fairs & virtual events, 10 roadshows and 30 familiarization trips. With interviews and other participation over 400 activities were conducted in 2021.

Maldives has also won 4 awards in the Indian Ocean category at World Travel Awards, attesting to this. These categories are Indian Ocean's Leading Destination 2021, Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination, Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination 2021, Indian Ocean's Leading Tourist Board 2021. The destination has also won the famed Indian Ocean's Leading Destination award 14 times within the last 18 years.

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NEW OPENINGS

Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa to Debut in 2022



The Emerald Collection, a luxury resort group behind Emerald Maldives Resort & Spa, has announced its expansion with the acquisition of Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa. Set on a seven-hectare private island in the Raa Atoll, and framed by an extensive lagoon of 100 hectares, Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa will open on May 1, 2022 and is currently in the process of affiliating with The Leading Hotels of the World.

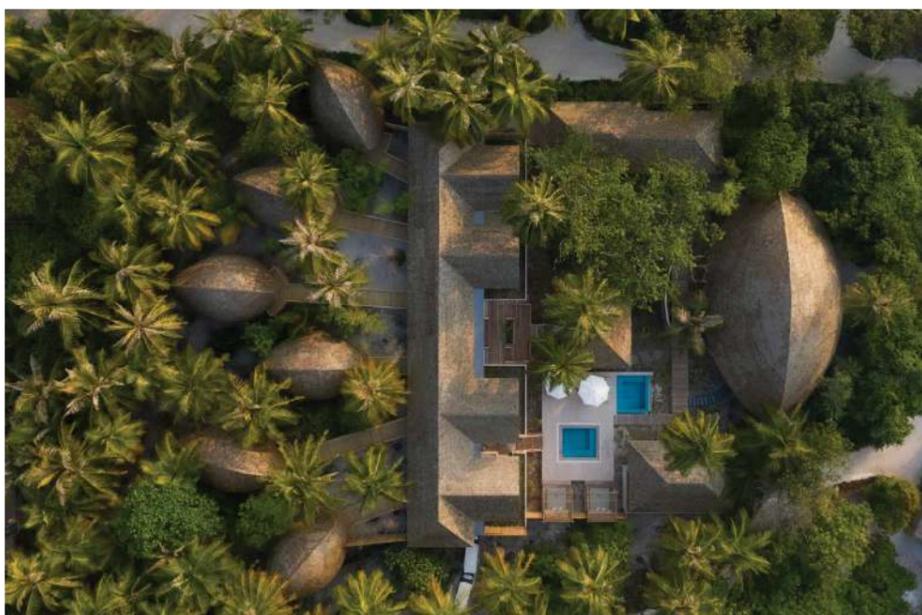
The island has 80 villas, split into six different categories: Beach Villas (10), Family Villas with Pool (10), Beach Villas with Pool (17), Water Villa with Pool (39), Superior Water Villa with Pool (3) and one Presidential Villa located on the beach.

The resort will have five restaurants and two bars to choose from, as part of its signature "Deluxe All-Inclusive" packaging. The signature Italian restaurant, Mediterraneo, and Eclipse Bar are both located on the resort's jetty, with the former serving Italian dishes, and the latter serving cocktails and aperitifs.

The resort also houses Emerald Spa, hidden amongst the vegetation. It comprises eight air-conditioned spa suites elevated among the palm trees, where the design and oval roofs resemble eco-friendly spaceships. There is a steam room, a manicure and pedicure corner, a yoga pavilion, plunge pools, a spa boutique, and an immersive

relaxation area. The spa menu draws from Balinese tradition and includes a host of relaxing body massages and detoxifying facials. Designed with sports- and fitness-lovers in mind, Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa has one large tennis court and one paddle court in the marina, along with an air-conditioned Gym & Sports Centre with Technogym equipment.

Emerald Faarufushi Resort & Spa will offer extensive water sports facilities and diving at the five-star Diving Centre, where guests can achieve PADI license. A dedicated Dolphin Kids' Club is under construction and will comprise complimentary indoor and outdoor facilities for children aged three to 12.



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IN THE NEWS

Ooredoo Maldives launches Golden Year SIM Pack for Tourists Travelling to Maldives in 2022!

Ooredoo Maldives has launched its all new Golden Year SIM pack for tourists, as part of its celebration of Maldives Tourism Golden Jubilee. This special SIM pack dedicated to tourists was launched by the Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed.

The special SIM Pack includes massive data allowances including dedicated social media data with a validity of one month enabling the visitors to stay in touch with their friends and family afar and share their beautiful journey here in the Maldives.

"We are super excited as the whole nation gears up to celebrate its Golden Jubilee Year in tourism. We are pleased to be a part of the celebration and make this year even more colorful. Our launch of Magey Raajje Calendar and the Golden Year SIM pack is a just the beginning of the activities planned for the year. We remain committed to the people of the Maldives and will continue to enrich the lives of our communities and be a part of its celebrations. We hope this year will further flourish the tourism industry in the Maldives." Ooredoo Maldives Chief Commercial Officer, Hussain Niyaz.

"We at Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation are happy to hear about Ooredoo's special sim card celebrating the Golden Jubilee year of Maldivian Tourism. We appreciate Ooredoo's efforts in ensuring that travelers are connected with the world as they vacation in the sunny side of life". Managing Director of MMPRC, Thoyyib Mohamed.

Ooredoo Maldives has always worked closely with the stakeholders of the tourism industry extending its support through innovative solutions and enabling digital transformation within the industry. In 2020, upon reopening of the borders for travelers, the company also partnered with Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Tourism Ministry and Orca Media Group and launched a destination marketing campaign



"Visit Maldives Now" reaching its international network of over 117 million people across 10 countries.

Despite The impact of the global pandemic, with the joint effort of the stakeholders of the tourism sector, Maldives has made tremendous progress over the past year. Ooredoo Maldives congratulates the nation on this great win and wishes 2022 brings even more success.

Seven Islands in Baa Atoll Join Forces on Recycling with Soneva Namoonaa



Four more islands in Baa Atoll have started working with Soneva Namoonaa to pilot a sustainable waste management system that can be adopted throughout the Maldives.

Dhonfanu, Kamadhoo, Kudarikilu and Kendhoo have joined the original three Namoonaa islands in Baa Atoll—Maalhos, Dharavandhoo, and Kihaadhoo—to commission a recyclable waste collection boat, which will regularly collect recyclable waste from the islands. On December 6, 2021 the boat collected segregated, compacted, and baled recyclable waste from all seven islands for the first time the Maldives.

The boat collected over 50 tonnes of recyclable waste from the seven islands, consisting of aluminium, other metals, cardboard, tetra-paks (beverage cartons), and plastics, all of which will be

sent abroad for recycling.

The island council Presidents of the seven islands joined the collection boat to celebrate this milestone of the Soneva Namoonaa programme.

Local islands face significant challenges in disposing of their waste in a clean and environmentally sound manner. Waste is rarely segregated properly into different types, which is a prerequisite for recycling, the waste management centres often lack equipment, and managing waste properly can be costly.

Soneva Namoonaa is implementing a radically new approach to waste management, focusing on island-level solutions, in partnership with the island councils and local communities.

The seven Baa Atoll islands that are part of Soneva Namoonaa have made great strides in tackling the waste problem, including:

- Cleaning up all the legacy waste that was piled up in the island waste management centres. Under the activity, 'fresh start', all the waste was first segregated and all the recyclable waste was sent for recycling.

- Using baling machines to massively reduce the volume of recyclable waste, making it easier to store, handle, and transport.

- Working together to create enough baled, compacted recyclable waste to fill the collection boat.

Commenting on the collection boat now visiting all seven Namoonaa islands in Baa Atoll, Ibrahim Rahman, Kendhoo Island Council President, said: "A good waste management system, which compliments local lifestyles of small developing communities, is the most necessary solution that our isolated islands need. This ongoing collaborative initiative of Soneva Namoonaa, implemented with these seven islands, represents a huge success and advancement in our waste management systems. Soneva Namoonaa has demonstrated an effective alternative approach to one of our biggest concerns."

Azhoora Ahmed, President of Soneva Namoonaa NGO, said: "It has been a privilege working with these island communities who have all taken proactive steps to take control of the waste they produce. The Namoonaa Model shows how islands can work together to support each other. We are excited to see how this example could be adopted by more island clusters in the Maldives." Azhoora Ahmed, President of Soneva Namoonaa NGO.

Soneva Namoonaa's work in Dhonfanu, Kamadhoo, Kudarikilu and Kendhoo is funded by the Soneva Foundation and USAID's Clean Cities, Blue Ocean program.



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IN THE NEWS

Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) Celebrates 41 Years of Service



Maldives Transport and Contracting Company Plc (MTCC) marks 41 years of service since its establishment in 1980.

Attended by the President of Maldives, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, a special ceremony was held at Henvairu Football Stadium to celebrate the occasion. Speaking at the event, President Solih described MTCC as one of the most important partners, one that the people trusted for its quality of service and timely completion of projects.

CEO of MTCC, Adam Azim also extended his remarks and highlighted that with the expansion of the company, they are taking on more projects and the duration to complete these projects have shortened over the past few years, "In 2018, MTCC carried out 25 projects simultaneously. Currently, 94 projects are being carried out at the same time."

Azim estimates the profit to be higher for the company this year compared to 2020.

One of the largest projects currently undertaken by MTCC is the first phase of the "Integrated National Public Ferry Network"—a large-scale project that would introduce efficient, affordable, convenient, and sustainable passenger and cargo ferry services across the country. The first phase of the project would see the launch of ferry services in Haa Alifu, Haa Dhaalu and Shaviyani Atolls.

The company aims to train 100 individuals in the next three years under its technical skills training programme. During the ceremony, President Solih was presented with a copy of the book "Kaamiyaabu 40" about the achievements of MTCC over its 40-year history by Mohamed Faheem, the Chairman of MTCC.



At the function, President Solih also presented commemorative plaques to long-serving employees of the company, with Vice President Faisal Naseem handing over letters of acceptance to participants who were selected for the employee training programmes for 2021.

Moreover, recently MTCC has signed an agreement with The Maldives National University to establish a Maritime Survival Center. During the signing ceremony held at MTCC building, CEO Adam Azim signed on behalf of MTCC and Dr. Mohamed Shareef, Vice Chancellor, signed on behalf of MNU. Scope of works include, 1200cbm of land filling operations, construction of a 35m sheet pile quay wall, a 27.25m L-Section Quay wall, a 4.2X4m ramp and installation of mooring bollards. The value of the project is MVR 4.59 million. The project is to be completed within 210 days.

President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih Launches the NBAM Initiative - the "Life Jacket - Wear it" Campaign

On the first day of the 6th edition of the Maldives Marine Expo 2021 (December 13, 2021), President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih launched - the "Life Jacket - Wear it" Campaign. It was an initiative of National Boating Association of Maldives's (NBAM) as a Nationwide Campaign. The aim of the campaign is to make people more aware of the impact of their behavior, and in particular, alert people to the increased likelihood of severe injury or fatality if safety equipment is not on board or not used properly.

Initiating this awareness campaign is rather crucial

for maritime safety especially regarding the importance of wearing life jackets. Additionally, with all the tragic cases that have happened, NBAM believes that this should be implemented promptly. The importance of this campaign is not just for liveboards, however, for the entire boating sector of Maldives.

HE Ibrahim Mohamed Solih had kindly taken the time out of his schedule to launch this rather crucial awareness campaign for NBAM. This launching was



done in the presence of the key sponsors and partners of the campaign.

NBAM thanked the President of the Maldives, His Excellency Ibrahim Mohamed Solih for the inauguration of this safety awareness campaign. NBAM's executive board, key sponsors and partners, highly appreciated the President's kind gesture.

IN THE NEWS

FSM Reveals Rebranded Logo and Colors as It Turns 21 Years!

Fuel Supplies Maldives (FSM) reveals rebranded logo and colors on the occasion of its 21st Anniversary. The new logo was unveiled in a special ceremony held at CROSSROADS Maldives by Hon. Mohamed Aslam, Minister of National Planning, Housing & Infrastructure. Along with the new logo, a new company slogan "Fueling the Nation", a new flag and uniform was revealed too. The flag was unveiled by FSM's Chairman Abdul Wahid Moosa.

According to FSM, the logo is displayed in the shape of a chemical compound of hydrocarbon and its blue section showcases the vast sea surrounding the Maldives islands while the orange-colored parts represent the various types of fuel offered by the company. And the white lines in-between showcase its service network across the country. The logo was designed by Publicity Bureau.

The Managing Director of FSM, Mohamed Gasam

highlighted the key achievements that led to the current success of the company despite the challenges and unprecedented impacts from the pandemic. He further commended the efforts of all its team members and stakeholders over the long journey.



Speaking at the ceremony, CEO and Managing Director of State Trading Organization (STO) Hussain Amru stated that, "Despite the scale of the operation, the company provides fuel without interruptions across the country". FSM has been providing fuel continuously to islands, both residential islands and resorts. It was a global scale operation with dedicated staffs.

Further highlighting the hard work of FSM employees, Amru noted that even during bad weather conditions when red alerts are issued, the fuel operation cannot be interrupted, nor was it stopped during the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country.

As said in the new slogan of the company, "Fueling the Nation," FSM continues to maintain its place as

the leading fuel supplier and distributor of the Maldives with further expansion endeavors planned ahead.

FSM, is now a fully owned Subsidiary of STO PLC, formed with the main objective of streamlining fuel distribution in the country and to offer easy and convenient access to fuel throughout the country. Since its inception FSM has built a strong distribution infrastructure to cater to the needs of the country and has been able to establish a network for distribution of fuel, which has helped to create easy access to all. With the introduction of new technologies FSM has revolutionized the way fuel is delivered and handled in the country, and has set standards for the others in the industry to follow.

National Boating Association of Maldives Elects the New Board of NBAM for 2022 & 2023



On December 25, 2021, at SALT Café' and Restaurant, the National Boating Association of Maldives elected the new Management Team and Executive Board for the years 2022 & 2023. A total of 45 members participated in the AGM.

Ahmed Afrah, the President of the NBAM initiated and presented the Annual report of 2020-2021 and shared the key achievements of NBAM with the members and stakeholders. He appreciated the support received from the sponsors, partners and members amid the challenges faced by all the stakeholders in the industry in 2 years.

Secretary General of NBAM, Mr. Ashraf explained the transparent procedure of the voting process and how the new executive board will be elected. As members - Aboobakuru, Suood and Aminath oversaw the official proceedings of the AGM for smooth and transparent procedure.

The following were elected to the Executive Board of NBAM for the year 2022-2023.

The Management Team of NBAM for 2022 & 2023:

- Ismail Hameed** – President
- Abdulla Ibrahim Fulhu** – Vice President
- Ahmed Ibrahim** – Treasurer

The Executive Board of NBAM for 2022 & 2023:

1. **Abdulla Nasheed**
2. **Ahmed Afrah**
3. **Ahmed Zubair Adam**
4. **Aminath Salah**
5. **Amir Mansoor**
6. **Hussain Aman**
7. **Ibrahim Shahid**
8. **Mariyam Maaisha Shujau**
9. **Moosa Rasheed**

As this term ends for the National Boating Association of Maldives, the achievements and the work done during these past 2 years are plenty. With the hard hit of the worldwide pandemic, the Maldivian boating industry, which depends on tourism arrivals, was nearly crippled.

However, with hard work, a lot of teamwork, patience and strategic thinking; NBAM is still here stronger than ever. Its membership numbers have increased, despite the difficulties faced due to COVID-19. Looking at the achievements, the National Boating Association of Maldives has pulled off the largest Marine Expo held in the Maldives. With over 60+ exhibitors it came about to become a huge success. Furthermore, NBAM has also launched the nationwide safety awareness campaign 'Life Jacket – Wear It' and also conducted many other activities in regard to development, promotion and human resource development of the industry. NBAM expresses gratitude towards each and every one who has always supported the industry and aided in making progress in Maldives tourism.

About National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM)

National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) came into existence with the change of Liveboard Association of Maldives (LAM established on 4th June 2007) and NBAM (established in December 2018). NBAM is an independent membership-driven organization with the aim of developing the Boating and Marine Industry of Maldives.

BON APPÉTIT

Chicken Curry Pide

Food is a great conduit with which to travel the world, experience new cultures, and connect with other people- and this is exactly what Chef Olivier has been doing for more than 20 years. Originally from the Loire Valley in France, Chef has followed his passion for food from stand- alone restaurants to resorts in the USA, Thailand, Lebanon, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Mauritius. Most recently, he has found himself in the Maldives, which has naturally made an impressionable culinary impact on his career.



Chicken Curry Pide is the perfect dish – it is easy to make, and like a pizza, can be shared with family and friends over lunch, dinner, or an afternoon snack. It can be personalised to anyone's liking, with endless possibilities simply by switching up a few ingredients and garnishes. Additionally, the pide base can be creatively designed: Chef's favourite is in the form of a Dhoni, a traditional Maldivian boat. This recipe brings the Maldives experience right to where it matters most: the table. With fresh ingredients, a unique shape for an exotic location, and a burst of flavours and colours, Chef Olivier's Chicken Curry Pide has to be the next dish you prepare.

Ingredients for the Dough:

- Pizza flour 135 gr
- Water 75 gr
- Salt 2 gr
- Olive oil 4 ml
- Yeast 0.2 gr

Method:

Combine all ingredients, gradually adding the water during mixing. Keep aside and covered to rest and proof for at least a few hours.

Ingredients for the Pide:

- Pide dough as above
- Chicken curry as above
- Mozzarella cheese for pizza (grated) 40 gr
- Green chili (thin sliced) (optional according to taste)
- Red onion (thin sliced) 10 gr
- Masmirus (chicken condiment) 5 gr
- Fried drumstick leaves (Thelulifayi) 3 gr
- Fresh coriander 3 gr

Method:

- Set your oven to 200°C.
- Dust the table with flour and use a rolling pin to flatten the dough into an oblong shape.
- Fold the borders and twist the two extremities to give the classic pide shape.
- Cook the dough in the oven for 5 minutes, then take it out.
- Set oven to 250°C.
- Garnish the pide with chicken curry, grated mozzarella cheese, and green chili.
- Baked for a few minutes until the cheese is melted, then take it out.
- Sprinkle the pide with masmirus, fried drumstick leaves, red onion, and fresh coriander.
- Serve immediately for best results.

Ingredients for the Chicken Curry:

- Chicken thigh boneless 80 gr
- Garlic (chopped) 10 gr
- Ginger (chopped) 5 gr
- Onion (chopped) 15 gr
- Sunflower oil 3 ml
- Maldivian curry paste 15 gr (homemade from local island is better)
- Tomato (puree) 15 gr
- Curry leaves 1 gr to flavour
- Pandan leaves 5 gr to flavour (optional)
- Chili (scotch bonnet) to flavour (optional if less spicy)
- Coconut milk 20 ml
- Salt

Method:

- Slice the chicken into regular pieces; it should be easy to bite when used as a topping later.
- In hot oil, sauté the chicken for a minute while stirring, then remove the chicken and keep it aside.
- In the same oil, add the chopped onion, garlic, and ginger; stir until fragrant.
- Add the curry paste, curry leaves, and salt. Stir well and sauté for 1 or 2 minutes.
- Put the chicken back into the mixture and sauté until coated with the paste on all sides.
- Add 100ml of water, tomato puree, pandan leaf and chili; bring to a simmer.
- Cook the chicken curry and let the water reduce.
- When the chicken is cooked, add the coconut milk and reduce until the curry has a thickness like pizza sauce.
- Check seasoning, then remove pandan leaves and chili. Keep the curry aside.



Courtesy of
Executive Chef Olivier Portret
Lily Beach Resort & Spa



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Frankly Speaking

We are at the end of the fiscal year and the tourism industry has been continuously talking about the growth and shortage of rooms for the New Year period, as well as unavailability of parking slots for aircrafts. Amidst current demand for tourism, the black market for United States dollar has skyrocketed over the past few days. Are we heading into a similar crisis as our neighboring countries are facing?



Ibrahim Nizam
Managing Director
The Grand Associates

The Maldives is a global brand in tourism, particularly in luxury travel. While it is a prestige for the international hotel chains to have their presence in The Maldives, the travelers consider it their once in a lifetime dream destination. We the stakeholders and industry professionals should join hands together to ensure that the brand Maldives remains in the hearts and minds of the global travelers for years to come. Wishing everyone a happy new year filled with joy of a healthy and wealthy life.



Abdul Latheef
President
SME & Entrepreneurs Federation of Maldives (SEF-M)

One reason why we have \$ issue is, we have not established a foreign currency retention system in the Maldives, like the system in India. The second is that the dollars coming into the Maldives are controlled by macroeconomic segments at their discretion like how it was in Thailand during 2002. The evidence that this is the case in Maldives is that no matter what rate is determined by the Maldivian Government, dollars are only available for 2 rufiyaa more than the stipulated rate. The case in Thailand and Malaysia also demonstrates that the best option for Maldives is to maintain the rufiyaa pegged to the dollars. This pandemic has demonstrated that due to our geographical distribution we have unique opportunities. If we can increase productivity by improving domestic transport efficiency to divert air traffic to different regional airports and establish a better currency retention system, we can reduce the dollar rate for Rufiyaa in the Maldives.



Mirsaad Mohamed
Managing Director
Travel Connection Maldives

Maldives economy is very much different from its neighboring countries. History is evidence. Our GDP and growth inspire of having slow reform, and political situation are amazingly promising even in situations like COVID. Currency Black market is not because of economy or lack of FC inflow but due to poor regulations and corruption. Indeed it has certain impact on business but not on over all economy as a threat. Our economy has never been depending on any of the situation of neighbor country. Our economy is stable and growth is stable.



Ahmed Riyaz
Director
Toddy Inc

SME's are the majority of businesses in the world and it's a vital part of our economy too. And we are suffering because we have to rely on this black market 'business'.

I think it's about time MMA allows businesses without tourism operating license to do business in USD as well.



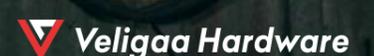
Shaaz Waleed
Managing Director
Resort Life Travel

As long as Foreigners run businesses keeping locals behind, we will go down the drain day by day.

As long as foreigners are illegally doing handling agency business and many other businesses, this will allow them to avoid paying the correct tax amounts as well. If this continues, Maldives will be in more serious positions due to these hidden business activities.

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