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Email : [news@islandchief.com](mailto:news@islandchief.com) | Hotline : +960 7980088



NESCAFÉ

TASTE OF ADVENTURE

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## FROM WHITE SANDS TO GREEN GOALS

with

**H.E. Thoriq Ibrahim**

Minister of Tourism and Environment,  
Republic of Maldives



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**Website:**



Address:  
Maldives Publications Pvt Ltd  
Champa Building 4, 5th Floor  
Orchid Magu,  
Male' City 20189  
Maldives

Mobile : +960 798-0088  
Phone : +960 3306606, 3307898  
Email : [sales@islandchief.com](mailto:sales@islandchief.com)

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Dear Readers,

As June unfolds with its promise of progress and vitality, The Islandchief is proud to present a dynamic round-up of developments shaping the Maldives' ever-evolving tourism and aviation landscape.

A historic milestone was achieved as Maafaru International Airport welcomed its first wide-body Boeing 777 aircraft—marking a significant leap toward long-haul connectivity and reinforcing its role as a northern gateway to the luxurious resorts of Noonu, Raa, and Baa Atolls. In parallel, President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu officially opened the Muli Airport in Meemu Atoll, a vital step in the nation's continued commitment to decentralizing air access and strengthening domestic tourism.

Regionally, connectivity is taking flight as Emirates and Air China enter a strategic partnership set to deepen links between China and the UAE. Meanwhile, the Maldives Marine Expo secures its future under MEDIUM Events through 2031, a move that amplifies the global significance of our marine industry and its contribution to sustainable growth.

Among regional event highlights, Colombo played host to IODA Ocean Summit 2025, uniting the Indian Ocean diving community in celebration of marine tourism and regional collaboration. Closer to home, the Aviation Forum – Connect Maldives returned for its second edition with a major announcement: the new terminal at Velana International Airport is on track to open on July 26, 2025. This critical infrastructure upgrade signals a transformative era for the Maldives as it prepares to accommodate over two million visitors annually.

This month's cover story features an exclusive interview with H.E. Thoriq Ibrahim, Minister of Tourism and Environment, who shares his ambitious vision for a greener, more resilient tourism model. With a career that bridges engineering and environmental leadership, Minister Thoriq is spearheading initiatives that position the Maldives as a global leader in sustainable island tourism.

In our Bon Appétit section, we spotlight Chef Darma of Sun Siyam Iru Veli, who delights with his elevated take on the beloved Hakuru Folhi Cake. His culinary journey—from Sri Lanka to Doha and now the Maldives—infuses tradition with creativity, delivering a dessert that is both nostalgic and exquisite.

Lastly, in our Frankly Speaking segment, we turn to key industry stakeholders for insights into the highly anticipated VIA terminal opening. While the expansion promises increased arrivals and air traffic, our contributors underscore the need for a holistic strategy—one that integrates aviation, tourism, diplomacy, and marketing to truly harness its potential.

Here's to new horizons, shared ambitions, and the enduring spirit of the islands.

Until next time,  
**The Islandchief Team**



## MAALI HINGUN – A Celebration of Culture and Color

Maali Hingun, also known as the Maali Parade, is a vibrant and spirited cultural event held during Eid festivities in the Maldives. Rooted in folklore and tradition, the parade features locals of all ages dressed in colorful costumes and masks, dancing through the streets to the rhythmic beats of boduberu, traditional Maldivian drums.

This lively procession brings the community together in celebration, showcasing traditional characters and performances that reflect the cultural heritage of the Maldives. With music, dance, and a festive atmosphere, Maali Hingun lights up the island, turning Eid into a truly unforgettable experience.

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# First Wide-Body Boeing 777 Lands at Maafaru International Airport Amid Certification Drive

Maafaru International Airport marked a historic milestone with the successful landing of its first wide-body aircraft, a Boeing 777, as part of a critical certification process. The move underscores the airport's emerging role as a major aviation hub in the Maldives.

The arrival of the Boeing 777 is a key component of the airport's certification phase to evaluate its readiness to handle wide-body aircraft operations. The process includes runway capacity testing, ground handling evaluations for passenger services, refueling, and cargo, as well as assessments of navigation and air traffic control systems to ensure compliance with international aviation standards.

Located in Noonu Atoll, Maafaru International Airport has recently undergone major infrastructure upgrades to accommodate larger aircraft and improve operational efficiency. Notably, the runway was extended from 2.2 km to 2.8 km, enabling the airport to receive aircraft such as the Boeing 777 and Airbus A330. The apron has also been expanded, doubling the number of

parking bays from 13 to 26 jets. These developments were spearheaded by the Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC).

Originally inaugurated in 2019, the airport temporarily halted international operations in May 2024 to complete these enhancements. With the upgrades now finalized, Maafaru has resumed operations, reinforcing its strategic importance within the country's aviation network. Initially built to support luxury tourism, providing direct access to premium resorts in Noonu, Raa, and Baa Atolls, the expanded airport is now positioned to handle direct long-haul flights from Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. This increased connectivity is expected to significantly boost tourism, reduce travel times for international visitors, and enhance economic opportunities by stimulating both passenger and cargo traffic.

The successful test landing of the Boeing 777 marks a new chapter for Maafaru International Airport as it gears up for full certification and broader international service.



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## ACROSS THE SKIES

# President Muizzu Inaugurates Muli Airport, Marking Milestone in Maldives' Aviation Expansion



President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu officially inaugurated Muli Airport on May 19, marking a significant advancement in domestic air travel and regional connectivity across the Maldives.

The inauguration ceremony, held in Meemu Atoll, was attended by key government figures including Minister at the President's Office Dr. Abdulla Muthalib, Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Mohamed Ameen, and

Regional Airports Company Limited (RACL) Managing Director Ahmed Mubeen, along with other senior state officials.

Originally commissioned in 2021 under the administration of former President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, Muli Airport was part of a broader national strategy to ensure that every inhabited island is within a 30-minute reach of an airport. Development works were contracted to the Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) for MVR 221 million, covering land reclamation of 14 hectares, 1,812 meters of coastal protection, and the construction of a 1,200-meter-long, 30-meter-wide runway along with associated taxiway and apron.

Despite initial plans to complete the project within a year, financial constraints led to delays. Reviving the

stalled project became a key campaign promise of President Muizzu during the 2023 presidential election.

Upon assuming office, his administration allocated an additional MVR 319 million, raising the total investment to MVR 540 million. MTCC completed the development, and the airport welcomed its first test flight on April 25, 2025.

Muli Airport is expected to significantly enhance domestic connectivity, spur local economic activity, and support the growth of guesthouse tourism in Meemu Atoll.

The launch of the airport underscores the Muizzu administration's ongoing efforts to strengthen national infrastructure and improve transportation access across the archipelago.

## Emirates and Air China ink Memorandum of Understanding to Explore Enhanced Partnership

Emirates and Air China have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to establish a strategic framework for expanding their existing reciprocal interline cooperation.

The signing took place on the sidelines of the 81st Annual General Meeting (IATA AGM) and World Air Transport Summit (WATS) in New Delhi.

The MoU was signed by Adnan Kazim, Emirates' Deputy President and Chief Commercial Officer and Yan Fei, Air China's Senior Vice President, Chief Commercial Officer, accompanied by senior executives from both sides.

**Adnan Kazim said:** "Our partnership with Air China commenced 26 years ago (July 1999) and since 2018 approximately, 18,000 Emirates customers have benefited from the expanded connectivity offered through our interline agreement.

Building on this success, we've recently announced the launch of two new Chinese cities—Shenzhen and Hangzhou—which will strengthen our East Asia operations. Shenzhen will

feature our best-in-class products, including our brand-new Premium Economy cabin. As we continue expanding our investments in Chinese mainland, we look forward to deepening our partnership with Air China to meet growing travel demand in this strategic market and create new pathways for travel and trade between China and the global community."

**Yan Fei said:** "Air China highly values the cooperation with Emirates. The signing of this memorandum is an important milestone for the deepening of the cooperation between the two sides. Air China continues to implement "Belt and Road Initiative". By collaborating with Emirates, we will further expand our route network in China-UAE and global market and jointly promote global connectivity."

Under the MOU, Emirates and Air China will explore a reciprocal codeshare on select routes across each other's networks. This would allow each airline to place its code on the other's flights on China-UAE trunk routes as well as beyond Beijing and Dubai to an expanded list of points.\*



Emirates and Air China will also develop a framework for cooperation across cargo operations and respective frequent flyer loyalty programme, enhancing their value proposition for both travellers and businesses.

To further ensure seamless

connectivity for customers, the two carriers will explore coordinating flight schedules or adjusting minimum connecting times. Once activated, customers of both airlines will benefit from a seamless booking process, single ticket itineraries and wider lounge access to new and exciting destinations.



IN A NUTSHELL

# A Ferrari in Paradise: Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi Partners with Hedley Studios for a One-of-a-Kind Bespoke Experience

Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi proudly announces a groundbreaking collaboration with Hedley Studios, the makers of hand-built classic sports cars that seamlessly fuse performance with collectible art. This exclusive partnership brings a rare Ferrari Testa Rossa J, one of only 299 models in existence, to the resort’s Ithaafushi Private Island as a living, breathing work of art, ready to be experienced by those who seek the exceptional.

Imagine waking up in your beachfront villa, stepping into a Silver Ferrari Testa Rossa J, and driving along the palm-fringed paths of the island to breakfast. Here, on the lush, sun-drenched shores of Ithaafushi Private Island, guests are invited not just to admire it, but to drive it.

This is more than an installation. It’s a journey into craftsmanship and design; a bespoke automotive art experience reserved for guests staying on the private island and will be invited to test drive the Ferrari Testa Rossa J during their stay,

and may even custom-order their own, beginning at USD 150,000.

Throughout the year, the Ferrari Testa Rossa J will be showcased during key island celebrations and exclusive events. From “The Ultimate Island Experience” to “Festive Gifting”, the Ferrari Testa Rossa J will take center stage in stories that celebrate craftsmanship, timeless beauty, and the spirit of escape.

“At Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi, we believe in crafting experiences that awaken the senses and stir the soul,” says TJ Joulak, General Manager of the resort. “Welcoming a piece of living history like the Ferrari Testa Rossa J is not only a celebration of beauty and legacy, it’s a gift to those who appreciate the extraordinary.”

Guests will see the Ferrari displayed during key seasonal moments and private events, further enhancing the resort’s status as a sanctuary for collectors, connoisseurs, and the



creatively curious. A masterpiece in motion. A statement in stillness. The ultimate island adventure awaits.

About Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi  
Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi is an unforgettable island escape with a wealth of experiences to discover. The resort features 117 reef, beach, and overwater villas spanning across three

interconnected islands, and the Maldives’ largest private island, Ithaafushi The Private Island, with dedicated staff and luxury amenities. Guests can experience culinary excellence through 11 distinctive dining venues, a world-class lifestyle spa sanctuary, and fitness centre, a children’s club, watersports and diving centre, and diversified activities for all generations.

## Experience the ‘Seven Wonders’ of Coco Bodu Hithi



Located in the crystal-clear waters of the North Malé Atoll, Coco Bodu Hithi offers a beautiful fusion of luxury and untouched nature. Recognised by Condé Nast Traveler Readers’ Choice Awards 2024 as one of the top resorts in the Indian Ocean, Coco Bodu Hithi offers serene escape, culinary excellence, curated experiences, underwater wonders and personalised service from a team of dedicated professionals.

Whether guests seek solitude, adventure, or relaxation, the resort’s exceptional service and natural beauty promise a personalized, meaningful, and memorable escape.

**Secluded Yet Convenient Location**  
Coco Bodu Hithi is just a short 35-minute speedboat ride from Velana International Airport. Close enough for convenience, yet far enough to feel truly secluded. It offers an ideal balance of accessibility and privacy, giving every guest a sense of effortless escape.

**Curated Couple Experiences**  
Tailored for honeymooners and awarded the title of ‘Indian Ocean’s Most Romantic Resort’ in the 2024 World Travel Awards, Coco Bodu Hithi offers romantic experiences like a sunset cruise, intimate pergola dinners under

the stars, private floating breakfasts, and a curated wellness journey at the overwater spa, featuring a “His & Her Coco Fusion Massage” as part of the Coco Splendid Honeymoon Offer.

**All About Delighting the Senses**  
From generous accommodation with private pools to exceptional cuisine and amenities, every detail is designed to impress. With 100 spacious villas offering private beach or lagoon access, couples can relax, reconnect, and enjoy intimate moments in a stunning natural setting.

**Personalised Service and Diverse Team**  
In addition to its beautiful surroundings and accommodations, Coco Bodu Hithi offers personalised service from a team of associates representing multiple nationalities, all embodying warmth and genuine hospitality. Guests are also cared for by a dedicated island host, ensuring they feel welcomed, valued, and looked after from the moment they arrive - often leaving with plans to return before they’ve even departed.

**Underwater Wonders**  
The island’s location offers exceptional snorkelling and diving opportunities. With direct access to flourishing coral reefs

and rich marine life, couples can discover the Maldives’ underwater world together – adding a touch of adventure to their romantic escape.

**Culinary Excellence**  
With a selection of fine dining options that showcase international and local flavours, Coco Bodu Hithi delights guests with culinary experiences that satisfy every palate – from fresh seafood to curated tasting menus in intimate oceanfront settings. A gourmet getaway in a Maldivian paradise, the resort regularly welcomes Michelin-starred chefs to the island, creating exceptional culinary moments that complement the work of Group Culinary Director and Michelin-starred Chef Martin Cahill.

**Sustainable Practices**  
Sustainability is at the heart of Coco Bodu Hithi. The resort’s commitment to supporting local communities includes sourcing fresh, sustainably caught fish directly from Maldivian fishermen. This not only brings the true taste of the Maldives to the table, but also supports local traditions and encourages responsible fishing – helping to protect the marine ecosystem for generations to come.



## IN A NUTSHELL

# Patina Maldives and The Ritz-Carlton Maldives Announce Inaugural Fari Islands Festival



Patina Maldives and The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands have joined forces to launch the Fari Islands Festival - a celebration of culture, creativity, and conscious living – taking place from 19-22 September 2025. This inaugural edition will bring together world-leading contemporary creatives and thought leaders including Canadian poet and illustrator Rupri Kaur, British DJ Kim Turnbull, and Tokyo-born fine food movement Wagyumafia, establishing the Fari Islands Festival as a distinctive new moment in the Indian Ocean's cultural calendar.

This unique partnership brings together two leading resorts in a shared commitment to shaping a more inspired and mindful Maldivian experience, set within the serene and forward-thinking Fari Islands archipelago.

## An Invitation to Engage with Depth and Intention

Conceived not as a spectacle but as an experience of resonance and reflection, the Fari Islands Festival invites discerning guests to immerse themselves in a world of ideas and artistry.

The 4-day programme has been thoughtfully composed to offer guests the opportunity to connect with contemporary thought leaders, creators and innovators in ways that are immersive, considered and wholly original.

**Creative Artistry:** Internationally celebrated poet Rupri Kaur will lead the festival's creative discourse, delivering a series of intimate readings and reflective dialogues that explore language, emotion and personal truth.

**Body, Mind and Soul:** The Bamford Experience, hosted by wellness expert CJ Jones-Leake alongside sustainability advocate and former professional athlete Anthony Mullally, offers a daily rhythm of grounding rituals, including breathwork, movement and integrative therapies.

**Nature Amplified:** National Geographic Explorer and shark scientist Gibbs Kuguru, in partnership with the Olive Ridley Project, leads a series of explorations designed to deepen awareness of the Maldives' marine ecosystems. Through guided snorkelling trips, conservation workshops and reflective discussions, guests will be invited into a renewed relationship with the ocean.

**Sonic Immersion:** British DJ and creative force Kim Turnbull curates the island's sonic identity, shaping ambient soundscapes and live performances that align with the gentle cadence of the natural environment. Culinary Exploration: Gastronomy becomes a performance with Wagyu Mafia, whose celebrated Kobe beef ritual will be presented through a limited series of curated dinners. Meanwhile, award-winning cocktail studio Nutmeg and Clove will reimagine the island's bar culture through sensorial storytelling and spirited artistry.

## A Festival Rooted in Place

The festival is hosted across the Fari Islands, a rare example of architectural clarity and community-led design. At the heart of the archipelago lies Fari Marina Village, a shared destination that seamlessly connects both resorts through curated experiences in dining,

design, and the arts.

The Fari Islands is the only destination in the Maldives where two distinct resort philosophies coexist in effortless harmony. Patina Maldives, an expression of transformative luxury and artistic curiosity, encouraging guests to look beyond the moment and create lasting memories. In gentle contrast, The Ritz-Carlton Maldives embodies heritage, craft and natural flow, guided by the principle of the Circle of Life.

Together, they offer a fluid experience of rare depth, with guests invited to cross between both resorts, engaging in a dynamic yet intimate cultural programme crafted to nourish both inner and outer worlds.

"Patina Maldives was created as a place of purposeful presence, where guests are invited not only to passively experience but to participate. This festival extends that vision, encouraging guests to connect actively and meaningfully with ideas, artists and the natural world," shares Anthony Gill, General Manager of Patina Maldives.

"At The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, we honour the rhythm of nature and the richness of human connection. The Fari Islands Festival reflects that ethos, a gathering where culture, creativity and community come together with intention. It is an invitation to slow down, to listen deeply and to be moved by the beauty of meaningful exchange," adds Oscar Posta, General Manager of The Ritz-Carlton Maldives.

# Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives Partners with Essens Spa – A Wellness and Beauty Sanctuary for All Ages

Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives is excited to introduce Essens Spa, a newly launched wellness sanctuary designed for all ages. This transformative space blends Maldivian healing traditions with modern wellness therapies, offering an immersive journey of relaxation, rejuvenation, and renewal for adults, teens, and children alike.

Nestled amidst lush tropical foliage and the tranquil beachfront of Kanifushi Island, Essens Spa is a haven of holistic wellbeing, created to nourish the mind, body, and soul. From signature spa rituals for adults to dedicated treatments for teens and children, every experience at Essens Spa combines authenticity, care, and innovation.

"We are thrilled to partner with Essens Spa to enhance the wellness experience for our guests", said Mr. Ram Bhoyroo, General

Manager of Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives. "Essens Spa brings together family-friendly treatments, modern techniques, and the timeless beauty of Maldivian wellness, offering something for everyone—from adults seeking relaxation to teens and children discovering the joys of wellbeing."

Essens Spa offers a comprehensive wellness program with immersive spa journeys, yoga and detox sessions, healing rituals, and salon services. Signature treatments include the Essens Spa Journey, a 150-minute indulgence with a coconut scrub, full-body massage, traditional haircare ritual, and a coconut milk bath, all using locally sourced Maldivian ingredients to promote renewal.

For younger guests, the Kids Spa Experience offers playful treatments, while teen wellness rituals support youthful skin,



growing bodies, and emotional balance.

As the only spa in the Maldives' premium segment to offer ELEMIS BIOTEC facials, Essens Spa sets a new standard in skincare with advanced therapies such as ultrasonic peels, microcurrent sculpting, and LED light therapy.

Essens Spa also features Ayurvedic treatments, couples' massages, and salon services including haircuts, styling, and luxurious treatments. The Healing Touch Massage, using warm Maldivian sand



compresses, provides a deeply restorative experience.

Essens Spa embodies a vision to deliver world-class wellness infused with the soulful touch of Maldivian tradition. It is more than a spa—it is a serene haven where guests reconnect with themselves and the natural world, guided by healing hands and authentic hospitality.

Essens Spa at Atmosphere Kanifushi Maldives: A journey of beauty, balance, and wellbeing—for every guest, at every age.



## IN A NUTSHELL

# Flavour, Rhythm, and Romance Take Centre Stage at Sun Siyam Iru Veli's New Guest Experiences

Sun Siyam Iru Veli continues to redefine extraordinary moments with the curation of new experiences designed to enrich the holidays. These latest additions, ranging from gastronomic adventures to castaway escapes, invite guests to explore a different side of island life. With a focus on culinary storytelling and private celebrations, each moment has been designed with intention and flair, bringing a new meaning to the Sun Siyam Iru Veli experience.

**Teppanyaki Live Cooking**

Adding a theatrical touch to the island's culinary offerings, Sun Siyam Iru Veli now introduces Teppanyaki dining. It is a cooking tradition rooted in Japanese culture, where food and its preparation become a performance. At this newly launched experience, guests can enjoy a front-row seat to a lively performance. Flames rise, knives dance, and flavours unfold in real-time, with a choice of three curated menus: meat, seafood, or a combination of both. It is an experience where dining becomes a spectacle, creating moments of shared joy.

This experience requires advance booking with a confirmed menu selection. It is

also family-friendly, where children aged eight and above are welcome to join.

**Voyage of Vibes: A Sunset Cruise with Live DJ**

Combining music, movement, and Maldivian seascapes, this overwater DJ excursion sets a new tone for island adventures. As the 'Sun Cruise' sets sail across the open waters, a live DJ plays soulful beats to pair perfectly with the sunset. The music echoes over the horizon as the sky paints itself in soft amber light. With champagne or beer adding to the indulgence, guests can enjoy a journey that is both laidback and alive as the vessel glides over the open waters. Perfect for couples seeking something out of the ordinary, or friends celebrating in style. This exclusive experience accommodates a maximum of 10 guests and requires advance booking.

**Thali Lunch at Roma**

Every Monday and Thursday, Roma—Sun Siyam Iru Veli's signature overwater Mediterranean restaurant—takes a detour to North India. This gastronomic journey celebrates the region's rich culinary heritage through a Thali lunch. Guests can savour a traditional spread featuring



dishes inspired by Punjabi, Kashmiri, and Lucknowi recipes. Delicately balanced and deeply satisfying, the lunch is available in vegetarian and non-vegetarian variations, accompanied by homemade lassi and fragrant herbs freshly harvested from the resort's organic garden. It is a gentle homage to the diversity of Indian cuisine, served against the backdrop of the Indian Ocean. This exclusive lunch is offered every Monday and Thursday from 12.30 to 14.30, with a choice between vegetarian and non-vegetarian menus and advance reservation is required.

**Private Sunset Isle**

Few experiences are as intimate and timeless as moments shared on a private sandbank in the middle of the ocean. 'Our



Private Sunset Isle' excursion at Sun Siyam Iru Veli is designed especially for couples in search of privacy, connection, and a memory that feels entirely their own. Guests can escape to a secluded sandbank, an untouched islet surrounded by sea and sky, with only the sound of the tide for company. Beanbags are laid on soft white sand, and as twilight paints the sky, champagne and canapés are served under the setting sun. This castaway adventure promises moments of quiet connection and magic that stay long after the stars appear.

Offered daily at sunset, depending on weather and tide conditions, this experience invites couples to unwind in complete seclusion as day gives way to night, and must be booked in advance.

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## MOVERS &amp; SHAKERS

## Atmosphere Core Elevates Krishna P. Chalise to Senior Vice President Projects



Atmosphere Core, a leading hospitality company, has announced the promotion of Mr. Krishna P. Chalise to Senior Vice President Projects, marking a significant milestone in the company's ongoing

leadership evolution. In his new role, Mr. Chalise will oversee the end-to-end development and execution of all projects across the Maldives, a key region for the company's growth strategy.

"Krishna has played a pivotal role in resort development projects for us", said Mr. Salil Panigrahi, Group Managing Director of Atmosphere Core. "He has a deep understanding of the Maldivian terrain, coupled with the ability to deliver large-scale, complex projects cost effectively and often ahead of schedule. This promotion is both a recognition of his past accomplishments and a strategic move to harness his leadership as we expand further in the Indian

Ocean". With over 20 years of experience in the hospitality development sector in the Maldives and Nepal, Mr. Chalise is recognised as a forward-thinking project leader known for transforming bold, visionary concepts into world-class resorts. His expertise spans the entire project lifecycle, including conceptualisation, planning, design, execution, and timely delivery, with a consistent emphasis on quality, efficiency, and cost optimisation.

An integral part of the company since conception, Mr. Chalise has led the successful completion of more than a dozen islands in the Maldives, representing almost half a billion dollars' worth of development. He easily navigates complex regulatory

landscapes while delivering high-impact, financially viable developments. Through a sharp focus on market research, design optimisation, and value engineering, he has consistently achieved significant cost savings while maintaining the highest quality standards and enabling early resort openings.

Reflecting on his promotion, Mr. Chalise said, "If you want to succeed for tomorrow, be honest in your work and do it today. This new role is both an honour and a responsibility. I am deeply grateful for the trust placed in me by the leadership team, as we go ahead on this journey of building inspiring, sustainable, and guest-focused resorts that set new benchmarks for experiential travel in the Maldives".

## Shihab Mohamed Appointed Vice President, Sales and Marketing at Atmosphere Core

Hospitality company Atmosphere Core has appointed Shihab Mohammed as Vice President Sales and Marketing for seven resorts within two portfolios comprising of three resorts within the Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts and four resorts within COLOURS of OBLU brands.

Shihab brings with him over 14 years sales acumen and luxury hospitality knowledge and will share his diverse experience across a variety of market segments including MICE, strategic planning, revenue optimisation, and brand management.

Michel Politano, Senior Vice President at Atmosphere Core highlights the importance of this latest appointment, "Shihab's talent for innovative initiatives

coupled with his multi-functional experience in various commercial disciplines underpins his extensive career achievements to date. When seeking a new candidate to drive our business forward, Shihab's strategically focused approach made him perfect to lead the future growth for both Atmosphere Hotels & Resorts and COLOURS OF OBLU brands.

"With deep sector and destination insights plus Shihab's natural ability to inspire teams, his skills will undoubtedly strengthen Atmosphere Core's commercial achievements in the Maldives. We firmly believe that Shihab's track record and extensive account relationships in the Maldives will act as key assets resulting in record breaking

performance".

Shihab is renowned for launching flagship hospitality properties, most notably his instrumental role in opening one of the largest resorts in the Maldives, featuring 470 keys. With a proven track record of driving record-breaking revenues, building high-performing sales teams, and leading impactful commercial strategies, Shihab combines innovative thinking with data-driven execution. His dynamic leadership has enabled him to consistently succeed in highly competitive markets across Asia, Europe, and the Middle East.

Commenting on the challenges ahead in his next career step, Shihab adds, "In



today's complex market, the Maldives has never been so competitive. With Atmosphere Core's 'Holiday Plan' concept, we have one of the strongest offerings in the Maldives and I intend to deliver on our highly desirable 'value' position".

## The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands Welcomes New General Manager, Oscar Postma



The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, announces Oscar Postma as the newly appointed General Manager for the property. With more than 25 years of global experience in luxury hospitality and corporate leadership across Asia,

Europe, and the United States, Oscar brings a wealth of operational expertise, strategic insight, and a passion for delivering exceptional guest experiences.

A dynamic leader known for driving performance through innovation and collaboration, Oscar has a distinguished career managing world-renowned properties and guiding them through pivotal transitions, renovations, and brand transformations. Most recently, Oscar served as Cluster Operations General Manager for Conrad Singapore Orchard and Conrad Centennial Singapore, where he oversaw strategic operations for both hotels. Prior to this,

Oscar held the role of General Manager at Regent Singapore, where he navigated the property through a major brand transition, achieving a record-breaking F&B performance.

Oscar also brings with him a deep familiarity with the Marriott luxury portfolio, having previously served as Executive Assistant Manager, Rooms at both The St. Regis Singapore and The Ritz-Carlton, Millenia Singapore. His return to the Ritz-Carlton brand marks a meaningful homecoming to a legacy of refined service and exceptional hospitality.

In his new role at The Ritz-Carlton

Maldives, Fari Islands Oscar will lead a diverse and passionate team, nurturing a culture rooted in excellence, innovation, and intuitive, personalized service. Oscar brings a proven track record of fostering strong owner partnerships, developing high-performing teams, and enhancing the guest journey through strategic operational leadership.

"I am honored to join The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Fari Islands, a resort that embodies timeless luxury in one of the world's most breathtaking destinations," said Oscar Postma. "I look forward to working with the talented team to continue delivering world-class experiences that create meaningful and lasting memories for our guests."



# Aqua Fitness Icon Rajni Maker Set to Lead Global Wellness Day at Kuda Villingili Maldives



This Global Wellness Day, Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives invites guests to embrace the transformative power of water with an exclusive wellness program led by India’s pioneering aqua fitness expert, Rajni Maker. Taking place from June 14 to 18, 2025, the resort’s immersive wellness celebration is inspired by the global theme #ReconnectMagenta, encouraging guests to slow down, recharge, and rediscover a sense of connection—with self, with nature, and with community.

Located a scenic 30-minute speedboat

journey from Malé, Kuda Villingili is an island sanctuary where time and space are redefined. A curated collection of villas and residences evoke a deep sense of space, comfort, and privacy. Whether nestled over water or tucked within lush foliage, every accommodation invites moments of stillness, reflection, and reconnection.

Kuda Villingili is already a haven for wellness seekers, offering a wealth of experiences that celebrate balance, vitality, and inner peace. The resort’s private island spa is home to eight treatment villas where guests can indulge in holistic therapies using organic, island-inspired ingredients. For those seeking movement, the resort boasts the Maldives’ largest pool, a state-of-the-art gym with ocean views, and a scenic jungle yoga pavilion designed for sunrise and sunset practices.

With decades of experience in crafting inclusive, water-based wellness journeys, Rajni Maker brings her signature blend of intentionality, flow, and vitality to the Maldives. Her sessions are tailored to support all fitness levels, creating an

energising and welcoming space for everyone—from first-time movers to seasoned wellness seekers. Set against the striking backdrop of the Maldives’ largest pool, Rajni’s unique approach to aquatic fitness makes each workout a joyful and transformative experience.

“I am thrilled to bring my expertise to Kuda Villingili. The resort’s serene setting and expansive aquatic spaces offer the ideal canvas for meaningful, water-based wellness experiences,” says Rajni Maker. “My goal is to help every participant reconnect with their body and mind, while also leaving them with simple, sustainable practices they can continue at home—whether they are just beginning their wellness journey or are seasoned fitness enthusiasts.”

The wellness weekend opens with sessions designed to foster a deeper bond with the natural surroundings, including a guided nature walk through the island’s lush landscape, ending with a mindful beachside body scrub using traditional Maldivian ingredients. As the days unfold, guests are invited to explore inner strength and stability

through a sunrise Pilates session with the Magic Circle and energise themselves with high-intensity aqua kickboxing—a spirited yet joint-friendly cardio workout led by Rajni herself.

Wellness is celebrated not only as a personal journey but as a shared experience. Guests can join their loved ones in an invigorating family beach HIIT session, or enjoy friendly competition during a padel tennis match, complete with thoughtful wellness prizes. The sense of connection continues with creative expressions such as a nature-inspired painting session, and deeper reflection is encouraged through one-on-one wellness consultations with the resort’s dedicated experts.

Whether guests are seeking a new way to move, or simply a new space to pause, Global Wellness Day at Kuda Villingili promises an unforgettable journey of renewal. With Rajni Maker leading the way, and the resort’s immersive wellness offerings as the foundation, the island becomes a sanctuary of motion, mindfulness, and meaningful reconnection.



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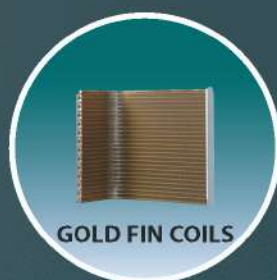
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# FROM WHITE SANDS TO GREEN GOALS

with

**Hon. Thoriq Ibrahim**

Minister of Tourism and Environment,  
Republic of Maldives

“Our existence is intrinsically tied to the health of our ocean. Plastic leakage into marine ecosystems is not just an environmental threat—it’s a direct challenge to our economy, our identity, and our future.”

Hon. Thoriq Ibrahim was appointed Minister of Tourism and Environment in February 2025—bringing with him a wealth of experience from his earlier roles overseeing climate change, environment, and energy portfolios. Now, he leads with a powerful mission: to shape a tourism industry that not only dazzles the world but also safeguards the fragile ecosystems that make the Maldives a global treasure. From combatting plastic pollution to driving renewable energy adoption, Minister Thoriq is steering transformative initiatives that align economic growth with environmental stewardship. With a background in engineering and building science, coupled with an MBA, he combines technical insight with strategic vision. Under his leadership, the Maldives is not just adapting to the challenges of climate change—it’s setting bold benchmarks for sustainable island development.

In this exclusive interview, Minister Thoriq shares how the Maldives is tackling plastic waste, reimagining tourism for the modern traveller, and leading international efforts for a cleaner, greener planet.

**Minister, with this year’s World Environment Day theme focusing on plastic pollution and its role in the triple planetary crisis, how is the Maldives aligning national environmental strategies to address the urgent threats posed by plastic waste?**

This year’s World Environment Day theme resonates deeply with the Maldives. As a Small Island Developing State on the frontlines of the climate crisis, we fully recognise the urgent threats posed by plastic waste as a critical component of the triple planetary crisis comprising climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution.

Our national environmental strategies represent a firm commitment to confront this challenge. Acknowledging

waste management as a paramount environmental issue, we are actively putting in place mechanisms across all islands and regions. This effort is underpinned by an ethos that prioritises local communities, guiding our focus towards upstream plastic reduction, enhanced waste collection and segregation, and investment in innovative treatment solutions.

Our goal is to safeguard our fragile ecosystems by curbing plastic pollution and enhancing overall environmental resilience. I also want to highlight the role of individual responsibility in reaching this goal. I urge everyone to take a moment, think of our collective future, and take action now.

**With China reaffirming its position as the leading source market for Maldivian tourism in 2025, how is the Ministry adapting its destination marketing and product offerings to better cater to the evolving preferences of Chinese travelers?**

China’s position as a leading source market is incredibly important to us. We constantly analyse the evolving preferences of Chinese travellers, who are increasingly seeking experiences beyond traditional resort stays.

Marketing efforts are tailored to highlight the richness of the Maldives’ cultural tourism assets, experiences, and attractions, showcasing the nation’s unique heritage and local island life.

We are also working on enhancing accessible tourism options and diversifying our product offerings to include more community-based experiences to maximise the benefits of Maldives’ sociocultural assets for both visitors and local communities. Enhancing airline connectivity in the north and south of the Maldives is key to facilitating access to a wider range of our islands.

**As a country whose economy and identity are intrinsically tied to the ocean, how is the Maldives working to mitigate the impacts of plastic leakage into marine ecosystems, particularly in coral reefs and island shorelines?**



Our existence is intrinsically tied to the health of our ocean. The leakage of plastic into marine ecosystems, particularly coral reefs and island shorelines, is a direct threat to our natural capital and tourism industry.

We are implementing stringent measures to mitigate this. This includes improving waste management infrastructure on islands, coastal clean-up initiatives, and the management of protected marine areas. We also encourage the hospitality sector to adopt sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics.

We are investing in capacity building for climate change mitigation and adaptation actions at the local level, empowering communities to become stewards of their coastal environments and participate in locally driven solutions for plastic and waste management.

**The Maldives has recorded a consistent year-on-year growth in tourist arrivals, with an 8.1 percent increase so far in 2025. How is the Ministry of Tourism and Environment balancing this impressive growth with sustainable tourism practices and infrastructure readiness?**

We are encouraged by the consistent growth in tourist arrivals, which is vital for our economy. However, this growth must be balanced with sustainable practices and a robust infrastructure. The environmental sustainability of the tourism product is the foundation of Maldives' tourism brand.

We are committed to ensuring that growth does not come at the expense of our natural environment. This involves rigorous environmental impact assessments for new developments, sustainable building practices, and investments in infrastructure, particularly in the energy sector.

As part of H.E. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's key policy, the government aims to generate 33% of the nation's electricity through renewable energy by 2028. Achieving this ambitious goal requires significant financial support and strategic investment to address the challenges of our dispersed islands, each with its own mini-grid.

We are striving to lead the world in sustainable tourism by providing the best services, while ensuring lasting benefits for communities and businesses.

**Tourism inevitably contributes to plastic consumption. Are there any new policy directives or incentive programs being introduced to encourage resorts, guesthouses, and liveaboards to shift away from single-use plastics?**

We recognise that tourism contributes to plastic consumption, and are actively working to address this. We have introduced policy directives aimed at phasing out certain single-use plastics across the hospitality sector. We are also exploring programmes to encourage resorts, hotels, guesthouses, and liveaboards to invest in sustainable alternatives and implement more robust waste management systems.

Our goal is to see the entire hospitality sector adopt sustainable alternatives to single-use plastics, leading by example in reducing plastic waste generation at the source. This is crucial for maintaining the ecological balance and the need for sustainable solutions to environmental problems within our vital tourism sector.

**With over 70 percent of this year's arrivals choosing resorts for accommodation, what strategies are in place**

**to ensure more equitable tourism growth across guesthouses, hotels, and liveaboards—particularly in local island communities?**

While resorts are a significant part of our tourism offering, our vision for tourism growth is an inclusive one. We actively promote guesthouses and liveaboards as unique ways to experience Maldives, focusing on the authentic cultural experiences and community interactions they offer. Initiatives include targeted marketing campaigns, capacity building programmes for guesthouse owners and staff on local islands, and improving infrastructure and services on these islands to enhance the visitor experience.

We understand that while community dependence on tourism is high, strengthening community linkages and enabling communities to take ownership and participate in cultural-heritage management is essential for sustainable and equitable growth.

**With the ongoing global negotiations for a treaty to end plastic pollution, how is the Maldives engaging in these dialogues, and what priorities is the country advocating for in international forums such as the Geneva session in August?**

The Maldives is actively and vocally engaged in the global negotiations for a treaty to end plastic pollution, participating in various forums including the Geneva session later this year. Our engagement stems from our extreme vulnerability as a Small Island Developing State dependent on a healthy marine environment.

We are advocating forcefully for a robust and legally binding treaty, prioritising measures that include significant plastic production reduction at source, mandatory extended producer responsibility, facilitated technology and financial support for waste management in developing countries, and effective action on microplastics. We are also advocating for the critical need to ensure that adequate financial support is provided for Small Island Developing States to address these issues.

**With tourism playing a vital role in the Maldivian economy, how is the Ministry of Tourism and Environment working with other government sectors to ensure that infrastructure—such as airports, domestic transport, and utility services—keeps pace with visitor growth?**

Recognising the vital role of tourism, the Ministry of Tourism and Environment works in very close collaboration with other government sectors to ensure that essential infrastructure keeps pace with visitor growth in a sustainable manner. This involves joint planning and investment in expanding and upgrading our airports and domestic transport networks.

We are also focused on enhancing utility services, including water and energy, with a strong emphasis on transitioning to renewable energy sources. Our goal to achieve 33% of the nation's electricity through renewable energy by 2028 is a key initiative in supporting sustainable growth in the tourism sector and beyond. We are committed to ensuring that infrastructure development supports both the needs of the tourism industry and the well-being of our local communities, promoting climate-informed planning and anticipatory action.

**Education and community engagement are key to behavioral change. What awareness campaigns or environmental education initiatives are being prioritized to cultivate a plastic-conscious culture among citizens and tourists alike?**

Cultivating a plastic-conscious culture among citizens and tourists alike is fundamental to safeguarding our environment. We prioritise impactful awareness campaigns designed to highlight the threat plastic pollution poses to our marine ecosystems and foster a collective commitment to reducing plastic use.

These initiatives include school programmes, public awareness campaigns through various media, and on-the-ground initiatives in local communities and tourist areas. We are also developing strategies to harness the potential of peer learning and citizen science to mobilise our communities and visitors as active participants in the fight against plastic pollution. These efforts support our wider goals for environmental stewardship and resilience, which incorporate nature-based solutions.

**Could you elaborate how the government policy on waste management will fundamentally redefine the waste disposal experience for resorts and tourism operators?**

Our geographic insularity significantly compounds the challenges for waste management, necessitating strategies at both local and regional levels. Central to this is the need to see waste as a resource – one that with careful and adequate management can help minimise environmental impact.

This challenge is evident in both resorts and local islands. While resorts have been doing an incredible job managing most waste on their property locally, a portion still requires off-island transport to adequate disposal facilities, a reality shared by local islands.

Consequently, our approach prioritises waste reduction, followed by segregation and management at the local level. These efforts are strategically complemented by the establishment of regional waste management facilities across the Maldives. Together, they provide a holistic infrastructure designed for effective multi-level waste management.

**Lastly, how does the Ministry of Tourism and Environment envision the role of the tourism sector in leading by example—not only in managing plastic pollution—but in setting global benchmarks for sustainable island development?**

We envision the Maldivian tourism sector playing a leading role globally in setting benchmarks for sustainable island development. Given that the environmental sustainability of the tourism product is the cornerstone of Maldives' tourism brand, our industry is uniquely positioned to demonstrate how economic growth can be achieved in harmony with environmental protection and social equity.

To realise this vision, our resorts, guesthouses, and liveaboards are stepping up to become leaders in sustainable practices. The way forward involves aggressively tackling plastic pollution, transitioning to renewable energy, preserving our marine ecosystems through strengthened management of protected areas, fostering strong community linkages, and ensuring the equitable distribution of tourism benefits.

By demonstrating this leadership in sustainable tourism, the Maldives aims to inspire other island nations and coastal destinations to adopt similar approaches. We are committed to proving that a thriving tourism industry and a healthy environment not only go hand in hand but are mutually reinforcing.



## NEW OPENING

# New Hospitality Group SIX & SIX PRIVATE ISLANDS to Launch Six Resorts in the Maldives Over Six Years



*The first luxury and ultra-luxury lifestyle resorts are set to open in South Malé Atoll in 2025 and 2026.*

SIX & SIX PRIVATE ISLANDS is poised to redefine hospitality in the Maldives. Co-founder & CEO Laith Pharaon launched the company with a fresh approach based on intuitive service, simple-yet-artistic design, and a cosmopolitan lifestyle. Officially launched in 2024, SIX & SIX PRIVATE ISLANDS has embarked its first development phase, with six resorts. The first two are set to open in South Malé Atoll in 2025 and 2026. Each of the individually branded properties will

offer a distinct experience, all united by a shared philosophy: creating spectacular stays tailored to each guest's lifestyle.

SIX & SIX's guest-centric approach goes beyond the levels of personalisation seen in traditional resorts. Guests will have complete freedom over how they dine, explore, play, and unwind. Specialists in health, nutrition, and fitness will design individualised wellness journeys, using state-of-the-art facilities and holistic techniques. This tailored approach to experiential travel will also offer rare opportunities to connect with the Maldives' natural beauty and rich culture.

## RAH GILI MALDIVES

### Opening Q4 2025

Perched on the edge of the atoll, RAH GILI MALDIVES sits beside an exclusive dolphin sanctuary. On land, guests can mingle and indulge in a wide range of

epicurean offerings, social activities, and cultural happenings.

The resort will feature 74 pool villas, including 38 overwater—ranging from 170 to 260 sqm, each with private pools. With sleek design, whimsical touches, and vibrant social spaces, RAH GILI MALDIVES will create an exclusive hideaway for in-the-know globetrotters.

## DHON MAAGA MALDIVES

### Opening 2026

SIX & SIX PRIVATE ISLANDS will unveil the epitome of island luxury with DHON MAAGA MALDIVES. This ultra-luxe destination will feature some of the Maldives' most colossal and plush accommodations, with one- to three-bedroom villas. Guests will be spoilt for choice from 31 overwater and 25 beach villas, ranging from 515 to over 1,000 square metres. Each features a 16-metre pool, zen courtyard,

and bathtubs inlaid with semi-precious gems. Private-jet transfers, an extensive wine cellar, state-of-the-art spa and wellness facilities, and world-class dining will position the resort among the most extravagant in the world.

## A New Standard in Guest-Centric Luxury

Rooted in a deep respect for the island nation, SIX & SIX PRIVATE ISLANDS will also take a leading role in protecting the Maldives' environment and contributing to its society. Located on some of the country's most pristine isles, SIX & SIX-managed resorts have extremely ambitious ESG targets, demonstrating the company's deep commitment to holistic sustainability.

Extensive use of solar-power, zero-waste to landfill, local produce support, reef rehabilitation, and community programmes will help to preserve the nation's wondrous environment and way of life.

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# Ifuru Island Maldives Recognized as Best Premium All-Inclusive Resort Maldives 2025 by Golden Travel Award

Ifuru Island Maldives has been officially named Best Premium All-Inclusive Resort Maldives 2025 by the prestigious Golden Travel Award, in recognition of the resort’s exceptional guest experience and innovative all-inclusive offering. Ifuru Island stood out for its commitment to redefining the premium all-inclusive concept with a bold mix of curated adventures, gourmet dining, and a true sense of luxury.

“This recognition is a celebration of the heart and soul our team pours into creating unforgettable moments for every guest,” said Marcel Sawyer, General Manager of Ifuru Island



Maldives. “We’ve designed an experience that gives guests the freedom to relax, explore, and truly feel at home – all wrapped in the comforts of a premium all-inclusive package. We’re thrilled to see this vision recognized by industry professionals.”



Ifuru Island Maldives has rapidly made a name for itself with thoughtful inclusions in the resort’s innovative “Exclusively Yours” Premium All Inclusive package. With a fresh take on luxury and authenticity, it continues to resonate strongly with modern travelers

seeking both comfort and connection. This acknowledgment from the Golden Travel Award reinforces Ifuru Island’s growing reputation as one of the Maldives’ most distinctive and experience-driven destinations.

# National Boating Association of Maldives Extends Contract with MEDIUM Events to Manage Maldives Marine Expo Through 2031



The National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) is pleased to officially announce the extension of its partnership with MEDIUM Events, awarding the event management contract for the Maldives Marine Expo through 2031. This continued collaboration underscores a shared commitment to the sustainable growth and international recognition of the Maldivian marine industry.

Launched in 2014 as NBAM’s flagship event, the Maldives Marine Expo has

evolved into the nation’s leading platform for the maritime and boating industries. The event was originally managed by Blak Pvt Ltd for its first five years. Since 2019, MEDIUM Events has served as the official event manager, successfully transforming the Expo into the largest marine industry event in the country.

The 2025 edition of the Expo recorded over 12,000 attendees, featured 120 exhibitors from different countries, and showcased more than 20 vessels, reflecting growing global interest in the

Maldives’ marine sector.

“MEDIUM Events has been a cornerstone in the success of the Maldives Marine Expo,” said Mr. Amir Mansoor, President of NBAM. “Their experience and strategic vision will be key as we steer toward an even more dynamic and globally integrated marine industry.”

Mr. Shaam Mohamed, Director of MEDIUM Events, added: “We are proud to continue this journey with NBAM and remain committed to elevating the Expo as a global destination for marine innovation, sustainability, and collaboration.”

Looking ahead, the upcoming editions will emphasize green marine solutions, fleet decarbonization, and blue economy investments - initiatives that align with the Maldives’ national priorities in climate resilience and sustainable ocean tourism. Projections suggest that by 2030, the marine industry could contribute over 15% to the national GDP, driven by eco-marine tourism, advanced vessel technologies, and infrastructure development.

In addition to organizing the Marine Expo, NBAM plays a vital role in advancing the boating sector in the

Maldives. Established in 2007, the association organizes the annual Maldives Boating Awards, promotes marine safety through initiatives like Stay Safe Afloat, and conducts training programs to support skill development across the industry.

NBAM continues to act as the collective voice of the marine and boating industry, actively engaging with businesses and government bodies to support sustainable growth and regulatory advancement.

**About the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM):**  
NBAM is the national authority responsible for promoting, regulating, and developing the boating and marine industries in the Maldives. It works with stakeholders to foster a safe, sustainable, and thriving marine environment.

**About MEDIUM Events:**  
MEDIUM Events is a leading event management company in the Maldives, specializing in industry focused events, including exhibitions, conferences and forums. With over a decade of experience, the team has successfully delivered high-profile events that drive both national development and international collaboration.



## EVENTS &amp; AWARDS

# Maldives Welcomes Kajal Singh, the One Millionth Tourist of 2025



The Maldives has welcomed its 1 millionth tourist of 2025 on 7th June 2025, the fastest that the country has achieved a million tourists in our nation's history. Kajal Singh, an Indian national, arrived in the Maldives today on IndiGo flight 6E 1131 at 12:55. She is visiting for her honeymoon at Malahini Kuda Bandos. This is her first trip to the Maldives.

Visit Maldives, in collaboration with

the Ministry of Tourism and Environment and Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), hosted a special celebratory event at Velana International Airport to commemorate this remarkable achievement.

"This milestone fills us with immense pride, reflecting the successful culmination of our destination marketing initiatives that showcase the true essence of the Maldivian

experience," stated Minister for Tourism and Environment, Hon. Thoriq Ibrahim. "Welcoming one million tourists with such unprecedented speed is a powerful indicator of our global appeal, and I extend my sincere appreciation to all the hardworking individuals across the tourism sector whose dedication made this achievement possible."

In a gesture highlighting the nation's commitment to environmental sustainability, the one millionth visitor, Kajal, was invited to participate in the "Five Million Trees Planting Program" initiated by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. Kajal planted a tree at Hulhulé as part of this nationwide effort to combat climate change, enhance biodiversity, and promote a greener Maldives for future generations.

"This achievement is a clear indicator that we are well on our way to attaining H.E President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's national tourist arrival target of 2.3 million for this year," said CEO & MD of MMPRC, Mr Ibrahim Shiuree. "We are thrilled to celebrate this milestone with all our stakeholders, whose dedication and hard work are invaluable. Our commitment doesn't end here; we are continually working to enhance the

Maldives' tourism industry and ensure the Sunny Side of Life remains a dream destination for everyone."

The arrival of the 1 millionth tourist in 2025 marks a proud moment for Maldivian tourism, symbolizing the robust momentum generated by MMPRC's strategic promotional efforts. Building on the resounding success of the recent Arabian Travel Market (ATM) 2025, where the Maldives captivated the global travel trade community with its powerful and immersive showcase, this milestone highlights the effectiveness of our enhanced global visibility and affirmed key industry partnerships. Complementing these efforts, the ongoing comprehensive Summer Campaign, with its multi-market strategy spanning Europe and key international markets, is actively driving increased visibility and stimulating early bookings for both the summer and upcoming winter seasons. MMPRC's marketing initiatives such as high-impact campaigns, strategic partnerships, and targeted outreach are significantly enhancing the Maldives' global brand, boosting booking confidence, and solidifying its position as a leading, year-round holiday destination.

# Maldives Collaborates with Renowned Bollywood Director Farah Khan to Showcase Local Island Life During Eid Celebrations

Maldives announces a special collaboration with acclaimed Indian film director, producer, choreographer, and television personality, Farah Khan. She visited the Maldives from 5th June to 8th June 2025, for a unique filming project aimed at showcasing the authentic charm of local island life in the Maldives during the festive Eid Al-Adha celebrations.

Farah Khan, a celebrated figure in the Indian entertainment industry with a career spanning over two decades, is renowned for her iconic dance numbers and commercially successful films. Her vibrant personality and widespread appeal have garnered her a combined social media following of over 13 million, particularly among Indian and South Asian audiences. Farah Khan's strong following and

relatable persona resonate exceptionally well with Indian families and leisure travellers, making her an ideal partner to showcase the destination's diverse offerings.

During her visit, Farah Khan and her five-member crew were hosted at Sun Siyam Olhuveli and Arena Hotels Maafushi. The collaboration will result in a dedicated YouTube vlog featuring her experiences, along with engaging content pieces. The Eid-focused vlog adds seasonal relevance and an emotional connection to the campaign, further enhancing its appeal. These are set to provide a glimpse into the Maldives beyond its luxury resorts, highlighting the warmth of local communities and the joy of Eid.

This high-impact campaign highlights



the continued importance of India as a top source market for the Maldives. Collaborating with a trusted celebrity of Farah Khan's stature enhances visibility and brand presence for the Maldives across the global tourism

arena. This initiative is part of Visit Maldives' ongoing strategy to engage with influential personalities and brand ambassadors across key markets, reinforcing the destination's appeal to a global audience.



EVENTS & AWARDS

# IODA Ocean Summit Successfully Concludes in Colombo



The Indian Ocean Divers Association (IODA), in collaboration with the Chamber of Marine Industries Sri Lanka (CMISL) and with the endorsement of the Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (SLTDA), successfully hosted the IODA Ocean Summit at the Cinnamon Grand, Colombo, Sri Lanka.

The event was generously supported by MistEO, Sail Lanka, Maldives Holiday Collections, Medium Events, and Floating Asia, and welcomed enthusiastic participation from diving industry professionals across India, Maldives, and Sri Lanka.

In his keynote address, Mr. Prahlad Kakar, President of IODA, emphasized the critical importance of collaborative efforts in building a stronger and more sustainable diving

industry within the Indian Ocean region. He highlighted the value of regional cooperation in unlocking the full potential of marine tourism and promoting environmental stewardship.

The summit also featured a compelling presentation by Mr. Anees Adenwala, who shared his unique experiences in underwater filming for Bollywood, offering creative insights into the intersection of film and marine exploration.

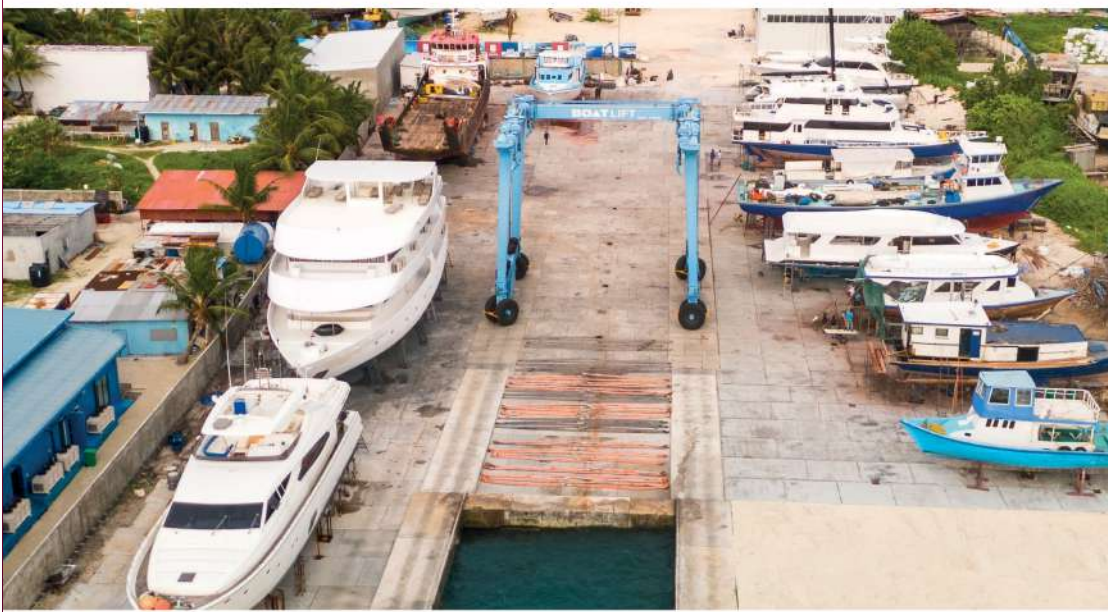
Throughout the event, panel discussions, networking sessions, and the active engagement of key stakeholders from the travel and diving sectors fostered meaningful dialogue and opened doors for future cross-border partnerships and innovations in the marine tourism industry.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

# 2nd Edition of Aviation Forum – Connect Maldives Held at Hulhule Island Hotel

The second edition of the Aviation Forum – Connect Maldives took place at the Hulhule Island Hotel, bringing together key players from the aviation and travel industries for a full-day conference focused on addressing challenges and opportunities amid growing demand in air travel and services.

The event gathered stakeholders from across the aviation spectrum, including airport and airline operators, industry organizations, and travel professionals. Participants engaged in discussions on collaborative strategies to enhance the Maldives’ aviation infrastructure and services to meet increasing tourism demands.

A major highlight of the forum was MACL’s (Maldives Airports Company Limited) announcement of the official



opening date for the new terminal at Velana International Airport – scheduled for July 26, 2025. The announcement marks a significant milestone for the industry, offering renewed optimism amid projections of over two million tourist arrivals in 2025 alone.

The forum featured four panel

discussions, keynote speeches, and a dedicated workshop, addressing a wide range of topics from innovation in airport operations to improving the traveler experience and sustainability in aviation.

Connect Maldives – Aviation Forum is organized and managed by Medium Events, with support from sponsors



including SITA, Inner Maldives, and Avia Maldives. The event’s print partner is Printlab Creative, with Maldives Moments managing audiovisual, sound, and lighting. The forum is officially endorsed by the Airline Operators Committee, MATATO (Maldives Association of Travel Agents and Tour Operators), and MATI (Maldives Association of Tourism Industry).

# Hard Rock Hotel Maldives Recertified by Green Globe for Sustainable Excellence



Hard Rock Hotel Maldives has once again secured its Green Globe Certification, turning sustainability into more than a statement. It is a sound check for every part of the guest experience, every behind-the-scenes decision, and every step the resort takes toward long-term impact. The recognition follows an in-depth, independent audit that measured the resort’s performance against more than 380 compliance indicators. It is a demanding benchmark, and the team delivered.

The resort has made significant progress in reducing its carbon footprint without turning down the comfort or the quality. Smart room controls and occupancy sensors help manage energy use, while 99 percent of the lighting across the property now runs on high-efficiency LEDs.

A generator-powered heat exchanger system supplies hot water throughout the resort, supported by steam-powered laundry machines and energy-efficient appliances across

kitchens, guest rooms, and staff areas. Digital systems have replaced paper-heavy processes, and all computers are powered down when not in use as part of a Green IT policy that reflects the brand’s commitment to conscious operations.

Water conservation is a core part of the resort’s sustainability rhythm. Hard Rock Hotel Maldives runs independently from public water systems, thanks to an advanced treatment plant that purifies seawater for all operations. Dual-flush toilets, low-flow fixtures, greywater recycling, and real-time monitoring systems keep usage efficient and responsive. Behind the scenes, routine checks prevent waste before it starts.

As a resort in one of the world’s most climate-vulnerable nations, action is non-negotiable. Electric buggies reduce island emissions. Local sourcing cuts down transport impact while supporting nearby communities. Green procurement and staff training keep every department in sync with long-term goals.

Marine conservation takes centre stage at the Marine Discovery Centre, where

coral propagation projects, guided snorkelling, and reef education invite guests to be part of the solution. A partnership with Parley for the Oceans helps ensure plastic waste is recycled and marine ecosystems are protected for future generations.

Sustainability at Hard Rock Hotel Maldives is not separate from the guest experience. It is built into every detail, from what guests see to what goes unseen. At the Maldives Discovery Centre, visitors learn the story of the islands through cultural exhibits, artisan showcases, and performances that bring Maldivian heritage to life. Workshops with local craftspeople and exhibitions on maritime trade routes provide more than a history lesson. They offer an immersive understanding of place, one that connects community, culture, and conservation.

This recertification is not the finish line. It is part of an ongoing commitment to protect what matters most while continuing to deliver the rhythm, flavour, and experience guests come for.

At Hard Rock Hotel Maldives, sustainability is part of the headline act.



IN THE NEWS

# Lets Go Maldives Celebrates 20 Years of Excellence: Pioneering Tourism, Aviation & Innovation in the Maldives



Lets Go Maldives, the Maldives’ most awarded and trusted luxury Destination Management Company (DMC), is proud to celebrate its 20th anniversary marking two decades of unmatched leadership in tourism, strategic innovation, and contribution to the Maldivian economy.

In honor of this milestone, Lets Go Maldives will be celebrating with exclusive offers, major announcements, and new partnership opportunities for its global network. Special deals are being extended to industry partners, and celebrations will continue throughout the year across multiple platforms and markets.

Founded with the vision to elevate the Maldives as the world’s most iconic travel destination, Lets Go Maldives has evolved into a powerhouse brand recognized as a top-producing DMC for most Maldives resorts and an industry leader in aviation, luxury travel, and destination marketing.

With over 175,200 hours the equivalent of 7,300 days of continuous dedication, the company’s journey is built on the strength of its people. This passionate team has played a pivotal role in shaping the Maldives’ global image as a premier tourism destination.

“Better days are ahead,” says

Mohamed Bassam Adam, Chief Operating Officer. “We’re moving forward with bold partnerships and digital transformation. As we expand in aviation and destination branding, we remain committed to delivering smarter, faster, and more meaningful travel experiences.”

From its stronghold in the Maldives to its international presence in the UAE and beyond, Lets Go Maldives is now also the General Sales Agent (GSA) for Air Arabia in the Maldives, connecting new markets and expanding into aviation ground handling, outbound holidays, and international trade partnerships.

Mohamed Riyaz, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of Maldives Airports Company Ltd (MACL), added: “Lets Go Maldives is more than a company, it’s a brand built on passion, partnerships, and trust. From award wins to redefining luxury, we’ve helped shape the Maldives tourism story. And we’re just getting started.”

Alina, Director of Brand Strategy, said: “Our incredible international team makes every experience exceptional. This company is a family, and that spirit fuels our success. We thank our partners for their trust and look forward to many more years of sharing the magic of the Maldives.”

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## SIMPLICITY AND SAFETY BY DESIGN

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

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IN THE NEWS

# The Spa at Velassaru Maldives Offers ELEMIS Biotec Facials



Velassaru Maldives has redefined wellness with the introduction of ELEMIS Biotec 2.0 facials, offering guests the ultimate skincare experience in paradise. This next-generation treatment combines advanced technology with expert techniques to deliver visible, transformative results for every skin type.

The Biotec 2.0 machine integrates six cutting-edge technologies:

- Cryotherapy, for firming and sculpting
- Ultrasonic Peel, for a radiant glow

- Microcurrent, to lift and tone
- Oxygen Infusion, for intense hydration
- LED Light Therapy, to rejuvenate tired skin
- Galvanic Technology, to restore vitality

Each facial blends these innovative technologies with the skilful touch of Velassaru’s experienced therapists. The standout treatment, the Expert Tech Sculpt + Firm Facial, harnesses all six technologies in one restorative session, leaving skin lifted, refreshed, and glowing.

ELEMIS is known for its holistic approach to skin wellness and its award-winning formulas are thoroughly tested to ensure effectiveness while providing a sensory skincare experience. With roots in aromatherapy, the products feature natural fragrances and luxurious textures, offering indulgent and effective care that delivers visible results.

“We are proud to bring ELEMIS Biotec facials to Velassaru,” said Denys Hordiienko, General Manager of Velassaru Maldives. “Our guests seek luxurious wellness experiences, and these advanced facials add a new dimension to our spa offering. Wellness continues to be a cornerstone of our commitment to delivering exceptional experiences.”

Guests can also extend their skincare journey with a curated selection of ELEMIS products available at the Spa Boutique, allowing them to maintain glowing results long after their stay.

Set in a serene overwater sanctuary surrounded by crystal-clear waters, The Spa at Velassaru offers the perfect balance of wellness and indulgence.



With four double treatment rooms, three single rooms, a relaxation terrace and lounge with plunge pool and ocean views, every detail is designed for comfort and relaxation.

**About Velassaru Maldives**  
Velassaru Maldives is a tropical idyll located on the tranquil shores of South Malé Atoll, offering a perfect blend of natural beauty and understated luxury. Encircled by a crystal-clear turquoise lagoon, the island is home to vibrant coral reefs and pristine beaches. With elegantly designed rooms and villas that maximise natural light, Velassaru creates a seamless connection between modern comfort and the lush surroundings. Designed for couples, honeymooners, and holidaymakers alike, the resort offers a relaxed, unpretentious take on luxury, focusing on natural sophistication and genuine warmth. From vibrant dining experiences to lounging by the turquoise waters, Velassaru is a haven for those seeking rejuvenation. For more information, visit Velassaru Maldives.

# Ooredoo Maldives and MMPRC Sign Strategic Partnership to Promote Visit Maldives to 150 Million Customers

Ooredoo Maldives and the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) have entered into a landmark partnership to promote the Maldives as a premier travel destination across Ooredoo’s operating companies around the world.

The agreement was officially signed by Khalid Al-Khamadi, CEO & Managing Director of Ooredoo Maldives, and Shiuree Ibrahim, CEO and Managing Director of MMPRC, in a ceremony held at Ooredoo Headquarters, Hulhumale’. This collaboration marks a significant step in expanding the reach of the “Visit Maldives” brand by leveraging Ooredoo Group’s international footprint.

Through this partnership, Ooredoo will support MMPRC’s global destination marketing efforts by utilizing its regional presence and platforms across key markets in Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa. Ooredoo operates in 10

countries including Maldives and can reach 150 million customers.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Khalid Al-Hamadi stated: “We are honored to partner with MMPRC in promoting the Maldives— one of the most beautiful destinations in the world. With the strength of Ooredoo’s global network, we aim to inspire more travelers from our international markets to experience the unique beauty, culture, and hospitality of the Maldives.”

Shiuree Ibrahim, CEO and MD of MMPRC, added: “This partnership with Ooredoo marks a significant step in enhancing our global outreach. Ooredoo’s established presence across numerous international markets offers a strategic opportunity to elevate our brand visibility and further promote the Maldives as a premier tourist destination.”

The partnership aligns with Ooredoo



Maldives’ commitment to supporting national development through strategic collaborations and showcases its ongoing efforts to contribute to the country’s economic growth, especially within the vital tourism sector.

As the Maldives continues to solidify its status as a world-class travel destination, this joint initiative between Ooredoo and MMPRC is set to play a pivotal role in connecting more people to the magic of the Maldives.





# STILL LEADING THE WAY



Look at these two, Champa Hussain Afeef and Ahmed Nazeer, friends for life and two of the very first people who believed the Maldives could be something bigger. Not just pretty islands, but a place people from all over the world would want to visit.

They did not have it easy. No big money, no fancy setups. Just hard work, a lot of running around, and a belief that it could be done. And they did it, with a few other pioneers who were not afraid to dream big and start from scratch.

Fast forward a few decades, and guess what? They are still not done.



This time, they have gone and pulled off another first, launching the very first golf tournament under Maldives Golf. A new chapter, but the same old drive.

They might not be building resorts anymore, but they are still showing how it is done, with style, with heart, and most importantly, together.

## Legends then, legends now.

**Contributing writer: Ibrahim Khalid**

### About Maldives Gold Association (MGA)

The Maldives Golf Association (MGA) proudly presents the Maldives Open 2025, an extraordinary golfing tournament that embodies the spirit of "Unity and Friendship through Golf." This inaugural event took place at the breathtaking Victoria Golf Resort in Sri Lanka, surrounded by scenic landscapes and the serene Victoria Lake.

Bringing together skilled golfers from diverse backgrounds, the Maldives Open 2025 serves as a testament to the MGA's commitment to promoting and developing the sport of golf in the Maldives.

It is not just a tournament but a platform to showcase talent, foster sportsmanship, and celebrate the camaraderie that golf inspires.

### President of Maldives Golf Association, Hussain Afeef said,

*"The registration of MGA provides a formal platform for developing the unique game of golf in our beautiful country. I invite all the passionate members of MGA to contribute to the development of golf in the Maldives."*

*"As a relatively new sport and one which requires a sophisticated set of infrastructure to play on, we as members of MGA should put in our best efforts towards the development of the sport in Maldives."*

### Vice President of Maldives Golf Association, Ahmed Nazeer said,

*"With the passion for golf and the competitive spirit of the players who have entered this competition, I am confident that this first Maldives Open promises to be an exciting event. I look forward to welcoming new players for our future events and would like to take this opportunity to wish the best to all competitors of this event. I would like to thank the President of MGA, Mr. Afeef for taking this initiative and his vision for the development of the sport in Maldives. I would also like to thank our General Secretary, Mr Hassan Shaam, Mr. Yusuf Riza and their committed team for putting together this event at record speed."*





BON APPÉTIT

# Hakuru Folhi Cake



Chef Darma began his hospitality career at the Sri Lankan Hotel School in 2013, initially training as a waiter in F&B at The Kingsbury Hotel. His passion for the culinary arts led him to Doha, Qatar, where he cross-trained as a pastry chef before returning to Sri Lanka to refine his craft. In 2019, he joined the pre-opening team at Sun Siyam Iru Veli, where he now works as a Chef de Partie. Specializing in pastries and desserts, he always explores innovative ways to transform simple ingredients into extraordinary, sweet creations.

*Chef Darma's dessert is a tribute to the heart of Maldivian cuisine – coconut. Inspired by the traditional ingredients found in every island kitchen, he layers palm sugar, milk, and grated coconut to create a sweet indulgence that evokes nostalgia with every bite. His passion lies in transforming simple, time-honoured flavours into something refined yet familiar, bringing a sense of home to those who taste it. With this dessert, he elevates the humble coconut into a dish that is comforting, nostalgic and exquisite.*

INGRIDENTS :

- 2.5 Cup Melted jaggery
- 2.5 Cup Fresh milk
- 2.5 Cup Coconut oil
- 12.5 g Baking powder
- 20 g Cardamom powder
- 20 g Cinamon powder
- 500 g Flour
- 200 g Grated coconut

SERVES FOR 2 PERSONS

METHOD:

- Step 1: Melt the jaggery over low heat, stirring occasionally until fully dissolved.
- Step 2: In a mixing bowl, combine the melted jaggery with fresh milk and oil, stirring until well incorporated before setting the mixture aside.
- Step 3: In a separate bowl, sift together the dry ingredients to get an even mixture and a light texture.
- Step 4: Gradually pour the liquid mixture into the dry ingredients, whisking gently by hand. Continue mixing until the batter is smooth and thick, ensuring there are no lumps.
- Step 5: Fold in the grated coconut, distributing it evenly throughout the batter for added texture and flavour.
- Step 6: Preheat the oven to 170°C. Grease and line a baking tin, then pour in the batter. Bake for 35-40 minutes, or until a skewer inserted in the centre comes out clean. Let it cool slightly before serving.

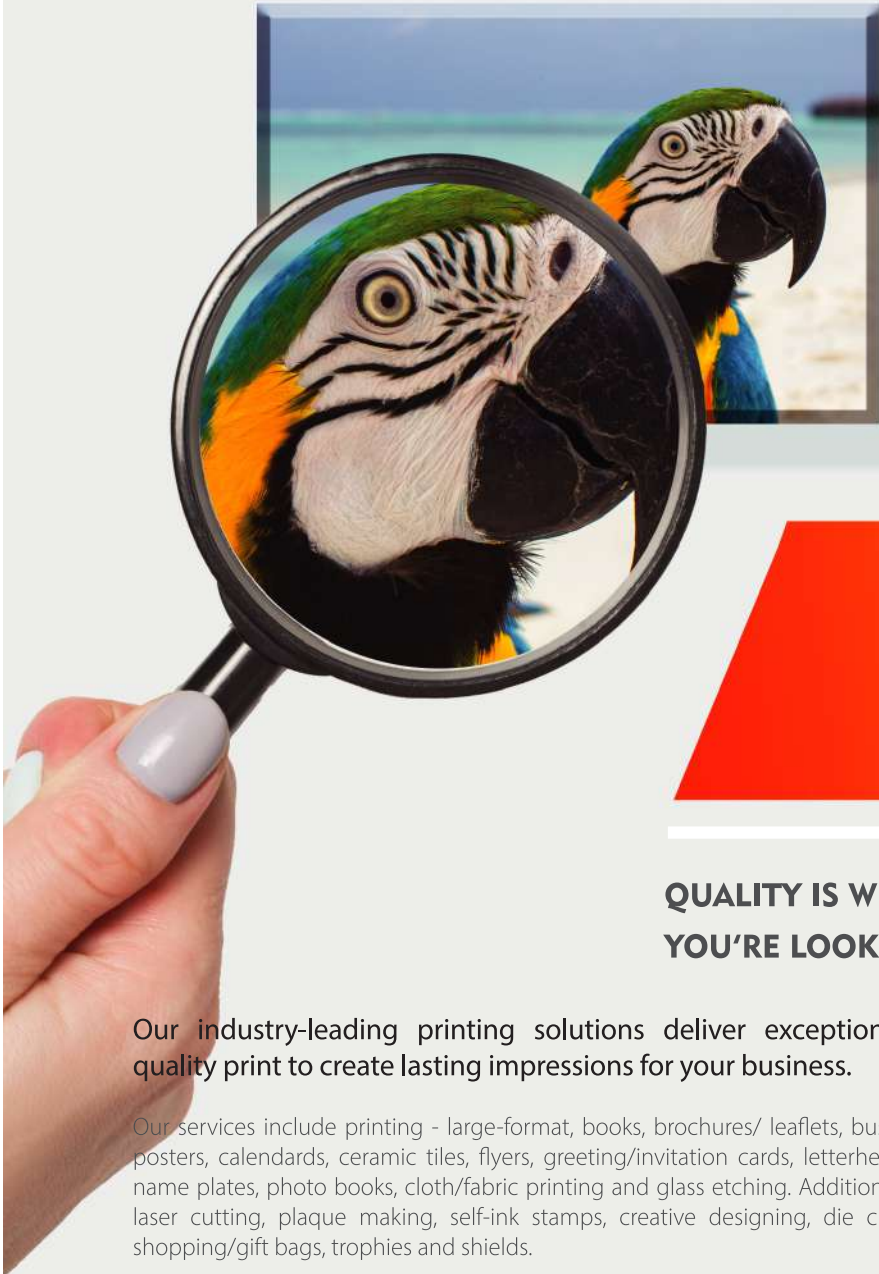


Courtesy of  
Chef B. D. Darmappriya Sugathasena,  
Chef De Partie at Sun Siyam Iru Veli,  
Maldives



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# Frankly Speaking

With the Plan for opening the new terminal at Velana International Airport (VIA) by 26th July 2025, presents a significant opportunity for the Maldives to increase tourist arrivals and air traffic. However, infrastructure alone isn’t enough - it must be complemented by strategic efforts across aviation, tourism, diplomacy, and marketing. What are the plans set forth and how can the industry contribute ?



**Mohamed Ali**  
Managing Director  
Moodhu Holiday / VP , Association of Travel Agents

The new terminal at VIA is a game-changer. However, its success depends on more than just infrastructure. The Maldives tourism industry must align efforts through increased route development, streamlined on-arrival-visa and immigration processes, stronger global marketing campaigns by all industry participants, and elevated service standards. Collaboration between airlines, tourism properties, tour operators, and government bodies will be key to turning this opportunity into sustained super-growth for Maldivian tourism!



**Mohamed Bassam Adam**  
COO  
Lets Go Maldives

With the new VIA terminal set to open in July 2025, the Maldives has a unique opportunity to position itself not just as a destination, but as a strategic transit and tourism hub in the Indian Ocean. Through our marketing initiatives, we are advancing route development, building airline partnerships, and crafting a brand that resonates emotionally with global audiences.

To fully capitalize on this momentum, we must tap into the transit passenger market, expand outbound travel offerings, and embrace collaboration over competition with regional destinations. Just as the UAE has built economic strength by connecting global travelers, the Maldives is now poised to evolve into a powerful regional connector – and this is only the beginning of a much broader vision.



**Ahmed Arshad**  
Director, Ground Operations  
Avia Maldives

It’s truly an exciting time for the Maldives. With the new terminal set to open, it is crucial that all stakeholders come together and collaborate more effectively to maximize this opportunity.

We need to proactively engage with current legacy airlines to discuss expansion of flight frequencies to the Maldives, especially during our off-peak periods. MMPRC can work closely with these airlines to promote additional flights through targeted marketing campaigns in each market. Innovative incentives like raffling holidays for every additional flight could be a strategic move to attract more traffic and build long-term customer loyalty.

Furthermore, we should collaborate with domestic airlines to improve connectivity and streamline slot allocations. This will help minimize passengers’ time at the airport, creating a smoother travel experience. In parallel, engaging with private sector operators running speedboat networks is essential to ensure seamless multi-modal transport options.

It is also vital for MMPRC, MACL, and the Ministry of Tourism to work in tandem with local and international agencies. Together, they can develop robust marketing strategies to promote the Maldives across key regions CIS, Europe, Asia, Middle East and beyond. A large-scale marketing campaign should be launched to showcase that our airport infrastructure is fully equipped to handle the influx of visitors and the 65,000 beds waiting to welcome them.

Lastly, integrating advanced technology into the arrival and departure processes will significantly enhance the passenger experience, making it more relaxed, efficient, and enjoyable. This collective effort will position the Maldives as a premier, accessible, and well-connected destination for travelers worldwide.

HOTEX<sup>2</sup>25

MALDIVES INTERNATIONAL  
HOTEL & TRADE EXHIBITION

7<sup>TH</sup> - 10<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2025  
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