

The islandchief

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NESCAFÉ

TASTE OF ADVENTURE

AUTHORIZED DISTRIBUTOR **Xity** ENTERPRISES PVT LTD

MASTERING MALDIVES' MARINE FRONTIER

with

Hussain Thoufee Ali

Managing Director, Silver Sands Pvt Ltd

Fari Islands to Meet Nearly 50%
of Energy Needs with Solar Power
in 2025

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Meyyafushi Resort to Open in
October 2025

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Dear Readers,

As we step into July, we find ourselves crossing the halfway mark of 2025 – a perfect moment to reflect on the progress made and the milestones ahead. This month, The Islandchief brings you stories that highlight the Maldives' dynamic journey in tourism and transport as the nation continues to embrace growth, innovation, and sustainability.

In this edition, we spotlight Maldivian's latest addition to its fleet, enhancing regional connectivity with the arrival of its fifth ATR 42-600 aircraft. We also explore Soneva Fushi's upcoming SOUL Festival, promising transformative wellness experiences guided by global thought leaders.

Fari Islands takes centre stage with its remarkable strides in sustainability, aiming to meet nearly half of its energy needs through solar power by next year. We celebrate RAAYA by Atmosphere as it marks its first anniversary with international accolades, and we honour Intour Maldives' 29 years of excellence as a luxury DMC, redefining curated travel experiences in the Maldives.

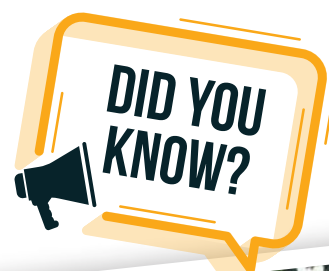
Our cover story features the visionary Mr. Hussain Thoufeeq Ali, Managing Director of Silver Sands Pvt Ltd, who has steered the company to become a powerhouse in marine tourism and beyond. As Silver Sands celebrates 25 years, Thoufeeq shares his insights on the evolution of marine-based experiences, sustainable growth, and the future of this dynamic sector.

In Bon Appétit, savour a taste of home and heritage with Chef Moustafa from The St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort as he presents his signature Chicken Kabsa Rice. Rooted in cherished family traditions from Ramadan gatherings, this dish blends authentic Middle Eastern flavours with his personal touch, reflecting a culinary journey shaped by renowned kitchens across Egypt and the Maldives.

Finally, in Frankly Speaking, our industry stakeholders weigh in on a timely topic of balancing foreign investments with national interests when partnering with external companies for critical airport services such as VIP terminals.

As you turn each page, may these stories inspire and inform, reminding us all of the resilience, creativity, and dedication driving the Maldivian tourism industry forward into the second half of the year.

Until next time,
The Islandchief Team



NATIONAL MUSEUM

The National Museum, located on the western edge of Sultan Park and just a short walk from the National Art Gallery, houses a rich collection of artefacts that showcase the Maldives' vibrant cultural heritage. Among its most notable exhibits are the 11th-century coral stone head of Buddha from the island of Thoddoo and the Feyli Kolhu, an intricately crafted ceremonial suit worn by Sultan Mohammed Thakurufaanu in the 16th century.

The museum was first opened in 1952 by Mohamed Amin Didi, the Maldives' first president, within the last remaining wing of the old sultan's palace complex. On 26 July 2010 Independence Day, the museum was officially reopened in a modern new building, constructed and donated by the Chinese government as a gesture of goodwill and friendship.



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Maldivian Expands Regional Capacity with Arrival of New ATR 42-600 Aircraft



Maldivian announces the arrival of its fifth ATR 42-600 aircraft, which landed at Velana International Airport. A welcoming ceremony was held to mark this important addition to the airline's ongoing fleet modernization program.

The new aircraft is part of Maldivian's plan to modernize its entire fleet with newer, more efficient aircraft, providing passengers with improved comfort and reliability for inter-island travel in the

Maldives.

The ATR 42-600 is well-suited for the Maldives' unique geography, offering excellent performance on short domestic routes with a comfortable cabin and smooth flight experience. The aircraft features modern systems that improve both safety and operational efficiency.

Maldivian has also introduced Premium

Economy service on domestic routes and launched onboard retail service featuring beverages and snacks. These enhancements reflect the airline's commitment to delivering a more personalized and enjoyable journey for all travellers.

With this latest addition, Maldivian operates a fleet of 26 aircraft, including five ATR 42-600s, one A330-200, one Airbus A320, eight

Dash-8 aircraft, and eleven Twin Otter seaplanes, allowing the airline to serve various routes across the Maldives.

The arrival of the fifth ATR 42-600 shows Maldivian's dedication to continuous improvement and supporting both local transportation needs and the country's growing tourism industry, aligning with national goals to enhance aviation services and connectivity throughout the Maldives.

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ACROSS THE SKIES

SriLankan Airlines' New A330-200 Makes Maiden Commercial Flight to Malé

SriLankan Airlines marked a significant milestone as its newly acquired wide-body Airbus A330-200 aircraft completed its maiden commercial flight, operating from Bandaranaike International Airport (BIA) to Velana International Airport in the Maldives.

According to Deepal Perera, Head of Corporate Communications at SriLankan Airlines, the aircraft departed BIA at 1:48 p.m. and touched down in Malé at 2:23 p.m.

The A330-200 arrived in Sri Lanka on the morning of June 4, following its delivery from the Airbus manufacturing facility in France. After completing all mandatory international procedures and official registration, the aircraft was approved for commercial operations.



The introduction of the A330-200 forms part of SriLankan Airlines'

broader fleet renewal strategy aimed at improving operational efficiency and

elevating passenger experience on both regional and long-haul routes.

Qatar Airways and Kenya Airways Ink Strategic Partnership



Qatar Airways and Kenya Airways have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), confirming the intention to enter a strategic partnership which will include a comprehensive codeshare agreement and increased flights between the East African state and Qatar Airways' award-winning Doha hub, Hamad International Airport.

The MoU signing took place in Doha between Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer and Kenya Airways Group Managing Director and CEO, Mr. Allan Kilavuka.

The partnership will see Qatar Airways introducing a third daily frequency between Doha and Nairobi in

codeshare with Kenya Airways, with flights due to be available for booking over the coming days. The new offering will be complemented by the launch of Kenya Airways operated, and Qatar Airways marketed, flights between Mombasa and Doha during the coming winter season. The two airlines will also codeshare on both networks to offer seamless connections and greater choice for travellers from around the world.

Additionally, both Qatar Airways and Kenya Airways will look to develop collaboration in other parts of the business, including

cargo, airport and ground services, product development, loyalty programmes, procurement as well as maintenance, repair and overhaul.

Qatar Airways Group Chief Executive Officer, Engr. Badr Mohammed Al-Meer, said: "This partnership is yet another demonstration of our deepening ties with the African region.

Today's agreement – which comes as we celebrate 20 years of flying to Kenya – is coupled with our recognisable record of partnerships across the continent, most recently through our investment in Airlink. Our growing collaboration with our African counterparts ensures that Qatar Airways continues to contribute to the continent's rapidly evolving aviation and economic ecosystem."

Kenya Airways Group Managing Director and CEO, Allan Kilavuka, said: "This partnership perfectly aligns with our airline's robust turnaround strategy, which saw Kenya Airways' return to profit for the first time in more than a decade earlier this year. The collaboration will also help expedite Kenya Airways' efforts to boost tourism and air cargo activities, turning these and others into pivotal economic growth propellers for Kenya and the East Africa region."

The partnership highlights two leading airlines collaborating to bring excellence to their global community of travellers. Kenya Airways, for the fourth consecutive year, has been recognised as Africa's Leading Airline and Business Class by the World Travel Awards 2025.



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IN A NUTSHELL

SOUL Festival Returns: Soneva Launches a Transformative New Chapter with Sanctum in Maldives



Returning for its third chapter, SOUL Festival unfolds once more from October 9 to 13, 2025, at Soneva Fushi in the Maldives' untamed Baa Atoll UNESCO Biosphere Reserve. Set within a sanctuary of barefoot luxury at the world's best beach resort, the five-day retreat is a deeply immersive celebration of wellness, healing wisdom and human connection – uniting a global community of seekers, changemakers and visionary wellbeing experts.

The 2025 edition welcomes an inspiring line-up of international thought leaders and practitioners. Returning to the Maldives are Sanctum founders Luuk Melisse and Gabriel Olszewski, whose energising morning rituals set the tone for

each day. Also featured are Peigín Crowley, founder of Ground Wellbeing and a champion of intuitive healing; Tim Gray, Europe's leading biohacker and a global voice in optimised health and longevity; Nathalie Schyllert, CEO of Bodyism, offering a holistic approach to physical and emotional wellbeing; Frida Redknapp, wellness advocate and creative collaborator at Bodyism; Dr Timm Golüke, renowned dermatologist and pioneer in anti-ageing skin health; and Roses Gabor, sound therapist and musician known for immersive healing journeys.

The line-up also includes Kirsten King of Fluidform Pilates, whose signature method balances strength and grace; Adrienne Adhami, wellness content creator and

advocate for movement-led living; Dong Juan, Traditional Chinese Medicine expert and movement guide; and Anika Lefebvre, transformational breathwork facilitator. Closing the roster is Nils Behrens, a leading voice in longevity and preventive health.

Each day is thoughtfully composed to guide guests through a full spectrum of wellness experiences that nurture both body and mind. Mornings begin with invigorating movement – from barefoot Sanctum sessions on the sand to Pilates overlooking the ocean – creating space for mindfulness and embodied awareness. After a nourishing breakfast, panel discussions explore themes such as longevity, emotional health, recovery and

modern wellness innovations. Afternoons offer deeper engagement through hands-on workshops and one-on-one sessions, including trauma-informed bodywork, clarity breathwork and somatic therapy designed to support deep relaxation and inner balance. As the sun sets, the island transforms with immersive sound journeys and social sensory dinners beneath the stars. Each night concludes in celebration, with musical performances and closing rituals that invite reflection and reconnection.

A natural treasure where luxury meets soulful living, Soneva Fushi offers vast, secluded villas nestled within jungle clearings or set directly on the sand, each designed to dissolve the boundaries between indoors and nature. Nourishing, health-led cuisine crafted from organic island ingredients, healing therapies at Soneva Soul and endless opportunities to explore both land and sea create the ideal setting for a deep, meaningful reset.

Guests can enjoy the full SOUL Festival experience with a dedicated package that includes luxurious villa accommodation, full board dining, return seaplane transfers, access to the complete programme, a complimentary Soneva Soul treatment and exclusive savings on therapies. Packages start from USD 3,360 per night for two adults, with a 10% reduction available for bookings confirmed before August 31, 2025.

Fari Islands to Meet Nearly 50% of Energy Needs with Solar Power in 2025

Fari Islands, the four-island archipelago home to renowned hospitality brands like The Ritz-Carlton Maldives, Capella Hotel Group's Patina Maldives, and the Fari Campus, is advancing its shared vision of net zero. In 2025, the islands will triple their photovoltaic (PV) capacity to 6.4 MWp, supplying up to 50% of energy demand on sunny days. This renewable energy push reflects the collective commitment to sustainability across the destination.

Developed by Singapore's Pontiac Land Group, Fari Islands has embedded sustainability since its inception in 2021. As the world's largest hospitality project using Mass Engineered Timber and prefabricated villas, the initiative reduced carbon emissions by over 6,000 tons during construction. The innovative flat-roof designs of the villas and amenities enable seamless solar panel integration, further underscoring the destination's eco-conscious planning.

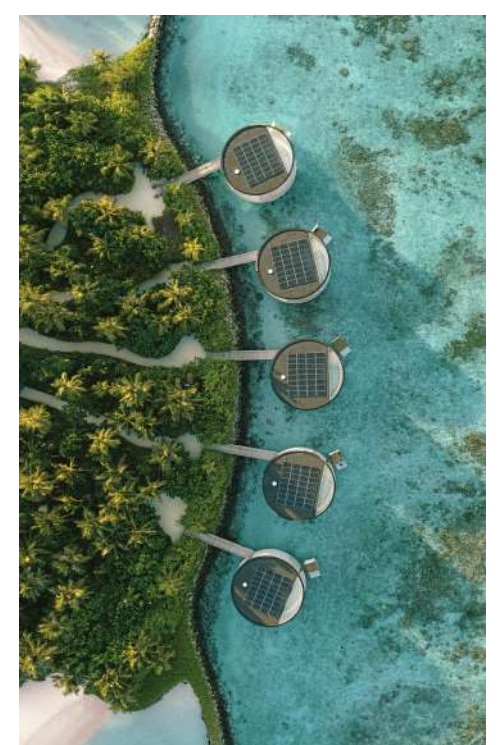
In collaboration with Swimsol, a solar pioneer in the Maldives, the islands are implementing one of the region's largest solar setups. Key developments include the first ocean-based floating solar installation around Fari Campus with 2,160 PV panels across 40 platforms, adding 1,037 kWp—24% of the islands' energy needs. Land-based solar installations at Fari Campus have also been upgraded to 1,200 kWp across 19 buildings.

The Ritz-Carlton Maldives expanded its solar efforts in 2024, adding panels across its Ocean Villas, back-of-house, Beach Shack, Dive Centre, and more, reaching 983 kWp in capacity. It also earned the 2024 Green Globe Certification and the Forbes VERIFIED Responsible Hospitality badge, recognizing its commitment to sustainability. General Manager Oscar Postma emphasized the resort's role in advancing the archipelago's shared

renewable energy goals.

Patina Maldives is set to operate entirely on solar power during daylight by 2025, with 2,994 kWp of solar panels across rooftops and a dedicated land bank, along with an additional 2 MWh of battery storage. Recognized with back-to-back EarthCheck Silver Certifications and a Forbes VERIFIED badge, the resort continues to lead in conscious luxury. General Manager Anthony Gill praised the collective effort driving real change.

These initiatives across Fari Islands showcase a united approach to sustainability in the Maldivian hospitality industry. Through collaboration, innovation, and strategic investment in renewable energy, Fari Islands is setting a new benchmark in eco-conscious tourism while preserving the natural beauty of its environment for future generations.



Banyan Tree Group Appoints Elias Pertoft as General Manager of Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru



Banyan Tree Group announces the appointment of Elias Pertoft as General Manager of Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru, effective 8 June 2025.

Elias brings over 17 years of leadership experience in luxury hospitality, with a strong focus on remote island resorts and ultra-high-end guest experiences. His expertise, dedication, and pursuit of excellence have defined his career across some of the world's most prestigious properties, including Waldorf Astoria Seychelles Platte

Island, Soneva Kiri in Thailand, and Necker Island in the British Virgin Islands.

Most recently, Elias led the successful pre-opening and launch of Waldorf Astoria Seychelles Platte Island, where he assembled and trained a multicultural team of 180 staff from 40 different nationalities. Under his leadership, the resort achieved 100% guest satisfaction and became the first and only property in the Seychelles to earn a Forbes Five-Star rating. His strengths in sustainability, remote island logistics, and crafting unique guest experiences — from destination dining to conservation-led activities — align perfectly with Banyan Group's regenerative tourism philosophy.

In his new role, Elias will be responsible for overseeing all operational functions at Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru and Dhawa Ihuru. His focus will be on elevating guest experiences, enhancing operational excellence, and driving sustainable growth through innovative leadership.

About Banyan Group

Banyan Group is a global, independent hospitality company built on purpose and innovation. With a pioneering spirit and design-led experiences, the Group has established itself as a steward of responsible tourism. Its extensive portfolio includes 90 hotels and resorts, over 140 spas and galleries, and more than 20 branded residences across 20+ countries.

Comprising 12 distinctive brands — including the iconic Banyan Tree — all are unified under the withBanyan experiential membership programme. The founding ethos of "Embracing the Environment, Empowering People" is embodied through the Banyan Global Foundation and Banyan Academy. Banyan Group remains at the forefront of sustainable and regenerative travel, delivering transformative guest journeys with lasting impact.

About Banyan Tree Vabbinfaru

Nestled in North Malé Atoll, just 25 minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport, Banyan Tree

Vabbinfaru offers barefoot eco-luxury at its finest. The resort features 48 newly refurbished all-pool villas that blend traditional Maldivian design with sustainability. At its core is the renowned Marine Lab, a pioneer in ocean conservation since 2004. Guests enjoy a Dine-Around experience at three distinctive restaurants — Sangu Garden, Saffron, and the award-winning Madi Hiya — complemented by the beachfront Naiboli bar. Vabbinfaru also features the acclaimed Banyan Tree Spa and offers a unique Twin-Island experience with sister property Dhawa Ihuru.

About Dhawa Ihuru

Dhawa Ihuru is an all-inclusive resort designed for the modern, independent traveller. Located just 25 minutes from Velana International Airport by complimentary speedboat, this North Malé Atoll retreat offers a vibrant mix of nature, culture, and contemporary comfort. With its intimate island setting, stylish design, and warm local hospitality, Dhawa Ihuru invites guests to unwind, explore, and connect in a truly authentic Maldivian escape.

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Gili Lankanfushi Appoints Florian Leven as Director of Operations

Gili Lankanfushi has announced the appointment of Florian Leven as Director of Operations. In this role, Leven will oversee the day-to-day operations of Gili Lankanfushi, drawing on over 25 years of international hospitality experience across Asia, Europe, the Middle East and North America.

"We are delighted to welcome Florian Leven to the Gili family," commented Rodrigo Buanafina, Resort Manager at Gili Lankanfushi. "With his strong leadership skills and proven track record in luxury hospitality, we know he will play a pivotal role in strengthening

the resort's operational excellence while elevating the special Gili experience."

Leven joins Gili Lankanfushi from Vietnam, where he held the position of Director of Operations at the five-star Mia Luxury Collection based in Ho Chi Minh City. Prior to this, he spent over a decade as General Manager of various luxury hotels and resorts, including The Capra, a luxury boutique hotel in Saas-Fee, Switzerland, The Legian Sire in Lombok, Indonesia and The Chedi Al Bait, UAE.

"I'm thrilled to join the team at Gili

Lankanfushi," said Leven of his appointment. "Known as one of the world's most prestigious luxury resorts and a pioneer of sustainable hospitality in the Maldives, it's truly an honour to be playing a part in the property's latest chapter."

Leven joins the Gili Lankanfushi Maldives team at an exciting time for the resort, which was recently awarded Gold Certification by EarthCheck, the world's leading scientific benchmarking, certification and advisory group for sustainable travel and tourism, in recognition of its sustainability practices.

Gili Lankanfushi enjoys an unspoilt



island location in the Maldives' North Malé Atoll, just 20 minutes by speedboat from Malé airport. Perfectly suited for couples, families, solo travellers and groups alike, the resort combines rustic eco-design, unparalleled service and stunning natural scenery with a laid-back-luxury, 'no news, no shoes' philosophy.

Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi Welcomes New Commercial Director



Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi has appointed Gerrit Chng-Lüchau as its new Commercial Director, a strategic move that reinforces the resort's commitment to curating transformative experiences for today's discerning

luxury travelers.

Known for its unrivaled service and exceptional setting across a 3.5-kilometer stretch in the South Malé Atoll, Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi—including the ultra-exclusive Ithaafushi – The Private Island—is poised to deepen its leadership in the luxury travel space. Chng-Lüchau's appointment comes at a pivotal time as the resort evolves to meet increasing demand for bespoke, experience-led stays that go beyond conventional luxury.

Chng-Lüchau brings over two decades of experience driving commercial growth for prestigious properties across Europe and Asia. Most recently,

he led the successful repositioning of The Chedi Andermatt in Switzerland, elevating it to Falstaff's 'Best Hotel in Switzerland'. His entrepreneurial mindset and results-driven leadership have consistently propelled commercial teams to deliver outstanding performance. Known for his adaptive coaching style and ability to foster talent, he is highly regarded for cultivating high-performing, collaborative teams.

"We are delighted to welcome Gerrit to our team," said TJ Joulak, general manager of Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi. "Gerrit's international expertise and innovative guest-centric approach to sales and marketing make him an invaluable addition to our leadership team. Gerrit's appointment ensures we stay ahead of evolving

luxury expectations and continue offering our guests rare, personalized journeys that are second to none."

Chng-Lüchau has already spearheaded a new wave of brand partnerships and immersive guest experiences, including with Hedley Studio and Ferrari, reflecting his strength in building meaningful, experiential partnerships that align with the values of the Waldorf Astoria brand.

"I am truly honored to join the extraordinary team at Waldorf Astoria Maldives Ithaafushi," said Chng-Lüchau. "This destination stands as a symbol of refined luxury and timeless service. I look forward to contributing to its continued legacy and shaping its future as one of the world's most iconic resorts."

The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort Appoints Nithil Baskar as New Resort Manager

The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort has announced the appointment of Nithil Baskar as the new Resort Manager. With over 15 years of hospitality experience, Nithil began his career at The Oberoi Amar Villas in 2010 and has since held key positions with renowned hospitality brands across Dubai and India.

An accomplished professional with particular expertise in food and beverage operations, Nithil most recently took on the role of Director of Operations at JW Marriott Mumbai Sahar, expanding his skills beyond F&B to the full spectrum of hotel management. Nithil's passion for hospitality is rooted in a genuine desire

to create meaningful and memorable guest experiences. His inspiration for this career stems from a love for making a positive impact on others, one stay at a time.

A firm believer in holistic well-being, Nithil's personal interests in fitness and running reflect his commitment to a balanced lifestyle. He views well-being as the creation of harmony between mind, body, and spirit, striving to embody this both personally and professionally. At The Westin Maldives, he plans to champion the brand's wellness philosophy by curating initiatives that help guests eat well, sleep well, move well, and ultimately, feel their best. Nithil recognizes that

Westin's approach to wellness is truly distinctive, woven thoughtfully into every element of the guest experience to ensure each visit yields a lasting sense of renewal.

Welcoming Nithil to the team, Vijay Kumar, General Manager of The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort, said, "We are thrilled to welcome Nithil to our leadership team. His strong operational background and genuine passion for wellness and guest experience make him the perfect fit for our resort. We look forward to seeing his expertise and energy elevate our commitment to well-being for both guests and associates."



Under Nithil's leadership, The Westin Maldives Miriandhoo Resort looks forward to an exciting new chapter, with guest well-being and exceptional service at its heart.

Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa Appoints Eduardo Gandia Martinez as New Executive Chef



Central to the ethos of Eduardo Gandia Martinez is the “art of cooking with heart and purpose.” It’s a value he learned from his grandmother in his native Spain that has guided him through an ambitious 12-year career. Now, in his new role as Executive Chef at Four Seasons Resort Maldives at Kuda Huraa, Eduardo is set to bring heart, purpose and a Mediterranean respect for ingredients to the resort’s award-winning culinary scene.

A dynamic leader who thrives on creative experimentation, Eduardo honed his culinary talent across some of Spain’s most celebrated Michelin-starred restaurants. His fusion of Med-inspired soulfulness and refined excellence was developed under maestros including Quique Dacosta, Francis Paniego, Martin Berasategui and Fran Martinez. Eduardo then went on to shape the dining experiences at leading global hotels including Hilton

Malta, Malta; Hilton Mallorca Galatzó, Spain and Alila Jabal Akhdar, Hyatt Corporation, Oman. Luxury hospitality enabled Eduardo to embrace a wider range of operations, from larger teams to project management. It proved to be the perfect match for his natural drive and energy.

A deep appreciation for the finest natural produce has its roots in Eduardo’s Spanish childhood. Growing up in a family of farmers and butchers, he has vivid memories of walking hand in hand with his grandfather through vibrant local markets and enjoying sandwiches his father prepared with the best cured meats and cheeses. It was his maternal grandmother Maria who most influenced his style though, with her ability to “create extraordinary flavours from humble ingredients.”

Ingredients—and their sustainability—are at the heart of Eduardo’s vision in his new role at the Forbes Five-Star garden island of Kuda Huraa. “For me, sustainability is simply

about respect for the product,” he says. “It means moving away from generic preparations that are replicated everywhere and instead embracing adaptation and creativity. Menus should be built around what is locally available, not the other way around.” In terms of the Maldives’ abundant ingredients, the ever-creative Eduardo doesn’t want “to leave a single one unexplored.”

Eduardo’s natural enthusiasm is equally matched by his forward-thinking leadership style. He’s grateful that times have changed from the traditional hierarchical kitchen management style. Supporting every member of his teams to shine, he uses a combination of “active listening, individual empowerment, and continuous development.”

Becoming a father has further deepened Eduardo’s inimitable dedication. He lives by the motto “Give your best, and the best will come back to you,” adding “whether it’s for your family, colleagues, work, or guests, never hold back on what you can offer.”



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MASTERING MALDIVES' MARINE FRONTIER



with

Hussain Thoufееq Ali

Managing Director, Silver Sands Pvt Ltd

Silver Sands has positioned itself as a leader in marine and water-based experiences in the Maldives. How do you define the long-term strategic vision of Silver Sands in an increasingly competitive and evolving luxury tourism landscape?

When we first entered the diving and water sports business nearly 20 years ago, the industry was largely dominated by foreign players. We differentiate ourselves by offering an innovative approach: consolidating all water-based activities under a single umbrella; unlike other operators who comes into the resort with their own brand, we create a unique brand for each resort that goes in harmony with the overall concept of the respective resort brand; owning the boats and investing in all the equipment and taking the responsibility of all the costs; recruiting all the staff and managing them. This allowed us to streamline operations for greater efficiency and optimize revenue generation. This tailored approach was well-received, and as we expanded, we continued to adapt and refine our model to suit the distinct needs of each resort.

As the industry becomes more competitive and continues to evolve, our long-term strategic vision is focused on enhancing operational efficiency while ensuring the highest standards of safety and service. Additionally, we recognize the importance of investing in the continuous training of our team, aiming to make

With over two decades of entrepreneurial leadership, Hussain Thoufееq Ali, Managing Director of Silver Sands Pvt Ltd, has been at the helm of one of the Maldives' most respected marine tourism companies. Founded in 2000, Silver Sands has established a strong presence in luxury resort destinations, offering integrated water sports, diving, and marine recreation services. Under Thoufееq's visionary leadership, the company has diversified into marine retail, construction, and trading - anchored in a commitment to environmental stewardship, local talent development, and guest experience innovation. In this exclusive feature with the IslandChief team, Thoufееq reflects on the evolution of marine-based tourism in the Maldives, the brand's strategic positioning, and what lies ahead as Silver Sands marks 25 years of service excellence.

them the most skilled, service-oriented professionals in the Maldives. This commitment to excellence will be key as we navigate the challenges of a rapidly changing luxury tourism landscape.

The Maldives is home to a growing number of marine operators. What would you say is Silver Sands' unique value proposition, and how has the brand adapted its offering to maintain exclusivity and relevance in a saturated market?

I would say one of our core values is reliability. From top management down to our front-line team, we are committed to delivering exactly what we promise; offering our service at the same level of the resort and without any compromise in safety standards. As mentioned above, another distinctive aspect of Silver Sands is that we do not have one brand identity on the

resorts that we operate in. Instead, we customise a brand for each resort in harmony with their respective brand and concept, which sets us apart from all the competitors that I am aware of. Lastly, owning our own boatyard gives us a significant operational advantage. It is managed by a highly experienced team, led by someone who deeply understands the realities and demands of our marine operations. This allows us to ensure quality, safety, and rapid response like no other.

Silver Sands has grown beyond water sports and marine operations to include retail, and boat yard. Could you elaborate on the rationale behind this diversification and how it aligns with the company's broader growth strategy?

When we started to expand our business, we were heavily relying on other suppliers to provide all the dive

and water sports equipment and boat spares and accessories. However, as the business grew, we began facing challenges in getting the items on time. Therefore, we started importing a lot of items to ensure that we had enough stock of important equipment such as snorkel sets, wetsuits, dive tanks, certain boat spares, etc.

Initially, we stored these items in a couple of warehouses, but recognising the demand in the market, we made the strategic decision to open a show room and to start selling them. This allowed us not only to meet the needs of the market but also to avoid having capital tied up in static inventory and by rolling the stock, we could generate profit and improve cash flow.

As the company continued to grow, we began owning a substantial number of boats. Repair and maintenance soon became a major challenge, especially since we had to rely on third-party boatyards. This prompted us to venture into the boatyard business, enabling us to service our own fleet more efficiently while also meeting the growing demand from other boat owners especially the resorts. As a business strategy, this vertical integration has hugely benefited us.

In addition, two of our owners are very experienced hoteliers. Leveraging their expertise and the strong relationships we have built with resorts over the years, we made the decision to go into hospitality supplies and household furniture. This diversification is fully aligned with our broader growth strategy, driven by operational needs, market demand, and long-term sustainability.

Recruitment and talent retention remain major challenges in the hospitality sector, particularly in technical and marine-based roles. How is Silver Sands addressing the talent pipeline issue, and what role does capacity building play in your leadership agenda?

This is one of the biggest challenges we face. In recruitment, we are competing not only with resorts but also with the state-owned enterprises (SOEs), which makes attracting and retaining talent especially difficult. Despite these hurdles, we have been successful in bringing in very good candidates and, more importantly, retaining them.

One of our key strengths is a horizontal management structure, which empowers the respective business heads, and also the staff in each business unit. This fosters a sense of belonging and shared responsibility. We place a strong emphasis on both on-the-job and off-site training. In our diving and water sports operations, for example, we provide staff with structured training in diving and water sports and even allow them to use some of our most valuable assets, which are our boats, to acquire necessary licenses.

We also make a deliberate effort to identify team members with leadership potential. Those who demonstrate such qualities are given opportunities for further development, including training abroad. Capacity building remains central to our leadership agenda because we believe long-term success depends on nurturing talent from within.

As environmental sustainability becomes central to the future of coastal tourism, what specific initiatives have Silver Sands implemented to mitigate ecological impact while maintaining operational viability?

At Silver Sands, environmental sustainability is a key consideration in how we operate. We have taken several initiatives to reduce our ecological impact while ensuring our operations remain viable. For instance, we import and use eco-friendly products, including cleaning agents and anti-fouling materials that are less harmful to the marine environment. We have significantly reduced the use of single-use plastics across our operations, introduced biodegradable bags, and implemented changes such as using larger hooks during sunset fishing trips to avoid capturing juvenile fish. We also sell reef-friendly sunscreens in our retail outlets.

As a third-party operator on resorts, there are naturally some limitations to what we can implement independently. However, we actively collaborate with our partner resorts on a variety of sustainability initiatives. Many of our operations have resident marine biologists who engage with guests through educational presentations and awareness programs about the Maldives’ fragile ecosystems. We also run coral propagation projects at several resorts, helping to support reef regeneration.

One notable upcoming initiative is our collaboration with AVANI+ Fares Maldives Resort and PADI, where we are organizing a full week of activities to celebrate AWARE Week and Manta Day, starting on the 14th of September. This is just one example of how we combine education, community engagement, and conservation in our sustainability efforts.

You have been a strong advocate for improved public-private collaboration. What is the most pressing policy-level interventions needed to support the sustainable growth of marine-based tourism in the Maldives?

As a country that depends heavily on tourism, I strongly believe the Government must urgently improve the national waste management system. This includes educating the public on the importance of protecting our fragile ecosystem and adopting advanced waste disposal methods that minimize environmental impact. The responsibility to preserve our natural beauty lies with every individual living in the Maldives. It is deeply disheartening to witness the increasing amount of garbage floating on our oceans and accumulating along our beaches.

Another crucial policy intervention is the designation of dive sites in each atoll as marine reserves. This should be implemented gradually, with the Government actively engaging local councils, fishermen, and the business community. It is essential to raise awareness about the importance of conserving our marine ecosystems, our oceans, reefs, thilas, giris, and marine life, not only for tourism but for the sustainability of future generations. A further pressing issue is the current practice of night fishing, where dhonis anchor directly onto the reef, causing significant damage to coral ecosystems. In collaboration with the private sector, the Government should invest in Fish Aggregating Devices (FADs), which would enable tourists and the locals to experience night fishing without harming the reef.

With thoughtful, collaborative policy-making and strong public-private partnerships, we can ensure that marine-based tourism continues to thrive in harmony with the environment.

Today’s luxury travelers seek more than just premium services - they seek meaningful, personalized experiences. How are Silver Sands innovating to meet this demand, and what future experiential offerings are being developed?

Since its inception, Silver Sands has operated with a clear purpose: to create lifetime experiences for our guests. Every decision we make is guided by two fundamental principles; safety always comes first, followed by guest satisfaction. This isn’t just a slogan; it is how we define our business. We do not compromise on these two guiding principles. Our entire team works in harmony to ensure that every guest leaves with a story worth sharing. Whether it is a unique diving adventure, a tailored excursion, or simply the attention to personal detail, our aim is to make every moment memorable. Looking ahead, we are continuously exploring new experiential offerings that blend authenticity, exclusivity, and a deep connection to the natural beauty of the Maldives.

The tourism sector faces growing risks, from climate change to geopolitical and economic shifts. How does Silver Sands embed resilience into its operational and investment strategies, particularly in geographically dispersed island environments?

We currently operate 14 centres across 9 atolls, each presenting a unique set of environmental and logistical challenges: from Noonu Atoll in the North to Addu Atoll in the South. Over the years, we have witnessed significant transformations: coral bleaching events like the one in 2016, Crown-of-Thorns (COT) invasions, political transitions, global conflicts, and of course, the COVID-19 pandemic. Looking back, the past decade has tested us with immense challenges, but we have been able to face those challenges and have survived. To put it very simply, resilience is not a just concept for us; it is an integral part of who we are. It is this mindset that has enabled us to adapt, innovate, and continue growing in such a dynamic and dispersed environment, across the Maldives. Without it, we simply would not be here today, and it will continue to guide us into the future.

As Silver Sands celebrates 25 years of excellence in 2025, what personal values continue to guide your leadership, and what legacy do you hope to leave through your work with Silver Sands?

As Silver Sands marks 25 years of excellence in 2025, the values that continue to guide my leadership are reliability, hard work, honesty, and a constant drive to improve every aspect of our business. We make it a point to listen, both to our staff and to our clients. And we remain open to positive change.

Silver Sands, as a 100% Maldivian-owned company, is a testament to what can be achieved with the right mindset, firm focus, and a strong commitment to core values. Success alone is not enough; what truly matters is sustaining the success that is achieved and then continuing to grow and improve. I believe the Maldives offers a lot of opportunities, and with the right approach, there is no limit to what we can accomplish.

Through my work with Silver Sands, I hope to leave a legacy that inspires future generations of Maldivians to believe in themselves, to work hard, uphold strong values, and build businesses that are both world-class and deeply rooted in local identity.

NEW OPENING

Meyyafushi Resort to Open in October 2025



Meyyafushi Maldives, a new five-star premium all-inclusive boutique resort, is set to open its doors on October 1, 2025. Located in the pristine Lhaviyani Atoll, just a 35-minute seaplane journey from Velana International Airport, the resort is poised to redefine luxury travel in the Maldives with its distinctive blend of

comfort, sustainability, and curated experiences.

Developed by BeKind Hospitality—the creators of the award-winning Fushifaru Maldives—Meyyafushi marks the brand's second property and an exciting new chapter in its mission to promote kindness and

environmental stewardship through hospitality. Nestled on a natural island surrounded by some of the Maldives' best dive sites, the resort features 95 luxurious villas and suites, each with a private pool, blending modern elegance with island-inspired charm.

Guests at Meyyafushi can indulge in a wide range of amenities and experiences, all covered under the resort's generous premium all-inclusive plan. Dining options include ten distinct venues, such as a Mediterranean restaurant, Teppanyaki grill, Asian fusion, an overwater wine cellar, a 24-hour café, and the standout underwater dining experience known as the "Bubble" restaurant. Complementing the culinary offerings is the overwater Veyoge Spa, fitness centre, yoga pavilion, and a range of wellness programs.

Meyyafushi also caters to families,

with the Kokko Kids Club offering a skate ramp, climbing wall, arts and crafts sessions, a kids' pool, and interactive programs. Sports and recreation enthusiasts can enjoy the Maldives' first overwater padel tennis court, a mini-bowling alley, billiards, motorized and non-motorized water sports, and excursions including snorkelling, dolphin watching, and diving.

The resort's sustainability philosophy is deeply rooted in BeKind's core values—Kindness to the Environment, the Community, Visitors, and Residents. Meyyafushi implements eco-conscious operations, eliminates single-use plastics, and actively supports local communities through various initiatives. With its empathetic approach and refined luxury, the resort seeks to offer more than just a holiday—it creates a meaningful experience for all who visit.

Dusit Launches dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives: Lively New All-Inclusive Resort Near Malé

Dusit Hotels and Resorts, the hotel arm of Dusit International, one of Thailand's leading hotel and property development companies, is set to mark a major milestone with the opening of dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives — the group's first all-inclusive lifestyle resort and its second Dusit-branded property in the country, complementing the luxury Dusit Thani Maldives.

Set to soft open on 27 July 2025, dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives is located on a pristine natural island just seven minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport, Malé. The resort invites guests to experience a private escape defined by bold design, vibrant energy, and curated experiences, all thoughtfully crafted for modern travellers who value freedom, connection, and discovery in an inspiring setting.

Fringed by a spacious lagoon and thriving coral reefs, the resort offers exceptional access to vibrant marine life and stunning dive sites — making it an ideal base for underwater exploration and ocean-inspired adventure.

Blending beachfront charm with overwater serenity, the upscale resort features 127 spacious villas across seven distinct categories, ranging from 77 to 306 sq m. From tranquil

beachfront retreats to expansive overwater sanctuaries, each villa is thoughtfully designed for modern comfort and style, with indoor-outdoor living spaces, private decks, and plunge pools in most categories.

dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives also introduces a fresh and modern take on the all-inclusive concept, with à la carte dining across five distinctive venues, unlimited premium beverages, daily entertainment, and generous resort credits for personalised indulgence.

Whether guests choose to unwind at Namm Spa, join beachfront yoga sessions, or sip island-inspired cocktails at the rooftop bar, they'll find countless ways to connect, recharge, and play. From floating breakfasts and live DJ sets to snorkelling adventures and beach cinema nights, every experience is designed to spark joy and create lasting memories.

For corporate retreats and incentive travel, the resort also offers a full-service conference facility for up to 240 guests, making it a compelling choice within easy reach of the capital.

"dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives brings a bold new energy to the Maldives while staying true to Dusit's signature Thai-inspired gracious hospitality," said Mr Gilles Cretallaz, Chief Operating



Officer, Dusit International. "Thoughtfully designed for the young and the young at heart, this vibrant, all-inclusive resort is more than just a place to stay; it's a lifestyle destination offering exceptional marine experiences, curated adventures, and effortless escapes in a stunning setting. It's a place where the spirit of discovery meets the comfort of modern, all-inclusive hospitality — perfect for travellers who want to do it all, or nothing at all."

To celebrate its soft opening, dusitD2 Feydhoo Maldives is offering an exclusive launch package featuring complimentary round-trip speedboat transfers for two, a complimentary

upgrade to the next villa category, one signature floating breakfast per stay, 24-hour check-in and check-out, and more. Members of Dusit's enhanced loyalty and lifestyle programme, Dusit Gold — which can be activated online for free at dusit.com/enrollment — also enjoy 15% off member rates and exclusive privileges throughout their stay.

Helmed by General Manager Yogeswaran Veerasamy — a seasoned hospitality professional with over two decades of experience in luxury resort operations across the Maldives and Southeast Asia — the resort is scheduled to celebrate its official grand opening in Q4 2025.



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EVENTS & AWARDS

Silver Sands Celebrates 25 Years of Marine Excellence in the Maldives



Silver Sands Pvt Ltd, a pioneering name in the Maldives' tourism industry for providing dive, watersports and excursions, proudly marked its 25th anniversary with a grand celebration held at Kurumba Maldives. The event brought together the company's dedicated staff, owners, directors, long-standing partners, and esteemed clients to commemorate a remarkable journey that began on June 7, 2000.

From humble beginnings, Silver Sands has grown into one of the country's most respected names in diving, water sports, and marine excursions. Today, it operates 14 dive and water sports centers across 16 luxury resorts, offering

a broad portfolio of tailored, high-end ocean experiences under its hallmark "Total Solutions" concept.

The evening was highlighted by an Awards Ceremony recognizing the company's longest-serving employees—individuals who have played a key role in shaping Silver Sands' legacy through their loyalty, professionalism, and passion for marine adventure.

In his address, Managing Director Mr. Hussain Thoufee Ali expressed heartfelt gratitude to the entire Silver Sands team and their partners. "Silver Sands, which started with only one employee (which was just me), has grown into a company

that has provided employment to more than 500 individuals—both Maldivians and foreigners—creating not just jobs, but careers, livelihoods, and opportunities for growth."

"I am delighted to see that our relentless efforts to train local talents have paid off. Silver Sands today employs staff who joined at entry level and have grown to become captains, managers, and even general managers—some of whom are present here."

Silver Sands' commitment to excellence has consistently placed it at the forefront of the Maldivian marine tourism sector. The company's offerings include

PADI-certified dive courses, luxury water sports, conservation-focused marine biology experiences, and custom excursions ranging from dolphin quests to big game fishing.

Its subsidiaries Sea Gear, the retail and equipment arm, and Evo, known for elite top notch product distribution also contribute to the brand's comprehensive approach, helping position Silver Sands as a one-stop solution for marine adventure and resort collaboration.

With multilingual, highly trained professionals and a firm dedication to sustainability, Silver Sands continues to redefine marine adventure in the Maldives.

As the night concluded, attendees looked back with pride and forward with renewed ambition, eager to see what the next chapter holds for a company that has made the Maldivian seas its life's work.

About Silver Sands

Founded in 2000, Silver Sands is a Maldivian-owned company delivering luxury dive and water sports services across the Maldives. Known for innovation, professionalism, and a guest-centric approach, Silver Sands remains the go-to partner for resorts seeking to offer world-class experiences.

Maldives Marine Industry Forum (MMIF) 2025 Successfully Concludes at Hotel Jen

The 3rd edition of the Maldives Marine Industry Forum (MMIF), organized by Medium Events Pvt Ltd, was successfully held on 1st July 2025 at JEN Maldives Malé by Shangri-La. The forum brought together a distinguished group of industry stakeholders, government officials, and senior representatives from both public and private sectors.

This year's forum was officially endorsed by the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) and the Indian Ocean Divers Association (IODA). MMIF 2025 served as a dynamic platform for industry leaders to address pressing challenges, explore emerging opportunities, and work collectively towards sustainable and innovative solutions for the advancement of the Maldivian marine industry.

The event featured four insightful panel discussions:

- **Panel 1:** Managing Marine Resources – A compelling discussion on sustainability, regulation, financing, and the responsible development of oceanic assets.
- **Panel 2:** Maritime Cargo Management,



Clearance, and Forwarding – A crucial dialogue addressing efficient trade, logistics, and supply chain operations in the Maldives.

- **Panel 3:** Marine Connectivity – Focused on the role of technology and infrastructure in bridging geographical gaps across our ocean territories and fleets.
- **Panel 4:** Expanding the Watersports and Diving Sector – A vibrant session exploring growth opportunities in one of the Maldives' most iconic tourism offerings, emphasizing innovation,

safety, and sustainability.

In addition, an interactive workshop was conducted by the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation, encouraging direct engagement between regulatory bodies and industry professionals to address operational policies implemented by the Ministry.

Adding a touch of excitement, the forum also featured a quick raffle draw, where one lucky attendee walked away with a Premier Annual Travel Cover, courtesy of Gold Sponsor Allied Insurance Company of the Maldives.



Sponsors of MMIF 2025 included:

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The continued support and collaboration between stakeholders underscore MMIF's vital role in shaping the future of the nation's marine industry.

EVENTS & AWARDS

Kuda Villingili Maldives Recognized Among the Best Resort Pools at the Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards 2025



Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives has been officially ranked among the Best Resort Pools in the Travel + Leisure Luxury Awards Asia Pacific 2025, a prestigious honour voted by discerning travellers across the region. This recognition coincides with the resort’s fourth anniversary, making it a month of double celebration for one of the Maldives’ most beloved luxury lifestyle destinations.

Set in the stunning North Malé Atoll just 30 minutes by speedboat from Velana International Airport, Kuda Villingili has become synonymous with design, experience, and community. At the heart of the resort’s allure is its show-stopping 150-metre pool—the largest in the Maldives and a true architectural marvel that elevates the art of leisure.

Fringed by swaying palms, plush daybeds, and jacuzzis, the pool serves as the social heartbeat of the island, seamlessly connecting guests to the resort’s three dynamic bars and eight globally inspired restaurants.

Far more than just a pool, this shimmering expanse offers a thoughtfully zoned experience tailored for every type of guest, including a 50-metre Olympic-size lap pool for fitness enthusiasts, daily aqua fitness and yoga sessions, Jacuzzi corners nestled beneath tropical greenery for ultimate relaxation and even shallow zones dedicated for children, making it a family-friendly haven. For couples seeking to one-up the traditional beach dinners under the stars, the pool also serves as a magical venue for intimate candlelit dinners veiled under the Milky Way.

“This award is a testament to our commitment to creating unforgettable, design-led experiences with heartfelt Maldivian hospitality,” shared Deepa Manuel, General Manager of Kuda Villingili Resort Maldives. “The pool was designed to bring people together—from families and fitness

lovers to couples and solo travellers. It’s where our guests laugh, connect, and relax. “To be ranked among the top three Best Resort Pools by Travel + Leisure readers just as we celebrate our fourth anniversary is a beautiful affirmation of what we have created here.”

Adding to its accolades, Kuda Villingili recently won the Reader’s Favourite Overseas Hotel award at the Travel + Leisure China Travel Awards 2024, further reinforcing its growing recognition across key Asian markets.

Kuda Villingili continues to redefine time and space with its distinct concept of luxury island life with a spirit of connection, wellness, and authenticity. Beyond the pool, Kuda Villingili is celebrated for its eight exceptional dining venues offering 11 cuisines, including its signature restaurant Mar-Umi—a Japanese-Peruvian culinary haven by the beach—and Earth, a tribute to Maldivian and vegetarian cuisine, further affirming its claim for inclusivity. The resort also features a wellness-focused private island spa, an energetic surf scene with direct access to the famed Chickens Break – only a paddle away from the shore – and 75 luxurious villas and residences with private infinity pools—each designed for both intimacy and connection with oneself and nature.

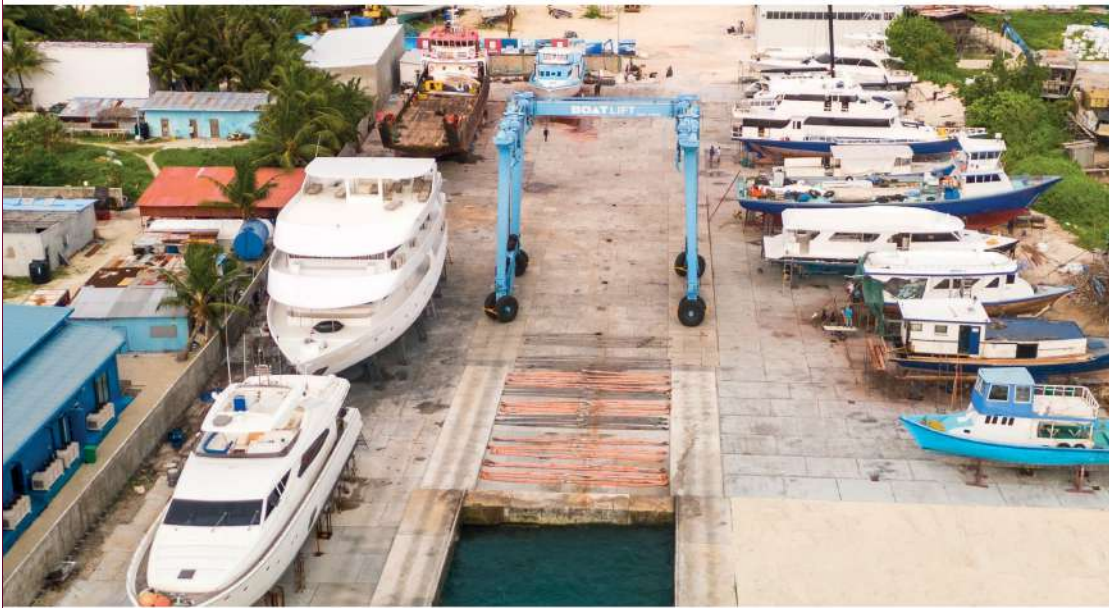
Whether gliding through the Olympic lap lane at sunrise, soaking in a poolside jacuzzi under the stars, or clinking glasses during a floating dinner at dusk, the pool at Kuda Villingili is more than a space—it is a feeling of individual experiences curated one at a time by a dedicated team of ambassadors. This recognition at the Travel + Leisure Awards reflects the heartfelt feedback of guests and travellers across the region, who voted not just for the beauty of the pool but for the soul of the experience that Kuda Villingili consistently delivers.



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IN THE NEWS

Ooredoo Enhances eSIM Journey to Boost Customer Security and Fraud Protection

Ooredoo Maldives has taken a major step forward in safeguarding its customers by enhancing security features to the eSIM journey, ensuring that SIM swaps are safer, smarter, and more secure than ever before. These new measures are designed to prevent unauthorized access and protect users from potential fraud and provide greater peace of mind in today's increasingly digital world.

Stronger Validation to Stop Fraud Before It Starts

To strengthen identity verification, Ooredoo has introduced enhanced acceptance standards. In addition to the existing OTP verification, the upgraded process now includes facial matching against the customer's ID document, providing a critical second layer of authentication. This makes it significantly more difficult for fraudsters to initiate or complete an eSIM swap, adding a powerful deterrent to fraudulent attempts.

Advanced OCR and Face ID Integration

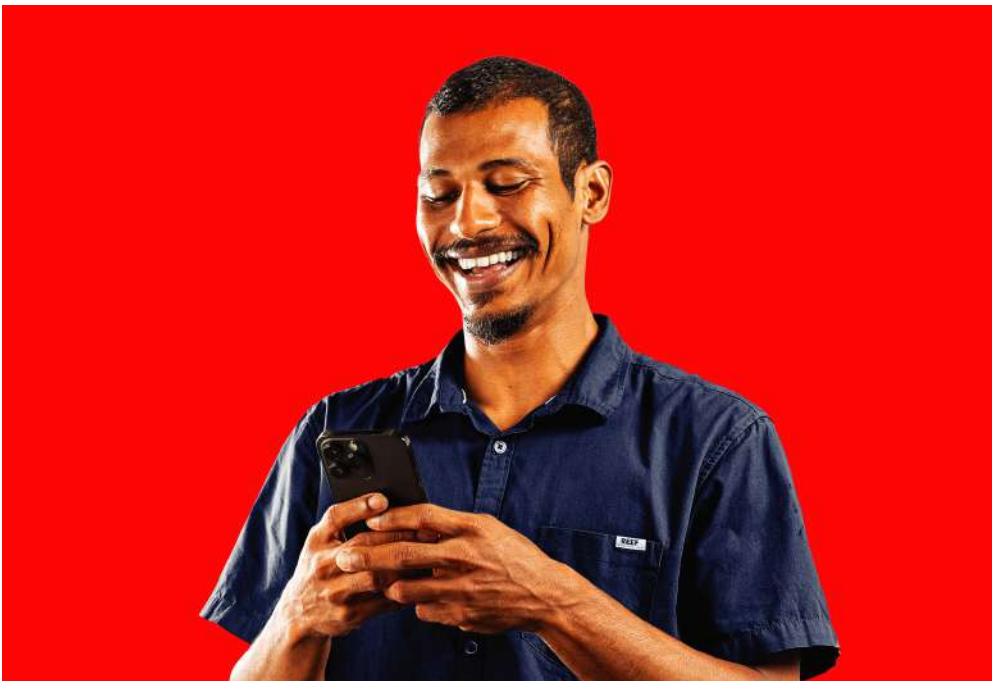
Another major improvement is the requirement to upload an image of the customer's national ID card, paired with real-time Face ID verification. Previously, users could proceed with just an OTP and ID card number, a vulnerability now addressed with cutting-edge OCR (Optical Character Recognition) technology and facial validation, ensuring only the rightful owner can complete the process.

Rollback Feature for Peace of Mind

Understanding the urgency of fraud response, Ooredoo has introduced a Rollback SMS feature. Before an eSIM swap is finalized, the original SIM owner receives an SMS with a rollback URL, valid for 72 hours. This gives customers the opportunity to instantly revert the change if they suspect fraudulent activity and hence minimizing damage and restoring control in real time.

Timely Alerts in Dhivehi & English

To keep customers fully informed, SMS and email notifications are now sent in



both Dhivehi and English at each stage of the eSIM journey. These alerts improve visibility, boost customer awareness, and create transparency around any changes to their SIM profile.

With these updates, Ooredoo reaffirms its commitment to customer trust, digital safety, and innovation. The

improved eSIM journey not only enhances the user experience but also sets a new benchmark for security standards in the Maldives' telecommunications sector.

At Ooredoo, the customer is always at the heart of innovation and with these upgrades, staying connected is now safer than ever.

Award-Winning Private Island Resort, RAAYA By Atmosphere Celebrates Its First Anniversary



Against the backdrop of a broader surge in global travel, with the Maldives welcoming a 9% year-on-year increase in tourist arrivals in the first half of 2025, RAAYA by Atmosphere proudly marks its first anniversary this July. With international recognition and a growing reputation for creating memories that linger, RAAYA enters its second year with a sense of quiet pride and renewed purpose.

Away from the crowd, hidden in the tranquil Raa Atoll, the island resort has, in just one year, established itself as a haven of understated indulgence, nature-inspired design, and thoughtfully curated experiences for discerning travellers from around the world. Since opening its doors on 4 July 2024, the resort has welcomed over 13,000 guests from across the globe, each discovering a castaway

narrative that delights all ages.

At the heart of RAAYA's concept is the story of Seb – a shipwrecked artist who finds refuge on the island, embracing its natural beauty, drawing inspiration from its wild charm, and living off the land until his eventual rescue. This whimsical tale shapes the island experience, weaving through its design, activities, dining, and family-friendly adventures.

From its 167 beach and overwater villas thoughtfully placed amidst fragrant gardens and turquoise waters, to its six exceptional dining venues, the resort has quickly become a sought-after escape for couples, families, and friends alike. The RAAYA Residence, with its private infinity pool

and panoramic ocean views, remains a pinnacle of privacy and sophistication.

RAAYA by Atmosphere's debut year has also brought accolades. Most notably, being recognised in the Tripadvisor Travellers' Choice Awards 2025, placing it in the top 10% of global listings based on genuine traveller reviews. Adding to its honours, the resort was also awarded "Opening of the Year" at the Travel Time Awards in Moscow, just nine months after its launch, a testament to the team's dedication and the resort's unique positioning as an experiential destination rooted in storytelling and sustainability.

Maurice Van Den Bosch, General Manager of RAAYA by Atmosphere, said "RAAYA was designed to be more than just a resort. It's a place of stories, of moments that matter. We are deeply grateful to our guests, our team, and our global travel partners who have embraced this vision and made our first year so rewarding. This is just the beginning".

IN THE NEWS

29 Years of Intour Maldives – Crafting the Maldives’ Most Exclusive Journeys



Intour Maldives, the Maldives’ leading luxury Destination Management Company (DMC), proudly celebrates 29 years of delivering exceptional travel experiences that have positioned the Maldives as a premier holiday destination for discerning Holidaymakers.

This milestone was commemorated with an elegant event at One&Only Reethi Rah, a distinguished partner renowned for its unparalleled luxury. The occasion honoured nearly three decades of collaboration, dedication, and a shared commitment to excellence in hospitality.

“For 29 years, Intour Maldives has crafted bespoke journeys that capture the essence of the Maldives’ beauty and serenity,” said Ali Firaq, Managing Director of Intour Maldives. “Our enduring partnership with One&Only Reethi Rah exemplifies our dedication to creating transformative experiences that resonate with Holidaymakers long after their visit.”

Established in 1996, the company has built a legacy of excellence through its deep knowledge of the destination and strong global partnerships. As the only Maldives based DMC recognized by the prestigious Serandipians by Traveller Made® network, Intour Maldives offers exclusive access, personalized itineraries, and preferential rates at the Maldives’ finest resorts, catering to the world’s most sophisticated Holidaymakers.

The anniversary event was also a celebration of the people behind the brand. “This milestone is a tribute to our incredible team—the people who live and breathe luxury hospitality and make it all possible,” added Mr. Firaq. “It’s their passion and discipline that allow us to deliver world-class service every day, reflecting the true spirit of Maldivian hospitality.”

This August also marks the 4th anniversary of Roam Maldives—the sister brand of Intour Maldives, introduced in 2021 to make the Maldives more accessible without compromising on quality. Positioned under the tagline “Maldives for Everyone,” Roam Maldives curates value-rich experiences that blend comfort, authenticity, and discovery. From serene beachfront escapes to immersive cultural and nature-based adventures, the brand is quickly becoming the go-to DMC for Holidaymakers seeking affordable luxury in the Maldives.

As Intour Maldives approaches its 30th year, the company remains steadfast in its commitment to innovation, strategic partnerships, and redefining the standards of luxury travel. With an unmatched understanding of the destination, Intour Maldives invites discerning Holidaymakers to experience the Maldives through journeys crafted with precision, care, and a deep sense of place—because no one knows the Maldives quite like they do.

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MARINE RUNWAY 2025 STEALS THE SPOTLIGHT AT MALDIVES MARINE EXPO

The Maldives Marine Expo 2025 wrapped up with resounding success, bringing together the marine industry’s leading innovators, suppliers, and visionaries. But it was the MARINE Runway 2025 — the event’s most anticipated entertainment spectacle — that made waves as the undeniable highlight of this year’s edition.

A unique convergence of fashion, function, and environmental awareness, MARINE Runway 2025 showcased dynamic marine-inspired collections from a curated selection of brands at the forefront of ocean apparel, lifestyle products, and diving innovation in the Maldives.

SEA SPORTS

Since 1995, Sea Sports has been the heartbeat of watersports retail and wholesale in the Maldives, including surfing, bodyboarding and swimming. Known for its collection of authentic global brands, they cater to athletes, ocean enthusiasts, and beach lovers alike.

Sea Sports is the authorized dealer in Maldives for Reef, Volcom, Ocean & Earth, Speedo, Hot Buttered, FCS Surf Hardware, Captain fin, DMC swim fin, Pride Bodyboards, Electric sunglasses and Redz Surfboards.

Their MARINE showcase featured high-performance surf wear and lifestyle collections designed for both adrenaline-filled adventures and laid-back island days. The collection reinforces Sea Sports’ legacy as the Maldives’ go-to destination for authentic surf and swim gear.

LANALA

Founded in 2017, LANALA is a proudly local, family-run swimwear brand that champions sustainability and inclusiveness. Named after the founder’s daughter “Lana” and the Dhivehi word for “pretty” (nala), LANALA made history as the first Maldivian swimwear brand to introduce recycled fabrics. Using eco-conscious materials like Repreve and Carvico — made from ocean waste and PET bottles — LANALA produces stylish, UV-protective swimwear for all ages, sizes, and styles. From modest wear and family collections to bold resort-ready bikinis, their runway segment displayed versatility, island heritage, and bold tropical flair. With a presence in over 20 resorts and outlets across the Maldives, LANALA continues to set benchmarks in ethical island fashion.

SEA GEAR

A lifestyle extension of Silver Sands Pvt Ltd, SEA GEAR was established in 2014 to bridge quality with performance in marine lifestyle products. Dedicated to promoting a healthy, ocean-centric lifestyle, Sea Gear offers top-of-the-line boating accessories, watersports gear, technical apparel, and leisurewear. Their MARINE Runway appearance celebrated function and fashion, presenting sleek wetsuits, outerwear, and accessories crafted for the serious ocean-goer and style-savvy adventurer. Some highlighted products featured on the runway included: Dry Tube / Tube Mini Bag, Sunglasses, Hurley Cap, Lycra Long Sleeve Rash Guard, Aqua Shoes, SUUNTO Watch, and the HERO Snorkeling Kit for kids.

MARINE EQUIPMENTS PVT LTD (MEQ)

With nearly two decades of experience in marine hardware and technology, MEQ stands as one of the Maldives’ most trusted marine equipment suppliers. Since 2006, the company has supported the evolving needs of the marine transportation industry with an extensive range of advanced equipment and vessel



solutions. On the runway, MEQ reimagined utility in elegant form — presenting innovative safety gear, dry wear, and accessories with technical finishes that marry practicality with contemporary design. Featured products included: Life Jackets for Adults, Dawn Marine Dry Bag, SEAFLO Body Boards, Rescue Tube, Rescue Can, Pro Blue PB Freediving Carbon Fiber Fins, Pro Blue Long Sleeve Rash Guard UV 50+, and Pro Blue Mask.

DIVE CLUB MALDIVES

A household name in accessible diving and watersports, Dive Club Maldives is renowned for offering a full range of PADI-certified training, from Discover Scuba Diving to Divemaster programs. Operating across several islands, they also bundle diving experiences with accommodation through partner hotels. Their MARINE Runway segment focused on approachability — showcasing practical, functional diving gear and stylish uniforms for instructors and students alike. Products featured included: Fish Tank Tote Bag, Femunu Rash Guard, Femunu Umbrella, T-shirt promoting Kaafu Dive Site, Aqua Seal Pro Water Bottle. Additionally, Dive Club gave merchandise to models and offered a Free Dive Voucher as a lucky draw prize for attendees.

LIZZY

Built around the evolving tastes of fashion-conscious consumers, LIZZY is a multi-category fashion house offering everything from formal menswear to activewear, women’s denim, accessories, and skincare. Their diverse portfolio appeals to all demographics and price points. On the MARINE Runway, LIZZY brought cosmopolitan energy to the stage with effortless coastal-chic looks — showcasing resort wear shorts and t-shirts, SPY Sunglasses, and COBIAN footwear tailored for modern island lifestyles.

D BLUE MARINE

D Blue Marine has been a premium provider of marine accessories and supplies for boating, sailing, and fishing in the Maldives since 2003. Whether outfitting a private vessel or stocking up for a deep-sea trip, they offer only the highest-quality products with expert customer support. Their MARINE Runway presentation highlighted essential boating wear, life jackets, fishing and safety gear — all designed for durability in harsh marine environments while maintaining a sleek, minimalistic aesthetic. Featured products included: Bob Marlin Hat, Dry Fit Shorts, Bandana (paired with a Life Jacket), Rope, and the TENRYU Bay Blaze Fishing Gear Rod.

HONDA MARINE (MARINE VIBE)

A division of D Blue Pvt Ltd, Marine Vibe is the exclusive distributor of Honda Marine outboard engines in the Maldives. Since 2017, Marine Vibe has brought global innovation to local waters with world-class propulsion systems. At MARINE Runway 2025, they presented the sophisticated side of marine engineering through gear, uniform-inspired apparel, and branded lifestyle elements. A major attraction was their “Win a Honda 15HP Outboard Engine” lucky draw campaign, which was a hit among visitors. Additionally, a Honda Genuine Motor Oil bottle was showcased on the runway by a staff member in official uniform.

SSI MALDIVES

Part of the global Scuba Schools International (SSI) network, SSI Maldives supports a broad network of dive schools and instructors across the country. Their runway presentation emphasized high-quality diving apparel and equipment that meet international standards. Featured items included: Mares Rash Guards and Wetsuits, Lifeguard SSI Pro Rash Guards, Waterproof SSI Dry Bags, Mares Freediving Fins and Fins Bag, Cruise Captain Bag, SSI Snorkeling/Diving Kits, Dive Computers, Safety Vests, SSI Sunglasses, Wet Towels, Booties, Regulators, Long Blade Fins, and Rescue Tubes.

FISHPEOPLE

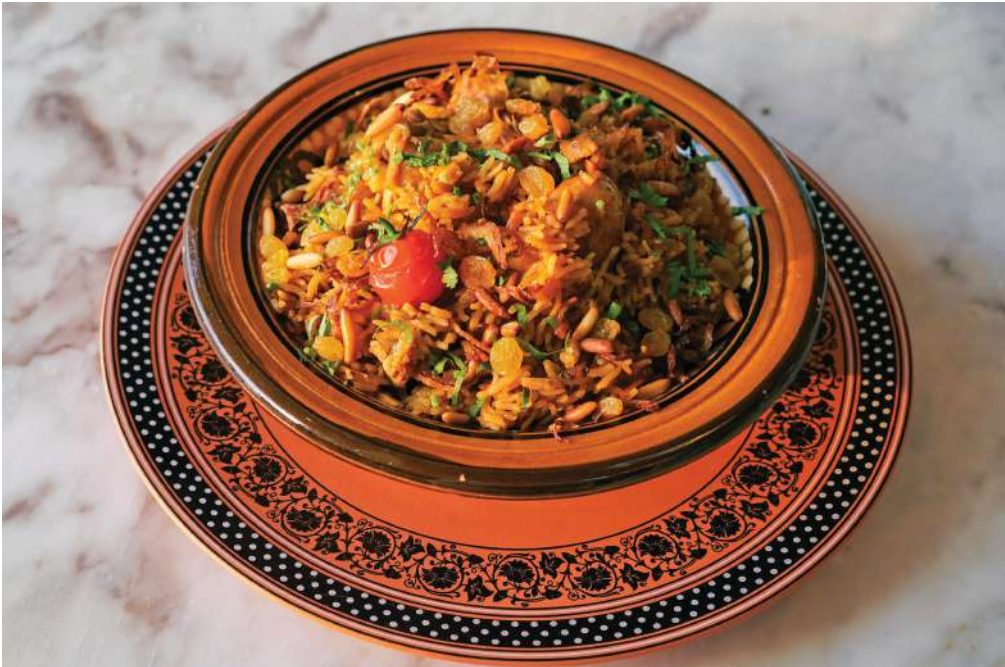
Sustainability took center stage as Fishpeople closed the show with a visionary lineup of eco-conscious uniforms and resort merchandise. Trusted by leading resorts including One & Only, Kaito, Dive Butler, and Best Dives, Fishpeople creates custom apparel using Global Recycled Standard (GRS) fabrics made from ocean plastic and discarded fishing nets. Their segment featured durable rash guards, recycled polos, organic cotton blends, and vibrant wetwear that redefined resort elegance. Their key resort uniforms and wetsuit rash guards were highlights on the runway — delivering a powerful message: sustainable fashion can be as luxurious as it is essential.

MARINE Runway 2025 was more than just a highlight — it was a transformative statement about the future of marine fashion and lifestyle. With bold designs, ethical practices, and forward-thinking collaborations, it successfully bridged industry utility with island glamour.

Adding to the vibrant atmosphere, the event was elevated by a high-energy performances from Detune, a popular band known for their wide appeal across different age groups. Their dynamic created a lively, unforgettable experience that resonated with the crowd.

BON APPÉTIT

Chicken Kabsa Rice



Chef Moustafa is a Junior Sous Chef specializing in Arabic cuisine at the St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort since September 2022. His career spans various prestigious hotels and resorts, starting at the Cliff Resort in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt, in 2012. With experience at renowned properties such as Anantara Dhigu, Pullman Mamutaa, and Shangri-La's Villingili Resort, Chef Moustafa has honed his skills in kitchens across the Maldives and Egypt. His deep knowledge of Arabic flavors, combined with his journey through these renowned establishments, shapes his approach to cooking, where tradition meets innovation.

Chef Moustafa's Chicken Kabsa Rice is a dish inspired by family and tradition. Growing up, Ramadan was a time of togetherness, where meals were shared with loved ones. For Moustafa, cooking is about connecting with family and honoring memories of those special moments. This dish, rooted in Middle Eastern tradition, holds a personal twist, with flavors and spices reminiscent of his mother's cooking. Chicken Kabsa Rice isn't just about the food—it's about celebrating family bonds, the joy of sharing, and the comfort of a home-cooked meal that brings everyone together.

SERVES FOR 6 PERSONS

INGRIDENTS :

- 1kg basmati rice
- 1kg chicken skinless
- 200gm red onion
- 30gm garlic
- 30gm ginger fresh
- 200gm fresh tomato
- 10gm green chili
- 1 table spoon tomato past
- 100gm carrot
- 100ml caw ghee
- 5gm Bay leaf whole
- 5gm Dried lemon whole
- 3gm cardamom whole
- 3gm clove whole
- 10gm salt
- 15gm seven spices powder
- 5gm coriander powder
- 5gm turmeric powder
- 3gm white sugar
- 5gm chicken stock powder
- 5lt hot water
- 2gm saffron

METHOD:

- 1.Wash the rice under running water for 5 minutes then soak for 1 hour before cooking
- 2.Cut the chicken by 8 without skin
- 3.Cut the all the vegetable in a small pieces
4. Heat the ghee on high fire then start add the cut onion and the whole spices until it turn to golden color then add the garlic and the ginger until it cook then add the fresh tomato until it cook
5. Add the chicken and the tomato past and all the the rest of the spices (the powder) let it toast for 2 minutes
6. Add the hot water and let boil for 20 minutes, finally add the rice (after straining the water) once it boil reduce the heat very slow fire for 20 more minutes
7. Now ready and you can garnish with coriander leaf's and fried onion or any type of nuts you like and golden raisins

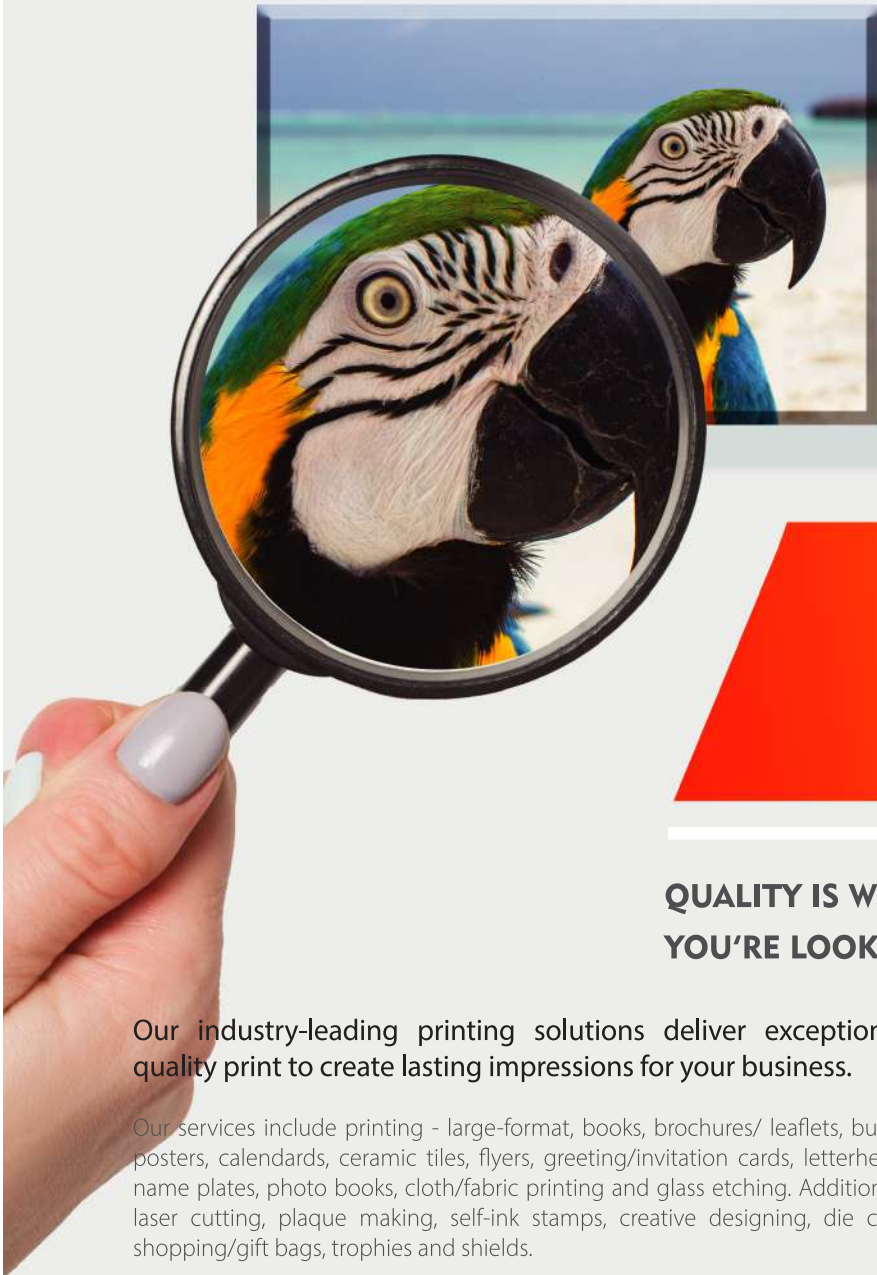


Courtesy of
Chef Moustafa
Junior Sous Chef
St. Regis Maldives Vommuli Resort



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Frankly Speaking

Considering the balance between foreign investments and national interests, what would be the key considerations for the Maldives in deciding whether to partner with external companies for critical airport services such as VIP terminals?



Abdulla Nazim
Owner
Sky Tours Maldives

National Control vs. Foreign Efficiency:
While foreign partners may offer efficiency and global branding, handing over critical infrastructure—like VIP (CIP) terminals—can weaken local control over high-value assets.

Economic Retention:
Revenue from elite aviation services should ideally circulate within the Maldivian economy. Local operators, Mainly Skytours,Avia Maldives and Flight Support Servjces have proven they can handle this segment without siphoning profits abroad.

Track Record & Commitment:
Priority should be given to those—local or foreign—who’ve shown long-term commitment, brought consistent business, and contributed to the industry’s growth.

Transparency & Fair Competition:
if a decision is made, it should be based on a transparent, merit-base...



Ahmed Visham
Regional Director of Sales and Marketing, Maldives
Azalea Cruise

The Maldives should retain local control of VIP terminal services, as MACL and local agencies have successfully managed them in the past. With upgraded facilities, local management can deliver high-quality service while ensuring economic benefits—especially USD revenue—remain within the country. Foreign investment risks diverting profits abroad and undermining local businesses. Prioritizing Maldivian companies promotes fair opportunity, economic growth, and national self-reliance in managing critical infrastructure.



Ahmed Arshad
Director
Avia Maldives

The real question we need to ask right now is does VIA truly need foreign investment to run or own a VIP terminal? My answer is no.

From my personal experience in the industry, I can confidently say that VIA has the full capacity to operate its own VIP terminal or a world-class FBO. If specific technical expertise is ever required, we can always bring in external support. But the ownership, direction, and daily operations must remain in local hands.

This is about more than just infrastructure, it’s about identity. The first and last impression of every VIP client entering the Maldives should reflect our Maldivian warmth and hospitality. That personal, local touch is something no foreign operator can replicate and it’s what truly sets us apart.

Let’s not outsource what we do best. Let’s build it ourselves for ourselves.



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