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President emphasises priority put forth for women empowerment

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has emphasised the government's policy is to empower women adding many efforts are being exerted to achieve this. He made the remark answering a question on "Raees ge Javaabu" series initiated to address public inquiries asked by public.

Responding to a question posed by Fariyaz Hussain from Meedho, Dhaa Atoll, the President acknowledged the celebration of International Women's Day and reiterated the government's dedication to women's empowerment.

President Dr. Muizzu expressed the intention to amend laws to facilitate women's participation in various fields, emphasising support for committees working towards women's development. He underscored the ongoing efforts to implement these policies, illustrating the government's proactive stance on empowering women.

The government's initiatives in this regard include creating more employment opportunities for women and facilitating work-from-home options.

SOURCE : PSM



A boost in income of councils will advance direct services to the people,

His Excellency President
Dr. Mohamed Muizzu



President to increase council block grant and WDC budget

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has revealed plans to enhance the local councils' financial stability and empowering the Women's Development Committee (WDC). He made the remarks in an address to the residents of Guraidhoo, Kaafu Atoll.

The President emphasised a significant increase in the block grant provided by the government to the councils, ensuring a more substantial share of the State's revenue is allocated to them. He expressed the government's commitment to facilitating positive changes within the council system, intending to make them financially robust institutions capable of driving impactful initiatives for the benefit of the village.



President Muizzu outlined key measures to achieve this goal, including earmarking 5% of the block grants exclusively for the WDC's activities. Additionally, he proposed integrating the committee's salary and allowance into the overall council budget.

To boost council revenue, the President called for a percentage of the tax paid by the local tourism industry to be directed towards the government. He also pledged to reclaim significant land in Guraidhoo for development, with the project set to launch within the year.

Moreover, President Muizzu announced the construction of a new school with a minimum of 20 classrooms, aimed at resolving the space crunch in the island. Moreover, plans include the establishment of an operation theater facility at the island hospital and a comprehensive solution to the sewerage problem, promising a transformative change for the community.

Highlighting the commitment to meet residents' preferences, the President assured that essential services such as water, sewerage, and electricity for the reclaimed land would be tailored to the community's needs.

SOURCE : PSM





Women empowerment crucial to accelerate economic development

International Women's Day, observed annually on March 8, serves to unite women and those supporting their empowerment, fostering collaboration to overcome the challenges women encounter across different life stages.

The Ministry of State for Social and Family Development announced that this year's Women's Day activities align with the UN's overarching theme: "Invest in Women: Accelerate Progress."

Emphasising the UN's commitment to gender equality as a core aspect of sustainable development, the theme reflects the 68th session of the Commission on the Status of Women (C.S.W) held annually in March. The UN's chosen theme for this year is "Accelerating the achievement of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls by addressing poverty and strengthening institutions and financing with a gender perspective."



The ministry officially designated the hashtag "Invest in Women" to be prominently featured on banners and materials used in related activities. Additionally, the ministry encourages the use of the hashtag "Generation Equality" on social media platforms when sharing photos or information related to Women's Day celebrations.

International Women's Day promotes women's involvement in economic, political, and social affairs, aiming to eradicate violence against women while advocating for their rights. Established in 1911, the day also recognises and appreciates women's contributions across various sectors and inspires future generations to pursue equal opportunities.

The increasing participation of women in decision-making roles is evident in government bodies, including ministers, parliament members, and council members, as well as in public and private institutions and the business sector. The government actively supports women's empowerment, offering increased employment opportunities, special allowances for single mothers, and the option for women to work from home.

Recognising that empowering women positively impacts the economy, the government emphasises the importance of providing opportunities to women, fostering national development, and enhancing economic growth. The nation's gender equality law safeguards women's rights, offering legal recourse against any form of violence. However, personal responsibility is equally crucial alongside legal measures to ensure a safer environment for women.

SOURCE : PSM

Backlog payments for fishermen will be cleared before Ramadan



Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Ahmed Shiyam has announced that USD3.2 million has been distributed to fishermen on March 5, with the remaining balance slated for settlement before Ramadan commences. He made the announcement during a press conference to update the public on the Week 14 Roadmap.

During the press conference, Minister Shiyam revealed that the government had allocated USD3.2 million to fishermen on March 5 alone, leaving an outstanding sum of USD9.5 million. He emphasised the government's commitment to clearing this backlog before the start of Ramadan.

Additionally, Minister Shiyam disclosed that payments have been made for fish processed up to January 25, leaving over a month's worth of payments pending. He also said that the government's objective is to initiate payments within 48 hours of fish processing, once the backlog is resolved and cash flow stabilises.

Since assuming office, the current administration has disbursed over USD39 million to fishermen. Despite the previous government's increase in the fish purchase price from USD1.1 per kg to USD1.6 per kg, the current government, after a review by the Economic Council, has revised the price to USD1.3 per kg. As such, approximately USD16 million remains outstanding to fishermen due to this adjustment.

SOURCE : PSM



Vice President attends the final match and closing ceremony of the "Golden Futsal Challenge 2024"



The President commits to prioritising land reclamation of Felidhoo Island and commence the project within the year



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu committed to listing Felidhoo Island’s land reclamation project among the prioritised projects to commence within the year. He made the commitment while addressing the Felidhoo Island residents.

The President said that land reclamation would proceed as planned in the island’s Land Use Plan (LUP). The project is anticipated to commence within the year and be completed as soon as possible.

The President announced that the groundwork for the Administration’s nationwide housing projects would officially commence within the year and that affordable housing loans would also be made available.

The President stated that the Administration would build a four-storey building to accommodate the additional classrooms and multipurpose hall requested for Felidhoo Island School. He added that hospital upgrades and a sports complex would be developed in line with the aspirations of Felidhoo residents.

SOURCE : PSM

Maldivian resumes flights between Hanimaadhoo and India

The national airline, Maldivian, has announced the resumption of flights from Hanimaadhoo International Airport to Trivandrum, India. The operation of the flights to Hanimaadhoo and India were suspended for development of Hanimaadhoo International Airport.

Island Aviation Services Limited (IASL) has confirmed that the flights are set to resume from April 12, 2024. Managing Director of Maldivian Ibrahim Ilyas highlighted the decision to resume flights aims to bring convenience to residents in the northern atolls and foster economic development in the region.

Ticket bookings for the resumed flights are currently open, and IASL has provided multiple options for booking, including their website, mobile app, and ticketing offices.

Maldivian will operate two flights per week between Hanimaadhoo and Trivandrum, scheduled for Fridays and Mondays. The move is expected to enhance connectivity and facilitate travel for individuals in the northern atolls, contributing to the overall development of the region.

SOURCE : PSM

All Maldivians can access housing in Male’, regardless of their island of residence



President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has assured that housing projects in the Greater Male’ Region will be accessible to all Maldivians, irrespective of their island of residence. The commitment was made during an episode of the “Raees ge Javaab” series, which allows direct public interaction with the President on various issues.

Addressing concerns raised by Fariyaz Hussain from Meedhoo, Dhaalu Atoll, regarding the inclusion of atoll residents in housing projects, President Dr. Muizzu affirmed that the government’s housing initiative extends to both Male’ and the atolls.

Furthermore, the President highlighted that these housing projects in the Greater Male’ Region will be open to all residents. He clarified that the initial focus would be on meeting the housing needs of Male’ residents, with subsequent efforts aimed at extending housing provisions to atoll residents within the Greater Male’ Region. President Dr. Muizzu also pledged to ensure housing security for all citizens by the end of his term.

As part of the government’s strategy, Rasmale’ is set to undergo reclamation to become the largest housing project in the Greater Male’ Region. The development will prioritise environmentally sustainable practices and is slated to provide 65,000 houses, effectively addressing the urgent housing demands in the region.

SOURCE : PSM



Training programmes to run Islamic institutions to be launched



Minister of Islamic Affairs, Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed, plans to launch a post-Ramadan programme aimed at training leaders to oversee Islamic institutions.

The programme is designed to empower young individuals to assume roles within the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, colleges, universities, and other related institutions. Minister Dr. Shaheem specified that the program would be accessible to individuals with at least a degree in an Islamic field.

Providing insights into the program's curriculum, the minister outlined its focus on Islamic administrative leadership, strategic thinking, institution building, management and collaboration skills, diplomacy, crisis management, and leadership-related areas. He emphasized that the initiative would include opportunities for participants to interact with distinguished personalities from Islamic countries through experimental trips.

Conducted by experienced professionals within the nation and scholars from abroad, the programme aims to nurture a capable and dedicated youth prepared to lead Islamic institutions in the future.

Additionally, the Ministry of Islamic Affairs is actively engaged in cultivating a strong and faithful youth. Initiatives include specialized programmes for imams to enhance their knowledge, enabling school graduates to lead prayers, including the Friday prayer, with the overarching goal of fostering a love for prayer and the Holy Quran.

SOURCE : PSM



Permanent Mosque Masjid Hassan Adam in Hulhumale' Phase II

Zakat al-Fitr collection to start from March 11



Government has announced collection of Zakat al-Fitr payments will be enabled from March 11.

Maldives Zakat Housing has confirmed that online zakat payments will be facilitated from the coming March 11 until April 6. They added that despite the last 10 days of Ramadan being government holidays, the zakat payment system will remain operational.

Various online platforms have been provided for the convenience of zakat payments, including the Dhiraagu app, Dhiraagu pay, SMS, Ooredoo M-Faisaa, Ooredoo pay, Maldives Islamic Bank Mobile Application, Faisaa net, Bank of Maldives (BML) portal, Fahipay application and website, as well as Bandeyri Pay.

Moreover, the payable zakat is determined based on the consumption of 2.4 kilograms of wheat.

In the Greater Male' area region, the Zakat al-Fitr amounts for different types of rice are as follows: USD 0.78 for rice, USD 4.55 for Thailand white rice, USD 5.20 for red rice, USD 4.55 for ordinary basmati rice, USD 6.49 for premium basmati rice, and USD 8.12 for super premium basmati rice. Additionally, the Zakat al-Fitr amounts for wheat and wheat flour are USD 0.65 and USD 4.87, respectively.

Zakat Housing also informed that Zakat al-Fitr can be paid via Bandeyri Pay until the last day of Ramadan. Additionally, zakat will be accepted at the Ministry of Islamic Affairs hall for elderly people and those unfamiliar with online payment systems.

Arrangements have been made to accept Zakat al-Fitr every morning from 0930hrs to 1300hrs, excluding public holidays. During the last 10 days of Ramadan (public holidays), zakat can be paid every day from 1100hrs am to 1400hrs, except for Fridays and Saturdays. Zakat Housing announced that zakat payment systems will be organised by the island's councils.

Furthermore, Zakat al-Fitr, obligatory for all Muslims, is given to those in need of financial assistance after the Holy month of Ramadan. Mandated in the second year of Hijra, it applies to men, women, children, adults, independents, slaves, rich, and poor. However, certain conditions must be met, including having enough money to provide for dependents with food and basic essentials on the day and night of Eid.

SOURCE : PSM



First ever wind energy system established in Maldives



Maldives has marked the inauguration of wind energy systems for the first time, accompanied by the commencement of operational water supply networks in Kaashidhoo, Kaafu Atoll.

Speaking at the launch event of the wind energy facilities, Minister of Construction and Infrastructure Dr. Abdulla Muththalib highlighted that while the Maldives is renowned for producing solar energy, additional resources are essential for sustainable 24-hour electricity production and to enhance energy security.

Emphasising the need to move away from reliance on oil, especially in the face of rapid changes in global economic patterns, Minister Muththalib stressed the importance of diversifying energy sources.

Chinese Ambassador to the Maldives Wang Lixin addressed the attendees and expressed optimism that the project's initiation would significantly improve the quality of life on the five respective islands.

This project, funded by China, is underway in five islands: Alifushi, Raa Atoll; Olhuvelifushi, Lhaviyani Atoll; Kelaa, Haa Alifu Atoll; and Dhaandhoo, Gaafu Alifu Atoll. Each island is equipped with water supply systems capable of producing 200 tonnes of water and a 200-kilowatt solar energy system. Additionally, Kaashidhoo has witnessed the creation of a water supply network allowing for wind energy generation from wind turbines. The project aims to produce 100 kilowatts of wind energy and 100 kilowatts of solar energy in each location.

As the Maldives actively strives for efficient solar energy production, it is concurrently making efforts to harness wind energy and wave power.

SOURCE : PSM



President plans to allocate local tourism tax to councils

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has announced his plan to propose amendments to the necessary laws to allow the allocation of a portion of the Tourism Goods and Services Tax (TGST) received from local tourism establishments in the islands, to the respective local councils. The President made the remarks while speaking with Vaavu Atoll Keyodhoo Island residents.

The President detailed that the Administration would propose law amendments facilitating a portion of the TGST paid to the Maldives Inland Revenue Authority (MIRA) being directed to individual local councils. The President emphasised the importance of amending laws to facilitate tax portions from main industries being directed to local councils instead of all tax revenue being collected by the central government through its collecting agency.

The President conveyed that the purpose of the change is to bring meaningful decentralisation by facilitating the people to benefit directly from the revenue. He said that the financial empowerment of the local councils would ease the strain on the central government.

President Dr Muizzu revealed plans to conduct Keyodhoo Island's land reclamation project within the year. He also announced the

Inclusion of Keyodhoo Island in the megaproject to develop waste management facilities on several islands under the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change. The President said that the Administration would resolve the concerns regarding the island's harbour development project, build a four-storey building for the school, and build a children's park for Keyodhoo Island.

SOURCE : PSM



President departs on an official visit to Lhaviyani Atoll

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has departed on an official visit to Lhaviyani Atoll.

During the visit, President Dr. Muizzu will visit three islands of Lhaviyani Atoll and hold meetings with local councils and Women Development Committees (WDC) to discuss the development needs of the islands and the most urgent needs of the residents.

President Dr. Muizzu has previously stated his goal of visiting each island in the country at least twice within the next five years. In his ongoing atoll visits, he has already engaged with a total of over 140 local councils.

President Dr. Muizzu is accompanied by a high-level government delegation during the tour.

SOURCE : PSM