



11 APRIL 2024

ISSUE 24



The President encourages observing Eid in a spirit of solidarity

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has encouraged all citizens to observe Eid in solidarity. He made the remarks while speaking at the ceremony to inaugurate "Eid Ali" and reopen the water fountain at the Republic Square.

The President was joined at the ceremony by First Lady Sajidha Mohamed, Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef, and his spouse, Aishath Afreen.

Speaking at the ceremony, the President articulated his aspiration for the populace to acknowledge the significance of Eid al-Adha and Eid-ul-Fitr celebrations in Islam. He urged the community to partake in the festivities to celebrate Eid. Furthermore, the President emphasised that the inauguration of festive lighting illuminates the urban landscapes in cities and atoll administrative capitals across the Maldives, enhancing the celebratory atmosphere.

President Dr Muizzu expressed that "Eid Ali," the festive lighting installations coupled with its speaker systems concurrently launched nationwide in cities and administrative capitals of atolls, would continue to play Eid Takbir throughout the festivities. The President relayed the Administration's commitment to expanding this initiative's reach, aiming to encompass more islands in the forthcoming Eid al-Adha celebrations and to continue the expansion of this initiative to reach an even wider range of islands in the subsequent year.

This evening, the President ceremoniously reinstated the functionality of the "Jumhooree Favvaaraa" water fountain at Republic Square. The landmark had been out of operation for an extended period due to a lack of necessary renovations.

SOURCE : President's Office

Maldives lights up for Eid celebration

The entire nation is aglow with Eid al-Fitr celebrations, in line with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's commitment to honour Islamic festivities with vibrant colours and joyous spirit.

President Muizzu inaugurated 'Eid Ali', an initiative aimed at illuminating islands across the Maldives with festive lights, representing Islamic symbols.



Additionally, the government resolved to install festive lighting in all cities and atoll administrative capitals across the Maldives, further enhancing the spirit of celebration. Concurrently, islands including Kulhudhuffushi City, Fuvahmulah City, Dhidhdhoo City, Addu City and as well as Male' City has been re-illuminated, rejuvenating the celebratory atmosphere.

Moreover, President Muizzu ceremonially reopened the "Jumhooree Favvaaraa", a water fountain at Republic Square during the 'Eid Ali' ceremony. This was initially established following the 50th anniversary of Maldivian independence in 2015.



Furthermore, this marks the first instance in recent history where the government has opted to celebrate Eid al-Fitr with vibrant colours and lights, prompting a wide spread of gratitude from people across the nation.

Male' City Council has also been actively working to celebrate Eid al-Fitr joyously, with plans to initiate several cultural activities with relevant groups.

SOURCE : PSM





The President conveys Eid greetings to members of the public



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu and First Lady Sajidha Mohamed met with members of the public and conveyed Eid Al-Fitr greetings to them. They met with the public from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. at Mulee'aage, the Official Residence of the President.

Members of the general public, including families, were present at Mulee'aage to exchange Eid greetings with the President and First Lady.

Cabinet Ministers, Ministers, members of the Parliament, State Ministers, foreign diplomats, heads of Government offices, and senior officials representing different sectors also gathered to exchange Eid greetings.

SOURCE : President's Office



The President extends Eid al-Fitr greetings to the leaders of Islamic nations

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu extended his warmest felicitations and sincere good wishes on behalf of the Government and the people of the Maldives to the Governments and the Muslim brothers and sisters of Islamic countries on the celebration of Eid al-Fitr.

In his messages, the President emphasised the importance of upholding the principles of compassion, generosity, and unity that characterises the holy month of Ramadan, and to bless the Islamic Ummah with mutual understanding, harmony and peace.

He concluded the messages by extending wishes for the health, well-being, and happiness of the leaders and people of the Islamic countries.

SOURCE : President's Office

Maldives decides to provide USD 97,000 as aid to Gaza



Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed has revealed the decision to donate aid worth USD 97,000 to the Palestinians striving in Gaza Strip. This initiative aims to provide financial assistance to the residents of Gaza Strip to obtain essential food items.

are allocated via the Zakat fund, Minister Dr. Shaheem disclosed that the humanitarian aid will be distributed with the assistance of Red Crescent from Qatar. The minister unveiled that the funds will be sent to Gaza in two payments, noting that the funds were allocated under the decree of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. He additionally observed that Maldives has provided assistance at an international

Highlighting that this marks the first time funds

standard two times up to date, with the support of Qatar's Red Crescent.

Following the distribution of Zakat payments to the underprivileged, the government allocates the remaining funds to the Zakat Fund. Managed according to established policies and recommendations from the Zakat Committee, the fund supports various initiatives, including aiding individuals in need of medical treatment and education, as well as contributing to mosque renovations and other public interest projects.

Despite the order of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) calling for the implementation of a temporary ceasefire, the Israeli military's aggression has continued and has further intensified the attacks on various locations within the Gaza Strip. Since October 7, the ongoing attacks have claimed the lives of 33,137 innocent civilians. This includes 25,000 women and children according to the statement made by the United States Secretary of Defence Llyod Austin. The number of individuals injured mounts to 75,815.

SOURCE : PSM



Minister estimates tourist arrivals to reach 2.4 million by year-end



Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed has evaluated that approximately 2.4 million tourists are to arrive by the end of this year. The remarks were made by the minister during an exclusive interview given to TRT News; a Turkish broadcaster.

In response to the queries raised during the interview, Minister Saeed revealed that tourism of the nation is heavily dependent on the situation of the world, while noting that any shocks faced by countries negatively impacts the tourism growth. However, the minister affirmed that efforts to overcome such challenges are underway.

Highlighting the exponential growth of the tourist arrivals this year, Minister Saeed proclaimed that more than 500,000 tourists have visited the country up to date. Therefore, the minister expressed confidence in the influx of tourists, anticipating their numbers to reach 2.4 million by the year's end. The latest statistics publicised by the Ministry of Tourism indicated that Chinese tourists constitute the largest portion of total tourist arrivals, totalling to 69,000. It also revealed that more than 620,000 tourists visited the country so far.

Furthermore, Minister Saeed observed the increase in number of flights to the country, acknowledging the commencement of flights from three Chinese airlines and from Malaysia Airlines as well. Additionally, the minister underscored the increase in flights from Virgin Atlantic, Emirates and Qatar. He proclaimed that Maldives is a tourist destination welcoming all, and further revealed strong connections with several countries.

The government is firmly committed to attract two million tourists this year. However, the ministry anticipates that the actual number of tourists will reach 2.3 million.

SOURCE : PSM



Thilamale' bridge project accelerates under new government

The Thilamale' Bridge project stands as a beacon of hope and progress in the Maldives' journey towards economic revitalisation. Spanning 6.7 kilometers and connecting Gulhifalhu, Thilafushi, and soon Giraavarufalhu, this ambitious endeavor marks a significant milestone in the nation's development agenda.

Despite initial delays, plans are now underway to accelerate the project under the proactive leadership of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. Since assuming office, President Muizzu has personally overseen the project's progress, demonstrating a firm commitment to its timely completion. His direct engagement with contractors and strategic interventions have propelled the project forward, surpassing expectations and restoring confidence in its success.

Under the stewardship of Minister of Construction and Infrastructure, Dr. Abdulla Muththalib, the government's dedication to expediting the project's timeline is evident. With efforts focused on resuming stalled works and surpassing anticipated deadlines, the project is on track to reshape the nation's infrastructure landscape.

The Thilamale' Bridge project, with a value exceeding USD 454 million, is a testament to the strong bilateral ties between the Maldives and India. Supported by substantial financial aid from the Indian government and financing through a 'Line of Credit' arrangement, the project has been entrusted to Indian company Efcons, renowned for its expertise in infrastructure development.

With completion expected by September 30, 2026, the Thilamale' Bridge promises to revolutionise connectivity in the Maldives, unlocking new opportunities for trade, commerce, and tourism. Its strategic significance extends beyond mere infrastructure; it embodies the Maldives' unwavering commitment to progress and prosperity for its people.

As construction progresses and milestones are achieved, the Thilamale' Bridge project serves as a shining example of effective governance, collaborative partnerships, and visionary leadership. It heralds a new era of development and growth, ushering in a brighter future for the Maldives and its citizens.

SOURCE : PSM



Minister assures remarkable development of health sector



World Health Day, annually celebrated on April 7, serves to draw attention to various health topics of concern at an international standard. The internationally observed day is celebrated this year with the slogan; My Health -My Right.

Speaking on the occasion of World Health Day, Minister of Health Dr. Khaleel has announced that initiatives have been taken to enhance and bring evolutionary changes to the health sector, aiming to ensure “My Health - My Right” is signified to the fullest and sustainably. The minister underscored the importance of thinking critically from the perspective that health is a fundamental human right of every individual, stressing that one should focus on prioritising proper health care and preventing anything which may violate it. Observing that majority of the people are under the impression that ensuring good health is the responsibility of medical facilities or hospitals, he highlighted the significance of increasing public awareness regarding the topic.

Emphasising President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu’s unwavering commitment to enhance the health industry, Minister Dr. Khaleel affirmed that efforts to revise and amend policies that were previously neglected are underway. The minister acknowledged some initiatives such as the introduction of air ambulance services, monitoring the health of foreign employees, developing a specialised hospital designated to treat Thalassemia and cancer patients and advancing digital healthcare services.

Furthermore, Minister Dr. Khaleel underscored the noteworthy establishment of a system to ensure the quality of medical drugs provided through the healthcare systems. He additionally affirmed that the government would strive to take action to ensure that the advancements introduced to the sector align with the slogan; My Health - My Right.

SOURCE : PSM



Efforts underway to develop Hulhumale’ Hospital to tertiary standard

Male’ City Group of Hospitals has announced that Hulhumale’ Hospital will be modified to serve as a tertiary hospital within the next three years.

Speaking at programme hosted by PSM News, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Hulhumale’ Hospital Ibrahim Abdul Razzaq Haleem revealed ambitious plans to develop the hospital. Observing that the biggest challenge the hospital currently faces is due to the lack of facilities to cater and serve the increasing number of patients, CEO Haleem stated that four operation theatres will be commenced this year in addition to providing NICU and ICU services. Additionally, the CEO disclosed plans to establish a ten-storey building in the hospital grounds, affirming that requirements for the project are completed. He further proclaimed that the development will commence as soon as the necessary finances are secured. The development of the additional building will consist of 250 beds and private rooms, aims to expand the hospital’s services and to increase the number of specialists to ensure quality treatment for patients.

Furthermore, CEO Haleem declared that efforts to increase the bed capacity of the hospital with additional 29 beds will commence after the holidays. This initiative targets to ensure that dialysis services can be obtained via Hulhumale’ Hospital as well. The CEO also highlighted that the establishment of the new building will allow some works from the existing building to be transferred there, assisting to expand services specialised for women.

While Hulhumale’ Hospital continues to provide numerous services, efforts are underway to expand the services and develop the hospital further as per the commitment of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu.

SOURCE : PSM

Ballot papers to be dispatched across atolls on April 16

The Election Commission of Maldives (ECM) has announced the ballot papers for the upcoming parliamentary elections to be dispatched to the atolls on April 16th.

Moreover, ECM confirmed that the ballot papers will be distributed under the supervision of the Maldives Police Service (MPS). However, it has not yet disclosed the total number of papers printed for the forthcoming parliamentary elections.

Additionally, in accordance with the Election

Act, each ballot box will be dispatched with 1% more ballot papers than the actual designated number of voters allotted to the specific box.

In the upcoming parliamentary election scheduled for April 21, a total of 284,663 individuals are eligible to cast their votes, with more than 9,000 individuals partaking as observers, monitors, and as well as party representatives. 386 candidates are contesting across 93 constituencies in the upcoming 20th parliament.

SOURCE : PSM



Documents given to those who received land plots in unreclaimed areas



Ministry of Housing, Land and Urban Development has issued documents to individuals who received land plots from areas which have not been reclaimed.

The documents under the name of the Minister of Housing, Land and Urban Development Dr. Ali Haidar Ahmed were provided to those individuals as a guarantee of the provision of land plots designated to them by the previous administration. It can be additionally accessed via the Hiyaavehi Portal as well.

While the government continues to provide land registrations to individuals with allocated land plots, several residents were assigned plots from areas in which land had not been reclaimed. To ensure that such individuals receive the designated land, President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu assured that the government will provide them with temporary documents.

Despite a total of 9,101 individuals who attained land plots within the Male' region under the Binveriyaa Scheme, several did not receive registration by the end of the previous administration. Land plots are allocated under the scheme in Hulhumale', Gulhifalhu and Giraavarufalhu. While 1,351 plots are located in Hulhumale', 2,218 are designated in Gulhifalhu and 5,432 in Giraavarufalhu. Efforts are underway to dredge the land to provide land plots for the respective landowners. The government has further disclosed plans to reclaim more land than what was initially contracted.

SOURCE : PSM

“

Maldivians will see a golden era of housing, land ownership during this administration

His Excellency President
Dr. Mohamed Muizzu

”



1347 lands plots to be changed from Giraavarufalhu to Gulhifalhu

The government has finalized plans to transfer 1,347 plots of land allocated from Giraavarufalhu to Gulhifalhu as part of the Binveriyaa housing scheme.

Minister of Housing, Land and Urban development released a statement revealing that the previous government had allocated land from Giraavarufalhu without providing sufficient land for essential services in the area. Hence, the ministry emphasized that despite the allocated quantity, revision of Giraavaru land use plan does not provide sufficient land to meet the necessary requirements.

Remarkably, the previous government initially designated 5,432 plots of land. However, due to constraints, 1,347 plots have been determined for transfer to Gulhifalhu.

Numbers and sizes of plots to be transferred to Gulhifalhu:

- 193 plots within 1,250 acres of land
- 663 plots within 1,650 acres of land
- 487 plots within 2,050 acres of land
- 4 plots within 2,450 acres of land

Additionally, the Ministry has announced the opportunity for individuals who have received plots of this size to apply for land transfer. Thus, applications for land transfer can be submitted through the Hiyaavahi portal starting from 0900hrs on Sunday, April 7, until 1100hrs on Sunday, April 14.

Furthermore, Ministry of housing revealed that in case where the number of applicants for land transfer from Giraavaru Falhu to Gulhi falhu rises, the beneficiary selection will be conducted through a lottery process.

Moreover, while the initial plan involved reclaiming of 160 hectares of land in Giraavaru Falhu as part of the land reclamation process, President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has now resolved to add another 50 hectares to the reclamation effort. Co-currently, 50 hectares of land has already been reclaimed as part of the project.

SOURCE : PSM



Minister hails efforts of president to enhance social cohesion



Minister of Cities, Local Government and Public Works Adam Shareef Umar has hailed the tireless efforts of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu to prioritize and ensure social cohesion and harmony within the nation. The minister applauded the efforts during a ceremony held to officiate “Eid Ali” and reopen the water fountain at the Republic Square.

Speaking at the event, Minister Adam Shareef highlighted that the inauguration of festive lighting illuminating the urban landscapes in cities and atoll administrative capitals across the Maldives aiming to create a celebratory atmosphere for Eid-ul-Fitr was a commitment of President Dr. Muizzu. The minister observed that the ceremony embarks the religious festivities, affirming the fulfilment of the

president’s pledge. He further praised the policy utilised by the president to empower councils and the residents during the organisation of such events.

Additionally, Minister Adam Shareef noted that this year’s Ramadan brought significant relief to the people compared to previous years, especially since the government declared the last ten days of the month as public holidays. The minister stated that this initiative allowed individuals to perform prayers and acts of worship during the nights while reducing the burden of early morning work.

Minister Adam Shareef acknowledged the unwavering efforts of the ministry to prepare for the inauguration of Eid Ali as well.

SOURCE : PSM



Preparations to train school counselors underway

Minister of Education Dr. Ismail Shafeeu has revealed that preparations are underway to train enough school counselors required for the school.

Addressing the media, Minister Dr. Ismail Shafeeu shed light on the significant number of bullying cases and situations occurring in schools, noting that the biggest challenge to solve the issue was the lack of school counselors to the required amount. The minister observed that only 51 out of 225 government schools established in the nation had school counsellors. As such, several schools face obstructions to provide the required special attention or counseling to students regarding various cases.

Minister Dr. Ismail expressed his confidence in the declining rate of bullying and other such cases, following the training programmes held to attain school counselors. Disclosing that while 26 bullying and such cases surfaced from schools up to date, many initiatives and measures have been taken by the government to establish relevant policies to prevent such issues. Additionally, he highlighted the ongoing efforts to increase awareness amongst teachers and parents while providing assistance to students who require help.

Furthermore, Minister Dr. Ismail proclaimed that schools are responsible and take the necessary action as per the adopted policies and regulation, if such cases repetitively occur. The minister further affirmed that no cases would remain unsolved within the system.

SOURCE : PSM

India increases import quota for basic commodities

India has decided to increase the import quota of basic commodities demanded by the Maldives for next year, under the Agreement on Trade Cooperation implemented since 1981. The Indian High Commission has revealed that quota was increased to a significant amount in comparison to the allocation of quotas for previous years, while assuring that the commodities can be obtained at special prices.

The goods subjected to be imported from India following the special quota imposed includes onion, rice, sugar, flour, potatoes, eggs, dhal, river sand and stone aggregates. While there has been a 5% augmentation in quotas designated for essential food items, the quota for river sand and gravel utilised for burgeoning construction has been 1,000,000 metric tons,

attributing to a noteworthy increase of 25%.

Details on this remarkable move is as follows:

- Eggs: 428 million
- Potatoes: 21,000 metric tons
- Onions: 36,000 metric tons
- Rice: 124,000 metric tons
- Flour: 109,000 metric tons
- Sugar: 64,000 metric tons
- Dhal: 224 metric tons
- River sand: 1,000,000 metric tons
- Stone aggregates: 1,000,000 metric tons

The last agreement pretraining the import of basic commodities to the Maldives by India was signed in 2021. The contract validated for three years expired in March.

SOURCE : PSM



Minister Shaheem appointed to MWL's supreme council

Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed has been appointed to the Supreme Council of the Muslim World League, also known as Rabitat al-alamil Islami, an esteemed NGO comprising leading Islamic personalities worldwide.

Ministry of Islamic Affairs revealed that Minister Shaheem has been entrusted with the Supreme Council of the Muslim World League by its General Secretary Dr. Mohamed Bin AbdulKareemul Eesa. It further proclaimed the NGO to be the largest of its kind in the Islamic world.

Furthermore, Minister Shaheem had also served as an advisor to the Islamic Organisation of Corporation (OIC), an international organisation proactively working towards to promote Islamic unity in a global platform.

SOURCE : PSM

The President departs on an official visit to several islands of Hahdhunmathi Atoll

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu departed on an official visit to several islands of the Hahdhunmathi Atoll this morning.

During this visit, the President is scheduled to visit numerous islands in the Hahdhunmathi Atoll, where he will discuss community priorities and developmental needs with councils, Women's Development Committees (WDCs) and residents. A senior Government delegation accompanies the President on this tour.

Following the visit to Hahdhunmathi Atoll, the President is expected to undertake an unofficial visit to Addu City Hithadhoo on April 12th.

SOURCE : PSM

Gov't to boost tourism promotion budget, expands global outreach



Minister of Tourism Ibrahim Faisal has announced plans to strengthen the nation's tourism promotion budget, with a focus on expanding outreach across various global regions.

Speaking to PSM News, Minister Faisal emphasised his dedication to amplifying tourist arrivals to the Maldives. Stressing the

pivotal role of intensified marketing endeavors, he highlighted efforts to increase financial provisions for the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) from the state budget.

Additionally, Minister Faisal unveiled strategies to spotlight individual atolls in the Maldives for targeted tourism promotion. He outlined intentions to explore new tourist markets, with a particular focus on nations demonstrating substantial investment in this field. He also underscored plans to differentiate promotional campaigns for guesthouses and resorts, anticipating a significant increase in tourism figures over the next five years.

The government's efforts to elevate the tourism sector are yielding promising outcomes, evidenced by a historic increase in tourist arrivals during the initial quarter of this year. Recent statistics reveal that over 600,000 tourists have visited the Maldives within this timeframe, signaling a noteworthy milestone in the nation's tourism sector.

SOURCE : PSM

Survey initiated to launch seaplane services to Thoddoo

Managing Director of Island Aviation Serviced Ltd (IASL) Ibrahim Iyas has announced the commencement of seaplane operations to Thoddoo, Alif Alif Atoll, in the near future. The launch of seaplane services to Thoddoo will mark the island as the second inhabited island to which seaplanes operate.

IASL noted several ongoing efforts aiming to commence the seaplane operations to Thoddoo. A surveyor team from the company has been sent to the island in order to collect the necessary information regarding exceptional services and also to obtain various opinions for the development of a platform designated for seaplane landings. Addressing PSM News, MD Iyas additionally affirmed that a risk assessment will be completed to analyse the climate stability and safeness of the coastal area and the environmental impact.

Highlighting the government's priority to expand seaplane services, Iyas proclaimed that discussions regarding the launch of the

services were being initiated with the relevant authorities. He further revealed that the primary target of officiating seaplane operations to Thoddoo was to ensure the availability of the service to the general public while benefitting guesthouse businesses as well.

Explaining the benefits of seaplane operations to the island, Thoddoo Council's President Ahmed Karam asserted that the connection of the island through air transportation would significantly assist in the development of the island. He observed that the introduction of seaplane services will attract more tourists as the services are mostly renowned for excursion. Additionally, Karam disclosed that while the island boasts 60 guest houses in total, an average of 150 tourists visits the island on a daily basis.

Seaplane operations to inhabited islands initially commenced in December, 2023, with the service first launched to Fulhadhoo from Baa Atoll.

SOURCE : PSM