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New terminal is being built at Kulhudhuffushi Airport: RACL

Managing Director of Regional Airports Company Limited (RACL) Ahmed Mubeen has announced the initiation of a comprehensive plan for the construction of a passenger terminal at Kulhudhuffushi Airport, Haa Dhaalu Atoll, and initial steps have been taken to delegate the project to a suitable company.

Speaking to PSM News, Mubeen highlighted the inadequate condition of airports across the atolls. Therefore, he said that the primary objective has been to assess and address the existing challenges at the airports.

Additionally, Mubeen emphasised that significant enhancements are planned for Kulhudhuffushi Airport, in alignment with the government's Week-14 Roadmap. He said that a detailed master plan has been devised to construct a new terminal, incorporating modern amenities while addressing space constraints, limited resources, and public grievances regarding airport operations. He also mentioned preparations underway for the tendering process.

Furthermore, Mubeen disclosed that the terminal's architectural designs are in the finalisation phase. He said that the new terminal will boast ample space and cutting-edge facilities, including expanded waiting areas and baggage handling systems.

Moreover, Mubeen acknowledged the challenge of recurrent flooding in the airport vicinity. Consequently, he said that measures are being devised to mitigate this issue and ensure convenient disembarkation for passengers, particularly during inclement weather conditions.

Kulhudhuffushi Airport was constructed in 2018 under the previous administration and has faced operational challenges. However, with the envisioned upgrades, the aim is to provide enhanced services to the community.

SOURCE : PSM

MMPRC promotes dive adventures and breathtaking Maldivian Seascapes

Maldives Marketing & Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC / Visit Maldives), along with 6 industry partners, promoted the breathtaking underwater seascapes of the Maldives to the SouthEast Asia (SEA) market at ADEX Ocean Mission 2024. This event was held from 12 April 2024 to 14 April 2024, at the Suntec Singapore Exhibition and Convention Centre.

With a history spanning 26 years, ADEX is the biggest and longest-running dive expo in Asia – considered to be one of the industry's "must-attend" events. ADEX brings together distinguished VIPs and speakers from across the globe – scientists, marine conservationists, underwater photographers, videographers, and many others. It also provides a platform for various exhibitors such as dive operators, equipment manufacturers, and national tourism boards of countries.

MMPRC utilised this event to provide the latest destination information to interested visitors and create awareness for the Maldives as a preferred dive destination. The fair was also an ideal platform to collect market intelligence targeted for a niche segment through observations, and understand the sentiments of divers and dive enthusiasts from the Asian and South East Asian markets, in order to best promote and attract visitors from this segment to the Maldives. Participation in this event came under our efforts to promote the Maldives as the most preferred destination among Southeast Asian, especially Singaporean travellers, and to showcase the diving and underwater experiences available in the Maldives at the largest dive fair in the SEA market.

Some of the activities at the stand for Visit Maldives included a consumer survey, distribution of informative flash cards about Maldivian marine life, and artworks displaying the different dive locations in the Maldives.

This market ended last year with 58,947 visitors in total. From January to February this year, the Maldives welcomed 7,481 tourists from the SEA market. MMPRC has planned several activities targeting this market, to increase travellers and maintain destination presence. These activities include joint-marketing campaigns with major stakeholders, outdoor advertising campaigns, participation in fairs, hosting webinars, E-Learning programs and other events.

SOURCE : MMPRC





Developing fish factories in 3 islands entrusted to Chinese company



Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources have signed an Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) pertaining to establish fish factories in three islands. The islands include Felivaru from Lhaviyani Atoll, Fiyooaree from Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll and Maadheli from Dhaalu Atoll. The establishment of factories is among the initiatives which will be financed with low interest loans.

The MoU signed by the ministry and a Chinese company, Dongfang Electric International Corporation, aims to resolve the challenges faced by the islands due to the lack of storage areas. It further sheds light on the scope of the project, while unveiling that the project is to be completed and brought to commission within a period of 18 months. Minister Ahmed Shiyam estimated that approximately three months will be utilised to finalise the project design and secure finances before the project is officially launched.

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Ahmed Shiyam disclosed that a 100-tonne fish factory will be developed in Felidhoo. The minister observed that despite the island having the capacity to process 50 tons of fish, only 40 tons of fish can be processed. Highlighting several operational issues the island may face, he stated that the factory to be developed in Felidhoo is worth USD 50 million.

Providing an insight regarding the factory to be established in Maadheli under the project, Minister Shiyam revealed that the factory will encompass of facilities to process 50 tonnes of fish and a cold storage with the capacity of 1,500 tonnes. Additionally, the project outlines the establishment of necessary facilities required for operations and the harbour, as this is the first such factory being established on the island. Hence, the minister anticipated that the finance required for the project will range between USD 75 million or USD 100 million.

Furthermore, decisions have been made to establish a 100-tonne fish factory in Fiyooaree, along with a cold storage with a capacity of 3,000 tonnes. Regardless of this being the first fish factory being established on the island, Minister Shiyam affirmed that no funds would be provided to develop the harbour of the island as it is currently under development. The minister expressed confidence that the harbour being established will consist of the necessary facilities, hence not requiring additional finances for development. Therefore, he anticipated that the establishment of the factory would cost between USD 50 million and USD 75 million.

Minister Shiyam revealed that while the export of fish during the holy month of Ramadan generated a revenue of USD 91 million, the processing of fish would assist in generating twice the revenue attained. The ministry revealed that the completion of the project will ensure the processing of 81 tonnes of fish. This initiative also marks the first step towards self-sufficiency in fish and fish products produced by the country.

SOURCE : PSM



Land plots in Hanimaadhoo tourism zone to open for lease

The Hanimaadhoo Island Council has opened applications for 14 state-issued plots for tourism use for an extensive period of 50 years. These plots are to be assigned within the designated area for "tourism zone".

Hanimaadhoo has a population of more than 2500 residents and is heavily reliant on guest house businesses. Moreover, as Hanimaadhoo is a tourism-centric island, there are vast opportunities within the tourism sector. Therefore, the primary goal of the redevelopment of the Hanimaadhoo International Airport is to bolster tourism in the north and foster additional economic growth opportunities in the region.

Hanimaadhoo Council is to offer land plots comprising 5000 acres located in the northern part of the island. The primary motivation for facilitating this initiative is to significantly boost the island's income generating opportunities. Additionally, the council stated that the initiative aims to reduce reliance on the state budget, significantly increase revenue for the council and as well as promote self-sufficiency within the society.

In addition, the opportunity to submit applications for tourism-designated land in Hanimaadhoo will be facilitated on April 30 at 1300hrs. Simultaneously, the application bid will be accessible exclusively to businesses registered with the Ministry of Economic Development, while a fee of USD 64.76 is to be charged from the participants.

Furthermore, 12 land plots were issued in Hanimaadhoo last year for tourism purposes, which comprised 4, 10,000 acres of land along with 8, 5000 acres of land in business terms. Concurrently, 10,000 acres of land were issued for 40 years, while 5000 acres of land were assigned for 30 years. As a result, 75 businesses demonstrated a keen interest in seizing the opportunity.

SOURCE : PSM



The President appoints Hassan Zakariyya as a member of Election Commission of Maldives



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has appointed Hassan Zakariyya as a member of the Election Commission of Maldives (ECM).

Hassan Zakariyya was appointed pursuant to Article 168 (b) of the Constitution of the Republic of the Maldives and in accordance with Section 4(a) of Act no. 8/2008 (Elections Commission Act).

Prior to issuing the letter of appointment, the oath of office was administered to Hassan Zakariyya by the Supreme Court Justice Hon Uz Ali Rasheed Hussain at a ceremony held at the President's Office today.

SOURCE : President's Office



Practical work of road development in Kendhikulhudhoo commenced

Road Development Corporation (RDC) has officially commenced the practical work of developing the roads of Kendhikulhudhoo, Noonu Atoll. The project laying the groundwork for the development of the island's roads was launched by the Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed and RDC's Managing Director Brigadier General (rt'd) Ali Zuhair. The ceremony held to commence the practical work of the project was attended by members of Kendhikulhodhoo Council and residents of the island.

Decisions have been made to develop eight roads of the island to a modern standard. This includes the installation of drainage systems in roads with a length of 3.7km, while establishing utility junctions. Additionally, roads are to be tarred and developed with pavements, traffic signs, street lights and speed brakes as well. The government entrusted RDC with USD 5.89 million for the project on June 2023.

In addition to this project, RDC is also putting efforts in preparation for the commencement of the road development project in Alifushi, Raa Atoll. The government allocated an equivalent budget of USD 5.87 million to develop seven roads of the island. RDC revealed that this project will be carried out similarly to the road development project of Kendhikulhudhoo.

Furthermore, RDC proclaimed that efforts are underway to mobilize sites before initiating road development in Manadhoo, Noonu Atoll and Thoddoo, Alif Alif Atoll.

SOURCE : PSM

Minister of Tourism Mr. Ibrahim Faisal Calls for Debt Relief and Affordable Financing

Minister of Tourism, Ibrahim Faisal, delivered a powerful statement at the UN High-level Thematic Debate on Debt Sustainability and Socio-Economic Equality for All, urging reforms to the international financial system to better support Small Island Developing States (SIDS).

In his address, Minister Faisal highlighted the specific challenges faced by SIDS, emphasizing their vulnerability to climate change and external shocks. He argued that these factors necessitate significant investments in infrastructure, yet traditional financing options are expensive and limit debt sustainability.

"The Maldives, like many other SIDS, faces very high costs when borrowing from external sources," Minister Faisal stated. "These increased costs significantly challenge our ability to service debt and limit our capability to invest in infrastructure and other critical developmental needs."

The Minister stressed that debt, while a necessary tool for economic progress, must be affordable and sustainable. He pointed out that although the Maldives' successful tourism

industry has led to middle-income country status, this restricts access to concessional financing, forcing the nation to rely on more expensive options.

"This severely challenges our ability to efficiently service debt and hampers our developmental progress," Minister Faisal explained. He further noted how high debt servicing costs divert resources away from essential public services, exacerbating socioeconomic inequalities.

Minister Faisal's statement called for urgent reforms to the international financial architecture to allow SIDS to borrow at affordable rates. He advocated for debt refinancing initiatives and international collaboration to provide relief measures that can prevent financial crises in vulnerable economies.

The Maldives' participation in this discussion underscores its commitment to finding sustainable solutions for SIDS on the global stage, recognizing that a healthy tourism industry – a cornerstone of the Maldivian economy – relies on the stability and prosperity of fellow island nations.

SOURCE : PSM

