



23 APRIL 2024

ISSUE 31



## President acknowledges MNDF's resilience and diligent efforts

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has acknowledged the Maldivian Defence Force (MNDF)'s unwavering commitment and resilience towards the nation. These remarks were made on the occasion of MNDF's anniversary, highlighting that the MNDF has been working diligently day and night with utmost sincerity, serving the nation.

Following the celebration of MNDF's 132nd anniversary, President Muizzu pledged to substantially enhance its services, emphasising that efforts are currently underway to ensure that the Maldivian economic zones are monitored by the Maldivian army itself.

Remarkably, as part of President Muizzu's developmental initiatives, MNDF air corps have been launched for the very first time in the Maldives. Therefore, the new air corps will handle all aerial military operations necessary to safeguard the Maldives airspace.

Moreover, alongside the air corps introduced, unmanned ariel vehicles (UAV'S) are currently being used. Simultaneously, the President emphasised that additional sea, road and air vessels would be assigned to the military operation.

SOURCE : PSM

“ There will no longer be delays in search and rescue operations. 900,000 square meters will constantly be under surveillance from now on, we have the guarantee that we will be able to find any person at risk

His Excellency President  
Dr. Mohamed Muizzu

## Gov't confident of completion of Passenger Terminal by September

Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed has expressed confidence in completing the development of the new passenger terminal of Velana International Airport (VIA). The expedite development and commission of the new terminal has been given a top priority by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu.



Speaking at a programme aired on PSM News, Minister Saeed stated that the airport developmental project, being a primary focus of the government, is poised to contribute to significant economic growth upon completion. The transformational endeavour was initiated by the government of former President Yameen Abdul Gayoom.

However, Minister Saeed claimed that the project had been neglected by the previous administration, citing the delaying of subprojects and the increasing costs incurred. Emphasising the ongoing efforts and discussions with contractors to expedite the development of VIA along with the passenger terminal, Minister Saeed highlighted the noteworthy completion of the cargo terminal and commencing its operations. He further noted that the fuel farm being developed is prepared to be dispatched for operations.

Reiterating President Muizzu's target of completing the passenger terminal development before the peak season, Minister Saeed noted that the goal will be achieved if efforts continue at the current pace. The passenger terminal is one of the most significant components of the developmental project.

The current terminal facilitates 1.5 million passengers annually. However, the modernisation of the airport and the establishment of the passenger terminal will develop the airport such that it has the capacity to cater for seven million passengers annually. The new terminal will encompass a large area of 78,000m.

SOURCE : PSM





## 74 parliamentarian seats endorsed by President secured



The preliminary results indicate the administration has secured 74 seats in the Parliament, including candidates endorsed by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu.

The ruling party, People's National Congress (PNC) remarkably attained 66 seats in the incoming parliament, with it being the super majority. A total of 63 seats are required to secure a super majority in the parliament.

Furthermore, PNC successfully secured the majority of seats in highly populated atolls, encompassing constituencies that were not previously led by its coalition with Progress Party of Maldives (PPM). Therefore, constituencies previously led by Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in Addu City and Male' City have been secured by PNC. All seats in Fuvahmulah City and Kulhudhuffushi constituencies were also secured by PNC, along with one seat in Thinadhoo City.

In addition to the 66 candidates who won under the Congress Party ticket, five independent

candidates, endorsed by President Muizzu, also secured seats in the incoming parliament. With the inclusion of these five candidates, the total number of candidates backed by the President reaches 71.

In the parliamentary elections, members were elected for a total of 93 constituencies. PNC decided to support the leaders of the coalition parties by not contesting in their constituencies, including Jumhooree Party, Maldives National Party (MNP) and Maldives Development Alliance (MDA). Leaders endorsed by President Muizzu also successfully secured their seats.

According to the preliminary results, MDP, which holds the majority of seats in the 19th Parliament, has only won 12 seats.

The preliminary results show that 11 independent candidates have secured seats during the parliamentary elections, while the Adhaalath Party and The Democrats have not attained any seats.

SOURCE : PSM



## MNDF holds flag hoisting ceremony on 132nd anniversary

The Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) has held a flag hoisting ceremony on the occasion of its 132nd anniversary.

Minister of Defence Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon, inaugurated the flag hoisting ceremony and announced this year's slogan for MNDF at the ceremony, which is The Country's Independence-Soldiers Perseverance. The defence minister also launched the 34th issue of the bi-annual magazine Addana.

Chief of Defence Force Major General Ibrahim Hilmee was in attendance at the ceremony, including general MNDF officers, warrant officers and enlisted ranked officers. Flag hoisting ceremonies were held in all area commands of the country.

MNDF was established in the Maldives on April 21, 1892. MNDF faced the biggest challenge in 1988 when defending the country against a coup attempt supported by armed mercenaries of a Tamil secessionist group from Sri Lanka. Since then, MNDF has expanded its reach by establishing military bases across the country and improving logistical capabilities and training methods.

SOURCE : PSM

## President invites political leaders' involvement for nation's progress

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has urged all political leaders to refrain from political rivalry and to exert collaborative efforts, aiming for the nation's expedited development. The remarks were made by the president in the event held to celebrate the remarkable accomplishments of the People's National Congress (PNC) in the parliamentary elections.

Speaking at the event, President Dr. Muizzu affirmed that the projects and plans made by the government will be executed and completed at an accelerated rate, following PNC's victory.

The president assured that with the new Parliament, the international community will comprehend the significance of independence and freedom of expression to the Maldivians. On this stance, he invited all political leaders to participate and exert collaborative efforts to ensure sustainable development in a timely manner. He additionally ensured that no individual will be discriminated based on their parties.

Furthermore, President Dr. Muizzu stated that it is a responsibility of all individuals to contribute

to the development of the nation. The president urged boosting communal harmony and bolstering Islamic values as well.





## Peace should not be lost over election results: Vice President



Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef has highlighted the need for peace regardless of the outcome of the parliamentary election. He conveyed the message during an interview with PSM News following his participation in the voting process.

Speaking in the interview, Vice President Latheef highlighted the significance of the parliamentary election for the Maldivian populace, noting their historical diligence in fulfilling civic duties. Expressing confidence in their continued responsibility, he underlined the importance of the current election.

Additionally, Vice President Latheef expressed his desire for peace and unity among Maldivians, regardless of electoral outcomes. Stressing that peace remains a paramount aspiration for all citizens, he urged individuals to prioritise the interests of the nation. He also directed the message to political parties.

The parliamentary election features 368 candidates contesting for seats across 93 constituencies, with 603 ballot boxes placed accordingly.

SOURCE : PSM

## HDC to develop roller skating rink in Hulhumale': Gov't



Minister of Sports, Fitness, and Recreation Abdulla Rafiu has announced that discussions are ongoing between the Housing Development

Corporation (HDC) regarding the development of a roller skating rink in Hulhumale'.

During the handover ceremony for the land earmarked for a racing and drift arena in Hulhumale', Minister Rafiu disclosed that talks are progressing with the HDC to introduce facilities for various other sports in the area. He also emphasised the absence of a roller skating track and revealed ongoing discussions with Skate Maldives, the Sports Ministry, and the HDC to establish a skating rink in Hulhumale'.

Additionally, Minister Rafiu highlighted plans for the establishment of additional sporting facilities, indicating ongoing negotiations with the HDC for their fulfillment.

SOURCE : PSM

## Dr. Hussain Niyaaaz leads the Maldives delegation to the 80th Session of the ESCA

The 80th Session of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific (ESCAP) commenced today in Bangkok. The Maldives delegation at the 80th Commission Session is led by Dr. Hussain Niyaaaz, Secretary, Economic and Development Cooperation. The session will be held from 22-26 April 2024 at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand.

The theme for the 80th Commission Session is "Leveraging digital innovation for sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific" and provides an opportunity to strengthen region-wide cooperative action on leveraging digital innovation for the accelerated implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

In his remarks, Secretary, Economic and Development Cooperation highlighted the ambitious development agenda of the Government of Maldives which stems from innovation, sustainability and inclusivity. This includes the plans to establish smart and resilient urban centers throughout the Maldives, the "Ras Malé Eco-City project, the prioritization of e-government platforms and the utilization of artificial intelligence across various services.

Secretary, Economic Cooperation will also participate in a side event co-hosted by Maldives with Indonesia, Fiji and France entitled "Accelerating Ocean-Based Climate Action" held on the sidelines of the Session.

This year's session follows a thematic study undertaken by UNESCAP, which examines existing digital innovations that have accelerated progress towards sustainable development and explores ways to build on their successes. Delegations from ESCAP member countries and associate members, as well as independent organizations, are participating in the Commission Session.

Secretary, Economic, and Development Cooperation Dr. Hussain Niyaaaz is accompanied by Ms. Aishath Shiruma Ahmed, First Secretary, Ms. Aishath Shahula, First Secretary and Ms. Siyana Shiyam, Second Secretary at the Embassy of the Republic of Maldives in the Kingdom of Thailand.

SOURCE : PSM



## Practical works of land reclamation of Maavah commenced

The practical works under the land reclamation project of Maavah, Laamu Atoll have officially commenced. The project was entrusted to Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC).

MTCC has mobilised the site on April 16 in preparation for officiating the practical work of the project. The project valued at USD 3.99 million encompasses of reclaiming 508,816 cubic meters of land and conducting a sand search survey as well.



The project was initiated to address the housing shortage on the island, subsequent to President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's official visit to the island. During this visit, President Dr. Muizzu engaged in discussions with the Maavashu Island Council and Women's Development Committee (WDC), to address their concerns and the most pressing requirements needs of the residential community. As a result, the government has prioritized resolving the housing crisis at a national level, utilizing dredging operations to allocate land plots.

SOURCE : PSM

## Thilamale' bridge project continues expeditiously

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has underscored the expedited progress of Thilamale' bridge project within 5 months into his presidential term. He delivered these remarks addressing the media, following his visit to the site.

## Foundation stone laid for the new regional hospital based in Muli



The foundation stone for the development of a new regional hospital in Muli, Meemu Atoll has been laid by the Minister of State for Health Ahmed Qasim and Chief Executive Officer at Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) Abdulla Ziyad.

With a population exceeding 3000 people, Muli is an island where a majority of people daily commute to attain health and other amenities.

Despite the establishment of a hospital in Muli, it has experienced a significant physical decline. Therefore, there have been prolonged complaints regarding the same.

Remarkably, the local populaces foremost expectation is to access high quality healthcare within their own islands and atolls. Henceforth, the present administration has granted the establishment of a new regional hospital in Muli to MTCC, with the practical work already underway.

Speaking at the ceremony, Qasim stressed the importance of high-quality services being provided in Muli, as the capital of Meemu Atoll.

Additionally, Qasim reiterated that President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's centred aim is to initiate new projects following the commencement of the regional hospital. He further disclosed that efforts will be directed towards the training of fresh personnel within the industry.

Moreover, Ziyad proclaimed the new regional hospital to be a significant project for both Muli residents and those residing in Meemu Atoll. Thus, he validated the project to be fully commenced and handed over by the deadline.

As part of the project, a four-story building compassing 50 beds will be developed, covering 33250 acres of land. The budget for the project is USD 11.99 million.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Health emphasised that the newly established hospitals will facilitate a flu clinic, an isolation facility to ensure seamless operation in the event of a pandemic such as COVID-19.

Thereby, Solar PV systems will be installed in every hospital to mitigate the expenses associated with energy consumption.

Despite initial setbacks, efforts are currently underway to expedite the project in light of the inauguration of the new administration, as the project is heavily people-centric.

Providing insights into project progress, President Muizzu revealed 36% of the project to be fully commenced. He further emphasised that there has been a substantial improvement of 7% compared to the previous administration

The government aims to finalise the Thilamale'

Bridge project by either the end of 2025 or 2026, stating that the current administration is diligently pursuing the completion of the project three months earlier than the time when the government assumed power. Additionally, President confirmed that over 300 elements were cast into the superstructure.

Moreover, President Muizzu reaffirmed the substantial advancements made following his tenure and that the primary aim is to complete all the developments projects expeditiously.



## First quarter concluded with proper financial management



The revenue generated has been utilised effectively to cover the costs the nation has incurred during the past three months. Previously, the revenue attained can only be utilised to cover the costs incurred in January, as the expenses in the following months are greater than the revenue generated. Hence, this marks the first time finances have been managed efficiently for three months.

Numerous stalled projects and hefty debts led to the urgent need for beneficial changes in the nation when President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu assumed office. Therefore, the government has initiated several measures within the first few months of President Dr. Muizzu's term, aiming the recovery of the economy. The deteriorating situation of the economy and major economic obstacles were observed by various foreign institutes. However, international financial institutes have praised the efforts of the president, following the counter-actions taken aiming to boost economic growth.

Speaking at an interview given to PSM News, Minister of Finance Dr. Mohamed Shafeeq emphasised the extensive efforts made by the government to promote economic recovery. The minister revealed that the debt level of the nation was so high, contributing to 115% of the GDP of the nation, stressing the necessity of sustaining low debt levels. He additionally stated that the global shock and economic recession following the COVID-19 pandemic also contributed to the financial deterioration of the nation.

Minister Dr. Shafeeq elucidated the significance of allocating budget finance to recover the economic situation of the country sustainably. The minister disclosed that 60% of the debt was incurred within the country, while 40% debt was attained from abroad. He further noted that repayments for debts attained were necessary.

Observing the economic situation in which expenses are greater than the revenue generated, Minister Dr. Shafeeq stated that the costs incurred increase due to unnecessary expenses. As such, the minister emphasised the significance of reducing such expenditures, while strengthening and standardising the management of companies. Additionally, he highlighted the importance of launching projects, such that it does not delay the economic progress. He stressed the need to formulate plans and arrangements, while highlighting the efforts of the ministry, required to achieve continuous economic progress.

Several international financial institutes have praised the current administration's policies and efforts to achieve the long-term prospects of the economy. Global financial administrations have also observed that the policies adopted by the government were crucial for the nation's economic development in the long run.

SOURCE : PSM

## President states land plots from Gulhifalhu will be handed over soon

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has announced that efforts are underway to provide land plots from the reclaimed land of Gulhifalhu, Kaafu Atoll, to the respective landowners expeditiously. The president made this remarks during a media address, following the monitoring of the Gulhifalhu bridge project.

Addressing the media, President Dr. Muizzu affirmed that the land reclamation of Gulhifalhu will continue according to the policies of the government. The president observed the ongoing efforts to construct an exterior wall within the coastal region of Gulhifalhu, with the objective of safeguarding the reclaimed land. He affirmed that the establishment of the exterior was progressing swiftly, while highlighting that the necessary materials required for revetment have been attained. In anticipation that the construction of the exterior wall would be completed by August or September, the president stated that MTCC has been contracted to dredge the remaining 85ha of land.

Furthermore, President Dr. Muizzu disclosed that the project of establishing utility systems in Gulhifalhu will commence in the near future. Revealing that the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has been signed, the president stated that the required funds for the project have also been secured, following agreements made with the Chinese government.

SOURCE : PSM

## Maldives calls to admit Palestine as a full UN member

The Maldives has called the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to support the admission of Palestine as a full member state of the United Nations (UN). The Maldives rendered its support during a statement delivered today by Principal Secretary to the President on Foreign Relations Mohamed Naseer at the UNSC Quarterly Open Debate on the situation in the Middle East.

During the statement, Principal Secretary Naseer called on the members of the UN; especially the permanent members of the UNSC, to give their full and unconditional support for the admission of Palestine to the UN as a full member state. The Maldives also called on the UNSC to impose sanctions, including an arms embargo, on Israel for violating the Charter of the Council on multiple occasions. The Maldives further reiterated its support for a lasting solution to the conflict, through a two-state solution, with the establishment of an independent and sovereign Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The Quarterly Open Debate on the Situation in the Middle East is being convened during the Presidency of Malta in the UNSC. On 2 April 2024, Palestine submitted a letter requesting renewed consideration be given to the application for membership in the UN.

SOURCE : PSM