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Gov't grants first SEZ Act permit to launch solar project

Government of the Maldives has issued its first-ever Initial Permit under the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) Act, paving the way for a transformative solar project. Endorsed during a meeting with the Board of Investment (BoI), this milestone signals a strategic shift towards renewable energy solutions in the island nation.

The approved project, entrusted to Canadian company Abraxes Power Corp and Sungrow Power Supply Co. Ltd., aims to develop a 150MW floating Photo Voltaic power plant and bolster civil and electrical infrastructure in the Greater Male' Region. Additionally, plans include establishing a Li-ion battery system and an energy management platform, with investments allocated for seamless integration into the main electricity grid.

The issuance of the Initial Permit signifies a crucial step, enabling the BoI to conduct necessary research and assessments as mandated by the SEZ Act. Moreover, it facilitates the initiation of discussions and negotiations on commercial terms and project scope.

This initiative aligns with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's ambitious vision to transition from conventional to renewable energy sources. Addressing the High-Level Segment of the Twenty-Eighth Session of the Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP28) in Dubai, UAE, President Dr. Muizzu reiterated the Maldives' commitment to developing renewable energy systems by 2028. Despite current limitations, with only 4% of required electricity generated from renewable sources, the government aims to significantly increase this figure to 33%.

At COP28, President Dr. Muizzu emphasized the urgent need to address the climate funding deficit and underscored the importance of adopting sustainable solutions supported by the latest scientific advancements. The Maldives' proactive stance highlights its dedication to combatting climate change and fostering a greener, more resilient future.

SOURCE : PSM

Modern innovations bring solutions to environmental issues: Gov't

Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Ahmed Shiyam has highlighted the transformative potential of today's innovations in addressing climate challenges through modern technology, stressing the importance of collaborative efforts in seeking sustainable solutions

Minister Shiyam made the remarks during the inauguration of the Space for Island Nation Conference (SINC 2024), hosted by the Maldives Space Research Organisation. The conference's focal point this year revolves around bolstering marine security through scientific endeavors.

Speaking at the conference, Minister Shiyam underscored the intertwined relationship between environmental preservation and governmental policies. He emphasised the indispensable role of oceans in people's lives and cautioned against neglecting environmental concerns. Highlighting the pressing issues of climate change, rising sea levels, and coral bleaching impacting the Maldives, he expressed optimism in leveraging modern technology and innovative approaches to tackle these challenges.

Additionally, Minister Shiyam advocated for harnessing the power of science and technology to drive sustainable transformations. He emphasised the importance of accurately identifying the root causes of environmental issues and implementing monitoring mechanisms to effect positive change. He also underscored the significance of such efforts not only for the Maldives but also for the global safeguarding of oceanic ecosystems.

Furthermore, Minister Shiyam commended President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's dedication to advancing research initiatives and seeking sustainable solutions. He highlighted the pivotal role of space research in gathering crucial data about oceans and the environment, including information on sea temperature, sea level rise, and marine ecosystems. In addition, he emphasised the role of spatial data in enforcing fisheries policies, such as detecting illegal border crossings and unauthorised fishing activities. He, however, stressed that while technological advancements are crucial, collective action is imperative to effectively address shared challenges.

The SINC 2024 conference was attended by 18 researchers from the Maldives and renowned international organisations specialising in space exploration. The conference was held at Crossroads Maldives over three days, and facilitated discussions and knowledge exchange on space science and oceanic exploration. In addition, attendees had the opportunity to visit an island within the country's atolls, further enhancing insights into marine ecosystems and their significance.

SOURCE : PSM





Maldives welcomes over 700,000 tourists



Ministry of Tourism has revealed more than 700,000 tourists have visited the country so far.

The latest statistics published by the tourism ministry show that a total of 728,950 tourist arrivals visited the Maldives between January 1 and April 21, which is an increase of 13.1% compared to the 644,721 arrivals during the same period last year. The statistics show that a total of 192,385 tourists visited the Maldives in January, 217,392 arrivals in February, 194,227 in March and 124,946 arrivals till April 21.

The latest updated report reveals that Chinese tourists constitute the largest portion of total tourist arrivals so far this year, with 77,709 visitors. Following China, the United Kingdom, and Russia along with Italy and Germany, stand out as the next highest sources of tourists, with 72,635 and 72,336, 66,170 and 57,321 arrivals, respectively. Currently, Maldives receives an average of 6451 tourists every day, which spend an average of 7.9 days in the country.

Aiming to expand the tourism industry, the bed capacity has been increased with a total of 62,232 beds. This includes resorts, guest houses, hotels and safaris as well.

SOURCE : PSM

Air Service World Congress 2024 to be held in Kurumba Maldives



The Air Service World Congress serves as a significant platform for international representatives from the route development community to discuss the future of global air service growth and development. The annual forum is scheduled to be held from July 9 to July 11 in Kurumba Maldives.

Speaking regarding the event to PSM News, Corporate Communication Manager of Maldives Airport Company Limited (MACL), Shamaan Shakir disclosed that efforts are underway to register airports and airlines, market the congress and ensure maximum number of airports and airlines participate in the forum. Shamaan additionally revealed that decisions have been made such that Velana International Airport (VIA) is set to be the official host of the Air Service World Congress 2024, marking the first time the Maldives welcomes this significant global event.

With 55 airlines attending, the prestigious event will feature insightful industry discussions, individual meetings, and ample networking opportunities. Several discussions are to take place during the event as this forum will serve to connect airlines and airports.

Moreover, Shamaan stated that this presents a unique prospect for VIA to showcase its advancements and establish alliances with prominent airlines. He further emphasised that the congress will assist to acquiring additional airlines to operate flights within other international airports within the nation. Hence, he expressed confidence that the opportunity of hosting the global event will benefit all the airports operating in the country.

VIA was announced as the official host of the event, following the successful conclusion of the Air Service World Congress 2023 in Oakland, San Francisco Bay Area.

SOURCE : PSM

Uthuru Thila Falhu to reduce imports, ensure food security: Gov't

Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed has emphasised the government's endeavor to enhance food security through the Uthuru Thila Falhu project, aiming to curtail imports.

In an interview with a private media outlet, Minister Saeed underscored the significance of locally sourced products in ensuring food security for citizens. He also highlighted plans for island-level production.

Additionally, Minister Saeed outlined a upcoming initiative set to launch in Uthuru Thila Falhu, focusing on bolstering food security by cultivating ample fruits, vegetables, and seafood to cater to both resorts and residential areas across the nation. He said that the project

aligns with President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's vision for the country, aiming to transform Uthuru Thila Falhu into a pivotal food hub.

Furthermore, Minister Saeed disclosed that the Maldives Industrial Development Free Zone has entrusted the China Harbour Engineering Company with reclaiming land and establishing an agricultural zone in Uthuru Thila Falhu. The project includes the creation of a specialized agricultural zone serving as a pivotal distribution center for agricultural products and inputs.



SOURCE : PSM



Designs of three mosques under development, publicised

The designs of the three new mosques to be established in Alifushi in Raa Atoll, Addu City and Hulhumale' Phase II have been publicised.

Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed revealed that the new mosques will be developed such that solar panels can be installed to generate renewable energy. The minister also disclosed that the mosques will be fully air-conditioned as well. The Ministry of Islamic Affairs disclosed that mosques will be established with the capacities of 300, 500 and 700 individuals respectively.



Minister Dr. Shaheem announced that the practical works of the development of the mosque would commence in June. Riyan Private Limited was entrusted to format the Bill of Quantities (BoQ) and the design of the mosque, which is being developed by individuals.

As such, the mosque under development in Hulhudhoo, Addu City was an initiative of Mohamed Solih, and is contracted to finish within a timeframe of 720 days. Likewise, the mosque being established in Alifushi was contracted to be completed in 732 days by Abdul Rahman Moose. Additionally, the mosque being developed in Hulhumale' was entrusted by Mohamed Yoosuf.

SOURCE : PSM

Discussions ongoing to give 10% tax revenue generated to Councils

Minister of Cities, Local Government and Public Works Adam Shareef Umar has revealed that discussions are underway to amend the laws to ensure island councils will receive 10% of the tax collected from the local tourism sector. The remarks were made by the minister during an event held specialised to five atolls situated in the north of the country.

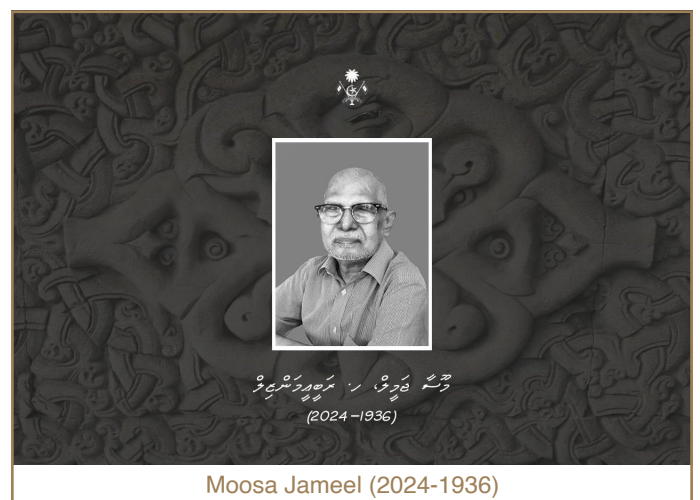
Observing that President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has held discussions with 170 Councils within the first five months of his tenure, Minister Adam noted that efforts are underway to address the issues and concerns raised by the Councils and the residents of the respective islands and atolls. The minister highlighted the top priority given to conduct research on decentralisation, while disclosing that the ongoing research is being conducted independently by the Maldives National University (MNU). The research will encompass the extent of implementation of the Decentralisation Act, necessary amendments, as well as the advantages that the Councils and residents derive from its implementation.

Several initiatives have been taken to empower Councils and to establish facilities on islands such that revenue can be generated independently. As such, some Councils have been entrusted with uninhabited islands to be utilised for economic activities, owing to the initiative of allocating uninhabited islands to Councils. Additionally, discussions are underway to ensure Councils receive 10% of the tax revenue generated by the islands, as per the commitment outlined in the government's manifesto.

Furthermore, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Local Government Authority (LGA) Mariyam Zulfa unveiled that opportunities will be open for Councils to submit concerns and opinions to strengthen the works of the Councils to the authority.

The event held jointly by LGA, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and International Republican Institute will consist of informative sessions and discussion panels as well.

SOURCE : PSM



Moosa Jameel (2024-1936)

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu expressed condolences to the President of the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) and former Minister of Foreign Affairs, Honourable Abdulla Shahid (ODRI), upon the passing of his father, Late (Dharavandhooge) Moosa Jameel.