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President decides to issue student loans to all eligible students



President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has declared that student loans will now be given to all eligible students seeking higher education opportunities. The announcement was made by Minister of Higher Education, Employment, and Skills Development Dr. Maryam Mariya during the public forum "Ahaa".

The opening of this year's student loan application process, initiated on February 29, marks the first such initiative under President Dr. Muizzu's administration. Initially scheduled to conclude on April 25, the application deadline was extended to May 2, providing further opportunities for aspiring students. Under this scheme, the government has allocated 500 loan opportunities spanning from diploma to PhD programs.

During the forum, Minister Mariya reiterated the government's commitment to simplifying the student loan process and addressing the challenges faced by students aspiring for higher education. She announced President Dr. Muizzu's decision to grant loans to all eligible

students who apply in this round.

The loan scheme offers flexibility for students to pursue their studies in their preferred countries, focusing on fields deemed essential for the Maldives' development, such as construction, aviation, and agriculture, as outlined in the President's manifesto. Notably, this year's scheme includes provisions for students with disabilities, with the government pledging to cover additional expenses based on individual circumstances.

Furthermore, existing students and those enrolled in free degree programmes will also have access to the loan scheme to cover supplementary expenses. The ministry has allocated 370 opportunities for new entrants and 130 opportunities for existing students.

In cases where students face challenges completing their programmes due to unforeseen circumstances, top-up loans will be available, capped at USD 45,000, to support their continued education journey.

SOURCE : PSM



Parliament greenlights appointment of 8 ambassadors

The Parliament has officially endorsed the appointed ambassadors and high commissioners nominated by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, subsequent to the approval of the Foreign Relations Committee.

The list of approved ambassadors appointed by President Dr. Muizzu includes:

Mohamed Hussain Shareef, Ambassador of the Maldives to the United Arab Nations

Dr. Iruthisham Adam, High Commissioner of the Maldives to the United Kingdom

Dr. Ali Naseer Mohamed, Ambassador of the Maldives to the United Nations

Masood Imad, High Commissioner of the Maldives to Sri Lanka

Dr. Mariyam Shabeena Ahmed, High Commissioner of the Maldives to Malaysia

Geela Ali, Ambassador of the Maldives to the Kingdom of Belgium and European Union

Dr. Salma Rasheed, Ambassador of the Maldives to the United Nations in Geneva

Mohamed Luweiz, High Commissioner of the Maldives to Singapore

However, the Foreign Relations Committee disclosed that two of the appointed delegates were not subjected to interviews due to inconsistencies in their court documents. Consequently, the Parliament refrained from casting votes for their approval. The individuals who were not approved are Dr. Fazeel Najeeb, appointed as Ambassador of the Maldives to China, and Shuineen Rasheed, designated as High Commissioner of the Maldives to Bangladesh.

The approval process was expedited by the Parliament in response to concerns raised by President Dr. Muizzu regarding delays in the approval process.

SOURCE : PSM



Expatriate issue to be resolved within 3 years, pledges government

Minister of Homeland Security and Technology Ali Ihusaan has assured issue of illegal expatriates residing in the Maldives will be solved within a three-year timeframe.

Speaking at the Aha forum, Minister Ihusaan responded to a citizen's query regarding this pressing concern, shedding light on the steps being taken to rectify the situation. He emphasised the need to accurately ascertain the total number of expatriates in the Maldives, a task that will be achieved through the collection of fingerprints from all foreign nationals within a year. This initiative will commence on May 2, starting in Himmafushi, Kaafu Atoll, and gradually expanding across the country.

Once the fingerprints are collected, they will be cross-referenced with existing work permit records to determine each individual's legal status and custodianship. Minister Ihusaan highlighted the complexity of transferring custody of expatriates, acknowledging the need for streamlined procedures in this regard. However, he assured that after the data collection process, efforts will be made to facilitate legal transfers within the established framework.

Furthermore, minister revealed expatriates found to be residing illegally will be given an opportunity to rectify their status by entering the system. He added failure to avail this opportunity will result in deportation, with those lacking proper identification documents being swiftly repatriated in collaboration with relevant embassies. Moreover, the government is actively enhancing information management systems to bolster border security and immigration control using modern technology.

Looking ahead, Minister Ihusaan underscored the anticipated rise in demand for unskilled laborers due to the government's ambitious development projects under President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's leadership. Special emphasis will be placed on ensuring legal entry for such laborers, thereby contributing to resolving the expatriate-related challenges within the stipulated three-year timeframe, he added.



SOURCE : PSM

IsDB discusses Islamic finance in Maldives



The Islamic Development Bank Institute (IsDB) has held discussions on the development and promotion of Islamic finance in the Maldives.

The talks were held during Minister of Finance Mohamed Shafeeq's official visit to Saudi Arabia. Minister Shafeeq met with Acting Director General of IsDB Dr. Sami Al-Suwailem. The meeting discussed ways to cooperate between the Maldives and IsDB. They also discussed ways in which Islamic finance can help.

Minister Shafeeq is on a visit to attend the annual meeting of IsDB. During the visit, he met with the heads of various international financial institutions and held important discussions. These include the OPEC Fund, the Saudi Development Fund and the Islamic Development Bank. Minister Shafeeq was accompanied by Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed.

SOURCE : PSM

Fathimath Habeeba appointed as member of CSC

The Parliament has approved the decision to appoint Fathimath Habeeba as a member of the Civil Service Commission (CSC). During today's parliamentary session, the decision to appoint her as a member of the CSC received approval, garnering a total of 38 votes.

Fathimath Habeeba's nomination was successfully endorsed, granting her the position in the CSC. However, the nominee Abdul Haseeb Ismail did not receive approval from the parliamentarians.

Habeeba have served as the Director General of the Civil Service Training Institute since December 9, 2019. Her appointment comes following the conclusion of Fathimath Amira's tenure as a member of the CSC, leaving a vacancy in the commission.

The composition of the commission now includes five members, namely President Nasih, Vice President Ibrahim Rasheed, Member Mohamed Farusath, Member Fathimath Shareef, and the newly appointed Fathimath Habeeba.

SOURCE : PSM



Gov't disburses USD 55 million to fishermen to date



The government has disclosed that approximately USD 55 million has been disbursed to fishermen since President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu assumed office.

During a public forum 'Ahaa', Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources Ahmed Shiyam revealed that a significant backlog of payments was outstanding to fishermen when the current administration took charge. Minister Shiyam acknowledged the challenges in swiftly addressing these overdue payments, citing the country's economic circumstances.

Despite these challenges, Minister Shiyam emphasised the government's commitment

to expedite the disbursement process in alignment with the President's directives. He noted that concerted efforts were made to ensure fishermen received their payments before Ramadan.

Since assuming office, the government has disbursed a total of USD 55 million to fishermen, according to Minister Shiyam. However, he also highlighted that there is still an outstanding balance of USD 1.74 million owed to fishermen. Assuring ongoing efforts to settle this remaining amount, Minister Shiyam reiterated the government's dedication to fulfilling its financial obligations to the fishing community.

SOURCE : PSM

Defence Minister visits MNDF's Thilafushi Post

Minister of Defence Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon has visited the Thilafushi Post of Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF).

During the visit, Minister Ghassan monitored the ongoing works of Thilafushi Fire Station. The minister observed and sought information on the Coastguard ship currently being built.

Minister Ghassan was accompanied by several senior officials including Chief of Defence Force Major General Ibrahim Hilmy, Commandant of Fire and Rescue Service Brigadier General Abdullah Zuhuree, Commander of Male' Area Brigadier General Ibrahim Rasheed and Commandant of Coastguard Brigadier General Mohamed Saleem.



SOURCE : PSM

Education Minister urges being committed and to act with integrity

Minister of Education Dr. Ismail Shafeeu has advised the graduates of the Maldives National University (MNU) to be diligent, committed and to act with integrity. He made the remarks during the graduation ceremony of the students who completed their studies in the field of health and tourism in the Maldives National University (MNU).

Speaking at the ceremony, Minister Dr. Shafeeu emphasised the importance of demonstrating ethical behaviour and avoiding dishonest acts. The minister highlighted the pivotal role of a tranquil and conducive learning atmosphere while underscoring that full-time courses, especially the Bachelor's Degree Programmes, require studying full-time. Furthermore, Minister Dr. Shafeeu revealed the government's plans



to launch a nation-wide programme to train teachers, aiming to accomplish the overarching goal of building future leaders and a skilled generation. He noted that MNU plays a significant role to assist in achieving the target.

Over 780 students have completed their respective courses and have graduated from MNU. This includes, School of Nursing Masters, Faculty of Shariah and Law, Faculty of Health and Science, Faculty of Hospitality and Tourism, Faculty of Education, Faculty of Arts, Faculty of Engineering Science and Technology, MNU Business School. The graduation ceremony of MNU will be held from April 28 to 30.



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THE MALDIVES NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

SOURCE : PSM



Maldives men's doubles team clinches silver at Asian Carom Championship



Ismail Azmeen and Hassan Nazim have achieved notable success by securing silver medals in the male doubles finale at the ongoing Asian Carom Championship.

Competing against a formidable Indian team, the Maldivian doubles pair demonstrated remarkable skill and determination throughout the competition. Despite their commendable efforts, the Indian team emerged victorious, clinching the gold medals after a hard-fought battle. Prior to reaching the finals, both Ismail Azmeen and Hassan Nazim displayed exceptional performance by defeating doubles pairs from Singapore and Bangladesh in earlier rounds.

In another highlight of the tournament, the Maldivian doubles pair of Aminath Widha and Aishath Nafha faced tough competition in the semifinals, ultimately conceding defeat to an Indian doubles team. Nevertheless, both players showcased their prowess by advancing to the quarter-finals, where they secured a victory over a pair from Sri Lanka. The Asian Carom Championship, marking its return after a decade-long hiatus, is scheduled to continue until May 1, 2024. Featuring the participation of over 100 players from seven Asian countries, including the Maldives, the championship has reignited enthusiasm among carom enthusiasts.

The tournament serves as a platform for players from India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, the Maldives, Singapore, Malaysia, and South Korea to showcase their talent. Notably, four world champions are among the participants, adding to the competitive spirit of the event.

SOURCE : PSM

FDC celebrates World Day for Safety and Health at Work

The event was attended by General Manager of Operational Safety and Health Management at Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL) Mohamed Abdulla. Representatives from key safety and security agencies like MACL, Housing Development Corporation (HDC), and the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) also participated.

The event provided insights into the safety initiatives of FDC, with the Projects and Planning Department outlining the rules and regulations governing safety measures across FDC facilities.

Speaking at the event, Managing Director Hamdhan Shakeel has emphasised the company's dedication to maintaining a secure workplace environment. He also highlighted the systems and procedures aligned with responsible safety standards in construction activities.

Additionally, Hamdhan highlighted the pivotal role of a dedicated team ensuring safety measures for workers, noting the company's milestone achievement of 15 million safe-man hours. He credited the accomplishment to the effort and resolve of contractors and FDC staff.

In line with this year's theme, Hamdhan underscored the imperative of adapting workplaces to mitigate climate change risks. He reaffirmed the company's commitment to fostering a safe and healthy work environment, prioritising the well-being of its workforce.

Maldives team heads to Thailand for Asian U19 Beach Volleyball Championship

A team representing the Maldives is gearing up for the Asian Under-19 Beach Volleyball Championship in Thailand, marking their participation in this esteemed event hosted by the Asian Volleyball Confederation for the fifth time. The championship is scheduled to run from May 1 to 5, attracting competitors from across Asia, with 32 men's teams and 21 women's teams vying for top honors.

Maldives will be represented by two pairs in the men's section of the tournament, showcasing the country's growing prowess in beach

volleyball. Under the guidance of Coach Adnan Abdul Hameed, four talented players are set to embark on the journey to Thailand, eager to make their mark on the international stage. Additionally, Maldivian referee Ismail Abdul will play a crucial role in ensuring fair play and adherence to regulations throughout the event.

The members of the Maldivian team are as follows:

Team 1: Mohamed Ikram Ismail Rasheed and Ibrahim Rakin Hassan

Team 2: Mohamed Iujaz Hassan and Abdulla Aal Ali

Prior to their departure, the team received a motivational boost from State Minister for Sports, Fitness, and Recreation Mohamed Riyaz, who convened a special session at the Ministry of Sports. Offering words of encouragement and support, Minister Riyaz instilled confidence in the players as they prepare to represent their country on the international stage.

SOURCE : PSM