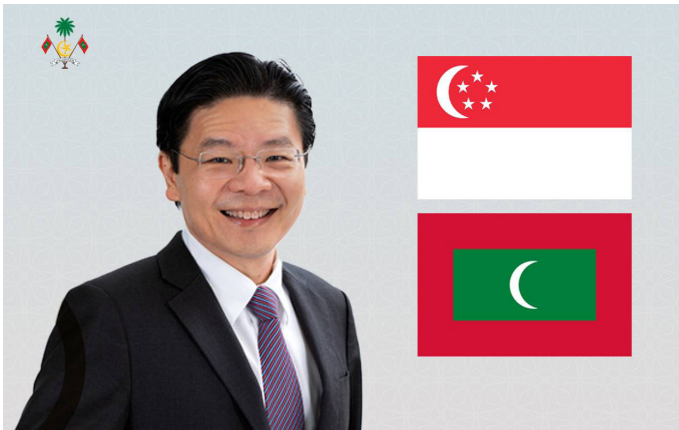




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### The President sends congratulatory message to the new Prime Minister of Singapore



President H.E. Dr Mohamed Muizzu congratulated H.E. Lawrence Wong following his appointment as the Prime Minister of the Republic of Singapore.

In his message, the President stated that he looks forward to working closely with the new Prime Minister of Singapore to improve bilateral ties further and increase collaboration in sectors of trade and investment that benefit both countries.

President Dr Muizzu also expressed optimism that the friendship between the Maldives and Singapore and its peoples will continue to strengthen in the coming years under the Prime Minister's leadership.

*SOURCE : President's Office*

### National airline seeks new medium-haul aircraft

Maldivian, the national airline, has announced the decision to lease a medium-haul flight Airbus A319 or A320 Current Engine Option (CEO) series for international flight operations, with a proposed lease period of three years.

Maldivian has previously engaged in the utilisation of aircraft through extended lease agreements for its operational requirements. The airline aims to enhance its services with this new addition by September 2024.

As part of the government-led initiative to expand Maldivian's services and fleet, the airline recently added a fourth ATR aircraft on May 8. With this addition, Maldivian's fleet now comprises 25 aircraft.

The airline is actively working to further expand its fleet, thereby consolidating its position in the market.

*SOURCE : PSM*



### Palestinians appreciate Maldives support for ICJ call

Palestinians have expressed gratitude to the Maldives for its decision to support the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in taking further measures against Israeli forces.

South Africa has filed a complaint with the ICJ against Israeli forces regarding the attacks on Palestine. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu has voiced full support for South Africa's submission to the ICJ. As such, the Palestinian government has thanked President Dr. Muizzu for his stance. The Palestinian government also shared on social media its appreciation for the Maldives' efforts in various international forums.



In a social media post, President Dr. Muizzu emphasised that the international community should not remain silent in the face of the inhumane acts committed by Israeli forces in Rafah. He affirmed the Maldives' full support for South Africa's ICJ proposal to take further measures against Israeli forces.

Additionally, President Dr. Muizzu called for an end to the Israeli forces' inhumane actions against Palestinian citizens and urged compliance with international law. He stressed the need for immediate ICJ action.

President Dr. Muizzu also reiterated his call for recognising Palestine as an independent state with East Jerusalem as its capital, as per the pre-1967 borders. He assured that Maldivian citizens would continue to advocate for Palestinian rights until Palestine is declared an independent state and its people can live in peace and freedom.

Since October of last year, millions have been displaced by Israeli military attacks on Palestinians. The Israeli forces have now ordered residents in eastern and central Rafah to evacuate. Rafah is currently home to about 1.4 million Palestinians. More than 35,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli military attacks since October 7, 2023.

*SOURCE : PSM*



## Visit Maldives CEO highlights tourism boom and sustainability efforts in BBC Interview



In an interview with BBC's CEO Edit programme, Ms Fathmath Thaufeeq, the Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC/ Visit Maldives) has shed light on the archipelago's thriving tourism industry, our focus on diversification, and the Maldives' commitment to environmental and economic sustainability.

Highlighting the success of the Maldives tourism industry this year, Ms Thaufeeq stated, "In the past four months, we have crossed over 25% of our [targeted] tourist arrivals for the year, which is over 500k." This signifies a strong first quarter, surpassing 25% of the Maldives ambitious target of 2 million tourist arrivals in 2024.

"[The Maldives] is a lot more than the sun, sea, and sand. We have natural wetlands, we have local experiences through boutique hotels/guesthouses, and we are very much focused on expanding the focus of the tourism industry." This shift towards local cultures caters to a wider range of tourists seeking unique experiences, and she further emphasised the diverse experiences the Maldives offers and the equally diverse range of stay options, from luxurious one-island resorts to adventurous liveaboards, city hotels, and local-island guesthouses.

Moving onto the topic of sustainable development, Ms Thaufeeq gave her confidence that Visit Maldives always prioritises

environmental protection. "We make sure that the public and the tourists are very well aware of how much we are focused on protecting the environment. We make sure that everyone is aware of the guidelines, and we work hand in hand with stakeholders and the tourism ministry to maintain and sustain our environment."

"The [Maldives] tourism industry catering 80% of our revenue means it directly and indirectly affects the people on the islands." She noted in recognition of the economic impact of tourism. She again highlighted the different segments and different categories of tourism facilities, services, or offers, one of which are boutique hotels/guesthouses built on the islands where locals live. This focus on community-based tourism ensures that the tourism industry benefits local residents.

"Tourists get to experience the local lifestyles, cuisines [...] maintaining and sustaining the livelihoods of the locals." She stated.

Looking toward the future, Ms Thaufeeq explained her strategies to implement innovative solutions using data-driven methodologies and new technologies. "In the long run, we are very focused on building a very sustainable strategy using new technologies and tools over the next 10 years." Ms Thaufeeq affirmed, once again underscoring the Maldives' commitment to sustainable tourism development and experiences.

SOURCE : Visit Maldives

## Economic Minister departs on an official visit to the UK

Minister of Economic Development and Trade Mohamed Saeed has departed on an official visit to the UK to participate in a convention focused on business and investment.

The Ministry underscored that the primary objective of Minister Saeed's visit to the UK, specifically to attend the Commonwealth Trade and Investment Round Table, is to seek the assistance of the UK's financial ministries for Maldives financial sector.



Providing insight into the discussions to be held, the Ministry conveyed that important aspects of the Maldives International Finance Service Authority and Development Bank will be addressed to further facilitate their services.

During this visit, Minister Saeed is scheduled to meet with UK administration officials to discuss a wide range of topics related to the economy and business.

SOURCE : PSM





# Parliament approves Food Security Bill

The Parliament has approved the Food Security Bill, which pended approval for over two years. The bill was proposed during the previous administration, by Parliamentarian Ahmed Haroon on August 2021.

The bill outlines policies and regulations to import and export food items, aiming to enhance the food security standards. As such, it prohibits the transportation or sale of any contaminated food items or food contaminating materials as well. Additionally, the bill forbids the import or production of mislabelled food items and foods which can have detrimental effects on health.



The bill was approved with the votes of 47 parliamentarians. Meanwhile, the committee report stipulates that the implementation of the bill will abolish certain laws currently implemented to ensure food security. As such, the bill has established a legal framework delineating rules and standards aimed at enhancing food security throughout the stages of food importation, production and storage.

SOURCE : PSM



# USD 83.3M accumulated in Green Fund by end of February

Ministry of Finance has revealed that the Green Fund comprised USD 83.3 million by the end of February 2024.

The Green Fund report publicised by the ministry stipulates the accumulation of USD 6.6 million by February 2024, with USD 6 million spent by the fund on the expenses of various projects since January 2024.



Green tax is a tax levied on tourists, aiming to generate revenue to financially assist in environmental projects. The tax is imposed on tourists in resorts, hotels, guest houses and safaris. As such, tourists spending their vacations in resorts and safaris are to pay at a rate of USD 6 daily as green tax. Meanwhile, tourists staying in hotels in inhabited islands or guest houses registered with more than 50 rooms are charged USD 6 on a daily basis. Likewise, tourists staying in hotels in residential areas with 50 rooms or fewer are also charged at a rate of USD 3 daily.



Statistics on the Green Fund released by the ministry are as follows:

- December 2023: USD 76 million
- January 2024: USD 6 million
- February 2024: USD 6.6 million

Hence, it can be concluded that within the first two months of 2024, USD 13 million was generated through green tax. The Green Fund has financially assisted in 10 projects in February, with the greatest expenses incurred for the Greater Male' Waste-to-Energy Project. A total of USD 907,000 was spent on the project solely.

SOURCE : PSM