



26 JUNE 2024

ISSUE 78

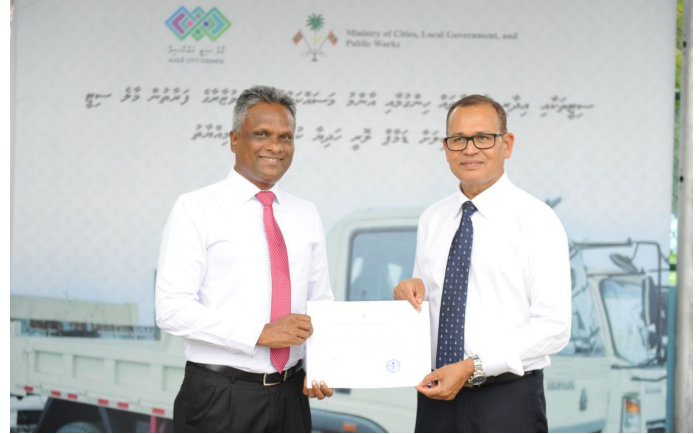
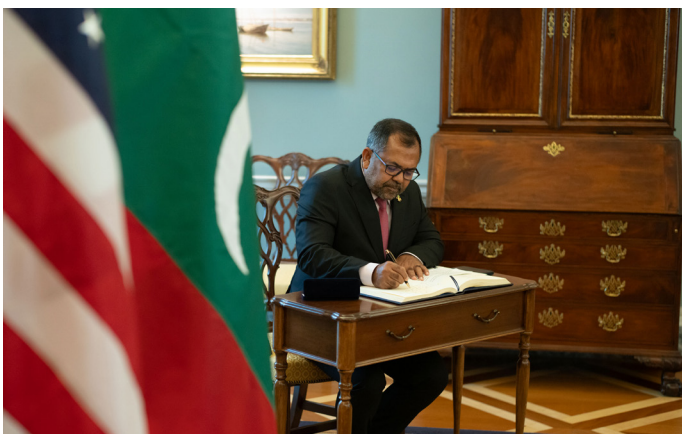


Minister Zameer meets with the U S Secretary of State Antony Blinken

Minister of Foreign Affairs Moosa Zameer met with U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken to discuss enhancing Maldives-U.S. relations, particularly in defense, security, democracy, economic growth, and climate change adaptation. Both parties reaffirmed their commitment to exploring new partnership avenues, upholding a rules-based international order, and promoting regional stability and peace.

Secretary Blinken congratulated Maldives on its successful elections and praised its leadership in combating climate change and promoting environmental sustainability. Minister Zameer highlighted the importance of educational opportunities and easier visa facilitation for Maldivians to promote cultural exchange, tourism, and business ties.

Minister Zameer was accompanied by Ambassador Abdul Ghafoor Mohamed, Secretary Bilateral Dr. Hala Hameed, Senior Undersecretary Hassan Hussain Shihab, Counsellor Zeena Didi, and Second Secretary Ibrahim Haail.



Gov't Affirms Support for Local Councils

Minister of Cities, Local Government, and Public Works Adam Shareef Umar reiterated the government's commitment to supporting local councils. During the handover of waste management vehicles to Male' City Council, Minister Shareef acknowledged the challenges faced by councils due to resource constraints and emphasized ongoing efforts to enhance waste management capabilities, with assistance from the Chinese government.

Mayor Adam Azim of Male' City Council expressed gratitude for the government's support, noting that the new vehicles would significantly aid in maintaining city cleanliness.

The government plans to provide necessary facilities and equipment to local councils, establish public works units in each constituency, and enhance municipal services' efficiency and effectiveness.





“Dhanduveri Manfaa” Initiative Launched to Boost Agriculture



The Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Welfare, in collaboration with the SME Development Finance Corporation (SDFC) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), launched the “Dhanduveri Manfaa” financial assistance and loan scheme. Minister Dr. Aishath Rameela emphasized the importance of financial support for long-term benefits in agriculture.



The scheme targets 26 islands in Haa Alif, Haa Dhaalu, and Shaviyani Atolls, providing grants and loans for climate-smart technology, greenhouses, irrigation, and fertigation systems. The ministry has allocated USD 648,508 to private firms, NGOs, and cooperative societies for these purposes.



Financing is available under two categories: Grant and Self-finance, and Grant and Dhanduveri Nafaa Loan, with specific conditions for eligibility and application through the SDFC portal.



Managing Director of MPRC Ibrahim Shiuree pays courtesy call on Tourism Minister Ibrahim Faisal

Tourism Stakeholders Discuss Promotion Strategies

Tourism Minister Ibrahim Faisal and MPRC Managing Director Ibrahim Shiuree met to discuss innovative strategies to promote the Maldives as a top travel destination. The meeting focused on new promotional methods, leveraging digital marketing, and enhancing collaboration with international travel agencies. MPRC is organizing a roadshow in India, named “Explore Maldives,” in collaboration with Manta Air, to attract more tourists.

During the meeting, Shiuree disclosed that MPRC is working diligently to enhance the promotion of the Maldives. He highlighted that the corporation has planned to implement more innovative promotional strategies and mentioned that details of these strategies will be disclosed within the next two weeks.

The administration also aims to hold several activities in partnership with tourism industry stakeholders to increase the number of visitor arrivals to the Maldives.

Sports Minister Advocates for Increased Exercise Facilities



Minister of Sports, Fitness, and Recreation Abdulla Rafiu emphasized the need for expanding exercise facilities to promote a healthier society during the reopening of a refurbished gym. He highlighted the benefits of regular exercise in preventing noncommunicable diseases and strengthening societal relationships.

Mayor Adam Azim supported the initiative, committing to more gyms across the city and ensuring outdoor gyms are accessible and comfortable. The reopening is part of ongoing efforts to improve the city’s fitness infrastructure.



HDC resumes land reclamation of Hulhumale' Phase 3



The Housing Development Corporation (HDC) has recommenced the land reclamation project in Hulhumale' Phase 3, initially paused due to environmental concerns. The project, managed by Capital Marine and Civil Construction Company Pvt Ltd, aims to reclaim 63 hectares for industrial, marina, housing, and recreational purposes.

HDC initially inaugurated the reclamation work for Phase 3 on September 22, 2023. The project is divided into three areas, with substantial progress already made. Dredging operations have been completed for 10 hectares of land in Site A, and 16 hectares of the planned 29 hectares in Site B have been dredged.

The project is being carried out by Capital Marine and Civil Construction Company Pvt Ltd. In total, 63 hectares of land will be reclaimed under this initiative.

HDC plans to utilise the newly reclaimed land for various purposes, including industrial and marina use, while also addressing the housing shortage. Similar to Phase II, Phase III will feature parks, sports and recreational centers, as well as bridges and roads to cater to the needs of residents.



President Conveys Condolences for Late Mohamed Arif

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu expressed condolences to the family of late professional footballer Mohamed Arif, acknowledging his significant contributions to the Maldives national team. Vice President Hussain Mohamed Latheef also expressed his sympathies.

RACL Enhances Maavarulu Airport Operations



RACL Managing Director Ahmed Mubeen announced improvements at Maavarulu Airport, including utility and ambulance services, better amenities, and transportation enhancements. The airport, operational since 2020, is set to improve regional connectivity and service quality.

Speaking on a program aired on PSM News, Mubeen noted that while Maavarulu Airport was recently established, it initially lacked essential services. He disclosed that arrangements have been made to provide utility and ambulance services at the airport, along with several other improvements.

Maavarulu Airport, which began operations in 2020, faced challenges due to the absence of some critical services. This year's budget includes funds to introduce and enhance these services. RACL is focused on making Maavarulu a more comfortable destination for visitors by improving amenities such as cafés and restaurants and enhancing transportation services, including ferry services for employees.

The development of Maavarulu Airport was contracted to Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC) and was completed in two phases. The airport features a 1,200-meter runway, with scheduled flights operating on Thursdays and Saturdays.

Efforts are ongoing to ensure that Maavarulu Airport meets the needs of its visitors and staff, reflecting a commitment to improving regional connectivity and service quality.





Gov't Plans to Increase MMPRC Budget to USD 15 Million



Tourism Minister Ibrahim Faisal announced efforts to increase the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) budget to USD 15 million for 2025. This budget increase aims to enhance the marketing and promotional activities of the Maldives on a global scale.

Providing further insights, MMPRC Managing Director Ibrahim Shiuree discussed ongoing efforts to promote the Maldives on a global scale. He emphasized the importance of seeking opportunities for international advertising and mentioned that discussions with all relevant industry authorities would be conducted. Shiuree also highlighted the need to observe and learn from the strategies used by other competitive nations in promoting their tourism industries.



The Ministry of Tourism has revealed plans to advertise each individual island of the nation separately, ensuring that the unique features of every island are showcased. The ministry has also assured support for all efforts aimed at expanding the tourism industry across the entire nation.



Minister Faisal emphasised the government's dedication to enhancing the tourism industry and highlighted the critical role MMPRC plays in this expansion. He expressed his vision of increasing MMPRC's budget to USD 15 million, noting that the investment in tourism would significantly boost economic growth in the long term.

