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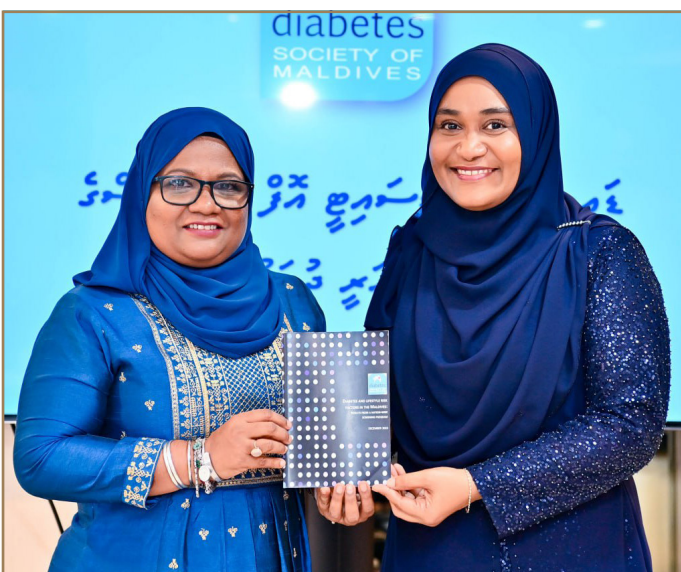
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The President sends a congratulatory message to the Prime Minister-elect of the UK

His Excellency President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu congratulated His Excellency Keir Starmer and the Labour Party following their election victory.

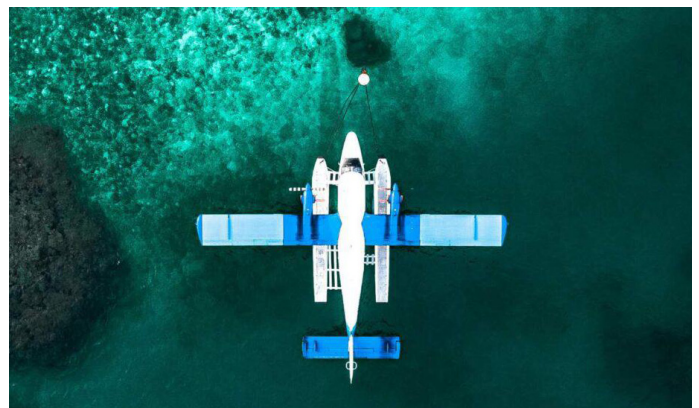
In a post shared on social media platform X, the President stated that he is confident that the UK will see a new dawn of prosperity under the leadership of Mr. Keir Starmer. The President also noted that he is looking forward to working closely with the new Prime Minister-elect to enhance and strengthen the close ties between the two countries and address global challenges.



The First Lady attends the function held to celebrate The Diabetes Society of Maldives' 24th Anniversary

Maldivian celebrates ten fantastic years of its seaplane services

Ten years ago today, Maldivian, the national airline of the Maldives, launched its seaplane operations, forever transforming the way tourists experience this island destination.



From a humble beginning with just two aircraft, Maldivian's seaplane fleet has grown considerably, whisking travelers away to explore the breathtaking beauty of the Maldives flying over the stunning atolls.

This anniversary marks not just Maldivian's success but the vital role seaplanes have played in boosting Maldivian tourism. The unique perspective offered by a seaplane ride, soaring over crystal-clear waters and idyllic atolls, has become an iconic part of any Maldivian vacation.

Maldivian's commitment to providing exceptional service and seamless connections between Velana International Airport and various destinations has been instrumental in making the Maldives even more accessible to travelers and locals alike.

Here's to a decade of scenic seaplane flights! The company looks forward to seeing what the next ten years hold for its seaplane operations and the continued growth of Maldivian tourism.





Fisheries ministry announces international scholarship opportunities



The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources has opened applications for scholarships for individuals seeking higher education in fields related to fisheries. These scholarships are being offered through a collaboration between the government and the World Bank named Transforming Fisheries Management in the South West Indian Ocean Region and Maldives.

There are several academic opportunities available in the field of marine science and related disciplines. These include:

- One opportunity to earn a Master’s Degree in Marine Science
- Two opportunities to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Aquaculture
- Two opportunities to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Marine Science/Marine Biology
- One opportunity to earn a Bachelor’s Degree in Veterinary Science (Aquatic)

The ministry revealed that interested individuals must apply for the scholarships before September 1, 2024, at 12pm.

According to the eligibility criteria, individuals applying for the Master’s Degree must have a Bachelor’s Degree and at least two years of work experience related to the field. Meanwhile, individuals applying for the Bachelor’s Degree must have earned a C in at least five subjects in GCE O Levels and a C in at least three A Level subjects.

Additionally, the ministry affirmed that students selected for the scholarships will be provided with the necessary documentation to obtain acceptance from a university recognized by the Maldives Qualification Authority (MQA). The ministry has been making significant efforts to increase higher education opportunities within the field.



Finance minister advocates for Maldivian accountants in global firms

Minister of Finance Dr. Mohamed Shafeeq has expressed his aspiration for Maldivian accountants to excel and secure positions in international companies. He made this remark during the opening ceremony of the Internal Audit Conference of the state held at the Islamic Center’s meeting hall.

The two-day conference aims at enhancing the capabilities of government institutions and local councils. In his speech, Minister Shafeeq emphasized the administration’s dedication to producing more Maldivian accountants, highlighting the numerous scholarship opportunities available in this field.

He noted that accountants are among the highest income earners in the Maldives, with accountants paying the highest amount of income tax in the country. The minister also stressed the need to strengthen internal audits.

The conference will feature the experiences of professionals working in the audit field, alongside discussions on the challenges faced by internal auditors and potential solutions. Additionally, a workshop on practical auditing and audit reporting will be conducted.

The State Internal Audit System, established by the Ministry of Finance under the State Finance Regulations, aims to ensure the accuracy of accounts, funds, and financial records in the state’s name. The Internal Audit Committee is responsible for monitoring the state’s assets, funds, and documents, ensuring compliance with Financial Regulations.



Tourism ministry to form task force for Shangri-La reopening

The Ministry of Tourism has decided to set up a special task force to reopen Shangri-La Resort and Spa, the largest resort in Addu City. Known for its luxurious standards, Shangri-La Resort offers 284 beds, including 60 water villas, 26 beach villas, 28 pool villas, 16 tree houses, and two presidential villas spread across 550,000 square meters.

The resort originally began operations with a 30% government stake and 70% ownership by Addu Investment Private Limited, a joint venture established to manage the property alongside the government. However, following its closure due to the global COVID-19 pandemic, the government relinquished its shares in August 2023. The closure resulted in significant job losses for many residents of Addu who are eagerly awaiting the resort's reopening.

The Ministry of Tourism stated that they convened with the management of Shangri-La Hotels and the parliamentarians of the Addu City constituencies to establish a special task force dedicated to reopening the Shangri-La Hotel in Addu.



Minister of Tourism Ibrahim Faisal emphasized that reopening Shangri-La Resort is a top priority for the government. He underscored the government's commitment to advancing the tourism industry in Addu City, noting ongoing discussions with China's Eastern Airlines to commence direct flight operations to the city. The minister stressed the necessity of increasing the tourist bed capacity in Addu as the introduction of direct flights is expected to boost tourist arrivals.

HDC opens land allocations for mixed residential and commercial purposes



The Housing Development Corporation (HDC) has announced the opening of opportunities to apply for land in Hulhumale' Phase Two for mixed residential and commercial purposes. Under this new initiative, HDC is offering land for the development of both mixed-use residential and commercial projects in accordance with the master plan for Phase Two of Hulhumale'.

The master plan for this phase includes provisions for social housing and commercial development aiming to create a balanced and vibrant community. The land available for mixed residential projects is designated for the construction of six 14-storey buildings, two 15-storey buildings, and two 20-storey buildings. These buildings are envisioned to feature apartment complexes with commercial spaces on the ground floor, designed to meet the needs of both residents and businesses in the area.

In addition, HDC is offering four land plots for commercial purposes. The available land plots are about 4,966.79 sqft, 7,073.60 sqft, 10,150.75 sqft, and 11,014.05 sqft. These commercial lands are being allocated on a land sale model where developers are responsible for the development and operation of their projects. This model ensures that the businesses established will serve the needs of the Phase Two community effectively.

Expressions of Interest (EOI) for these land parcels are open indefinitely. HDC will prioritize developers who propose the best services and plans that align with and strengthen the master plan for Hulhumale' Phase Two. For more information and to submit expressions of interest, HDC has asked to visit their website or contact their office directly.





Aasandha allocates USD 1.9 million for IVF treatment in 2024

The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the National Social Protection Agency (NSPA) Heena Waleed has announced that Aasandha has allocated a budget of USD 1.9 million for In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) treatment. The NSPA has published the preliminary list of 37 couples who have been approved for IVF treatment under the first round of the Aasandha Scheme.

This initiative, part of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's presidential pledge, aims to provide IVF treatment through the Aasandha Scheme. Within the first 14 weeks of his presidency, plans to offer Intrauterine Insemination (IUI) and IVF treatments were unveiled. The administration aims to assist 100 couples with IVF treatment through the Aasandha Scheme by the end of 2024.

Speaking to PSM News, Heena stated that the government has sought expert advice for this new initiative in the Maldives. She disclosed that a budget of USD 1.9 million was set for the IVF treatment of 100 couples this year. She also highlighted ongoing efforts to establish an IVF fund to ensure the treatment's effective and sustainable provision.

Arrangements have been made to provide IVF treatment within the Maldives or abroad. Heena affirmed that accommodation and meals for couples seeking treatment abroad or who need to travel to Male' City for treatment will be covered.

NSPA has released the list of applicants who sought assistance during this period. Out of the 153 applications received, 32 were deemed ineligible and 84 were incomplete. The agency will inform the 37 successful applicants of their treatment plans by July 30, 2024.

Additionally, NSPA has extended the deadline for submitting forms and documents to 1400hrs on July 31, 2024. This extension allows those with incomplete applications or new applicants to apply for assistance. Individuals whose circumstances have changed are also encouraged to reapply by the extended deadline.

NSPA has also opened the opportunity to submit complaints regarding the published list. If necessary, a revised list will be issued on July 15, 2024. Most applicants were ineligible due to differences in Body Mass Index (BMI) compared to the standard value. The agency also revealed some cases of incomplete smoking cessation duration.



Operation Kurangi' to expand nationwide this month



The Ministry of Homeland Security and Technology has announced that 'Operation Kurangi,' aimed at collecting data on expatriates living in the Maldives, will be expanded to all areas of the country this month. The operation expansion is scheduled to commence on July 18.

Pilot programs for 'Operation Kurangi' have already been conducted on Maafushi Island and Himmafushi Island in Kaafu Atoll. Based on the experience, the ministry is coordinating with island councils, the Maldives Police Service, and the Department of National Registration to facilitate the project, recognizing that a collaborative effort is necessary for its success.

Deputy Minister Ashraf Mohamed disclosed that special training sessions for island councils will be held from July 18 to July 20 to prepare for the project's implementation. Additionally, the ministry is working to establish the necessary resources, including devices capable of collecting and storing biometric information on expatriates.

Ashraf highlighted that the pilot programs revealed the potential for expatriates to relocate to other islands to avoid being documented if the project were conducted on different islands at separate times. To mitigate this issue, the project will be launched simultaneously across all islands, ensuring comprehensive data collection without allowing expatriates the opportunity to evade the system.

The administration is committed to addressing the issue of illegal immigration by establishing a robust system for collecting and maintaining information on foreigners residing in the Maldives. Additionally, a major operation has been launched to ensure that no expatriates live in the Maldives without a Maldivian sponsor responsible for their presence in the country.



Public debt bill and the fiscal responsibility bill sent to committee



The Parliament has accepted and passed the Public Debt Bill and the Fiscal Responsibility Bill to the Public Accounts Committee for further consideration. Both bills were approved with 78 votes in favor.

The Public Debt Bill, proposed by Parliamentarian of Funadhoo constituency Mohamed Mamdhoo, aims to establish a dedicated Debt Management Office. Once the bill is enacted, this new office will be responsible for managing the nation’s public debt. The Debt Management Office is to be established within six months of the bill’s passage into law. Under the bill, the responsibilities of the Debt Management Department of the Ministry of Finance will be transferred to this new office.

The bill outlines regulations for public debt management, including rules for debt disclosure, reporting, and sovereign guarantees for debts incurred by councils and government-owned companies.

The Fiscal Responsibility Bill, proposed by Parliamentarian of Thulusdhoo constituency Ibrahim Naseem, seeks to replace the Accountability for Public Expenditure Act with a new system of fiscal rules designed to ensure that public finances are managed in a sustainable, transparent, and accountable manner.

The bill introduces measures for the state’s fiscal policy and mandates the finance minister to formulate and publish a five-year Fiscal Responsibility Charter in the gazette within six months of each presidential term. This charter must be based on established fiscal policy rules and aims to ensure that fiscal practices are both sustainable and transparent.

The Public Accounts Committee will review the two bills and prepare them for further legislative processes.



New book on nutritional intake for children under two launched

Minister of Health Dr. Abdullah Khaleel has launched “Thuhthu Dharifulhuge Minheyo Kaanaa,” a comprehensive guide on food and nutrient intake for children under the age of two. The book provides valuable information on maintaining a healthy nutritional status during the first 1,000 days of life and features a variety of healthy recipes designed for young children.

At the launch event, Minister of State for Health Aminath Shirna emphasized the critical importance of supplying healthy nutrients to children under the age of two. She explained that the early period is crucial for children’s mental and physical development as their brains and bodies are growing rapidly.

The book is the result of collaborative efforts between the Health Protection Agency (HPA), the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), and Advocating the Rights of Children. According to the Ministry of Health, the book will be available online through the ministry’s website.



“Thuhthu Dharifulhuge Minheyo Kaanaa” includes essential information on introducing nutritious foods at six months of age, making informed food choices, and developing healthy eating habits. The book features a total of 30 recipes tailored for infants and young children.