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Changing course without risking bankruptcy has been the biggest achievement of past 52 weeks - President



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has stated that the biggest achievement of the past 52 weeks was changing the trajectory of the economy, without risking bankruptcy.

Speaking at the official ceremony marking one year since assuming office, the President reflected on the Administration's efforts to address the country's financial challenges. He noted that despite baseless accusations of economic mismanagement, the Government had taken decisive steps to reverse the economy's downward trajectory.

He indicated that International Monetary Fund (IMF) advisory report on the Maldives was published six months before the current Administration assumed office. The report, he noted, indicated that Maldives' debt sustainability was at risk and that the country

was in imminent danger of a default. The report was initially to be released on November 23, 2022, he added.

At the time of assumption of office, President Dr Muizzu said the debt stood at over MVR 120 billion. The previous approach, he added, had been to circumvent the constitutional checks on budgetary spending and supplementary budget, with this pattern observed over the previous five years.

The citizens, the President said, had trusted the "Dhivehinge Raajje" manifesto and taken it up to change the trajectory of the nation. As such, by November 17, 2023, there was a total of MVR 8.4 billion in Public Accounts overdrafts. This, he said, had led all international financial institutions to speculate that Maldives could default by April 2024.

President Dr Muizzu said that this concern was not a baseless one, as the interest payments on loans taken had increased to MVR 4.2 billion in 2023 from MVR 1.4 billion five years before.

Referring to the economic status one year back, the President said the country had to spend MVR 24 out of every MVR 100 on debt servicing; of which, MVR 16 out of every MVR 100 was interest payments.

Despite these factors, President Dr Muizzu stated that the Administration, in the past 52 weeks, had been successful in reversing the trajectory of the economy, averting a default. This, he said, was evident from economic figures and indicators.

The President said the budget for 2025 was the first ever budget of the Administration that would be passed by the Parliament and implemented. The budget for 2024 was passed by the previous administration and a Parliament that was closely aligned with the previous administration, and as such, current Administration did not have full autonomy over this year's budget. This, he said, was a direct attempt against the present administration, indicating that even though developmental projects were included in the budget, the working budget granted to those projects was not sufficient. Despite this challenge, the President noted that significant work had been carried out in the year.

SOURCE : The President's Office





Finance minister highlights risks of insufficient budget allocations



Minister of Finance Moosa Zameer has voiced concerns that inadequate financial allocations for development projects could lead to significant delays and hinder long-term progress during the ongoing parliamentary debate on the state budget 2025.

Speaking at the debate, Minister Zameer cautioned that spreading the budget thinly across numerous projects without sufficient funds would impede their progress, potentially resulting in stagnation due to cash flow constraints.

Referencing projects contracted by the previous administration to the Maldives Transport and Contracting Company (MTCC), he noted that initiatives valued at USD 1.2 billion remain stalled due to lack of secured financing; however, he assured that the new budget would prioritise funding to ensure successful project implementation nationwide.

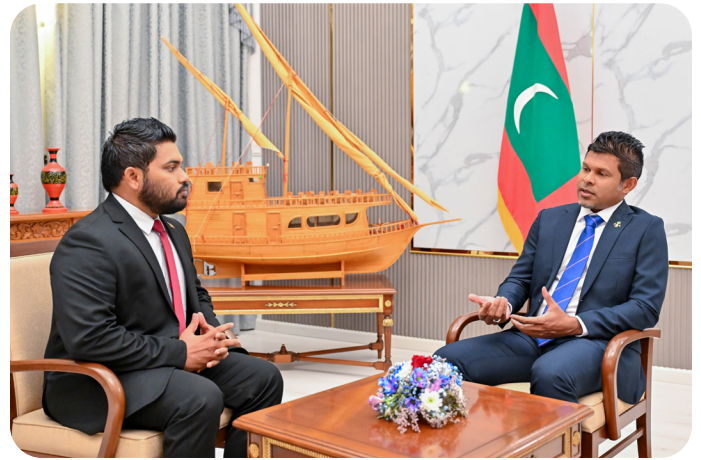
Minister Zameer also highlighted the Government's commitment to expanding financial services, announcing plans to establish ATMs on all inhabited islands by the end of the year, aligning with the Administration's objectives to enhance accessibility for citizens.

Furthermore, he reiterated the Government's focus on improving transparency in state-owned enterprises, suggesting that merging companies offering similar services could enhance performance and efficiency.

Turning to healthcare reforms, Minister Zameer commended changes to the national health insurance scheme, Aasandha, aimed at reducing wasteful expenditure. He expressed optimism that these reforms could generate savings of up to USD 32 million, contributing to broader fiscal objectives.

The Minister concluded by reaffirming the Government's dedication to addressing fiscal challenges and ensuring effective resource utilisation for national development.

Vice President describes current Government as one that brings hope



Vice President Uz Hussain Mohamed Latheef has described the current Government as one that will bring hope. He made these remarks during a special interview with PSM News on the first anniversary of President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's Administration today.

During the interview, the Vice President said that Presidential decisions are important in shaping tomorrow's Maldives, pointing to the upcoming implementation of the "Dhiveenge Raajje" Manifesto. A significant portion of the national budget has been allocated for housing development, with multiple projects in the pipeline. He expressed confidence that the Administration's four-year goals would be met through a combination of foreign aid and national revenue.

The Vice President highlighted that when the President took office, there were significant challenges, including warnings of potential State bankruptcy within months; however, the Government has successfully steered the nation towards stability. He further highlighted several stringent measures, including the cessation of money printing and subsidy reform, both of which have gained international recognition. As a result, this has led to strengthened diplomatic ties, with international organisations, neighbouring countries, Arab nations and Western countries pledging support for development initiatives in the Maldives. Additionally, speaking about the President's strong foreign policy stance, the Vice President acknowledged that while certain groups had attempted to misrepresent the Government's efforts to prioritise national interests, the Administration has successfully overcome these challenges as well.

In addressing social reform, the Vice President stated that the Government is focusing on youth development and has already seen positive results in crime reduction. Moreover, he stated that the Government has taken a measured approach to policy making, avoiding politically destabilising decisions while ensuring public welfare remains a priority.

Looking to the future, the Vice President revealed plans to break from the traditional cycle of project discontinuation during government transitions. This commitment to continuity is reflected in the 20-year National Development Plan, which aims to institutionalise public interest projects through legal frameworks.

SOURCE : The President's Office

SOURCE : PSM



President pledges swift and enthusiastic delivery of tangible results



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu stated on Sunday that the Government will produce tangible results with enthusiasm and at a fast pace. He made these remarks whilst speaking at the ceremony to mark the Government's first year in office.

He highlighted that there were numerous challenges concerning the realisation of the Administration's goals at the beginning of the tenure. However, the President revealed that many of these goals have already been delivered to the people. In that regard, he noted the establishment of the air ambulance service which transported 540 patients and the coverage of many healthcare services under the national the Government's universal healthcare insurance scheme, Aasandha, including coverage for In-vitro fertilisation (IVF) services and other reproductive health related services.

He added that the mental health helpline set up to ensure the wellbeing of people coping with mental health issues had been instrumental in providing relief to youth. The Administration introduced a nationwide single hotline, 911, within the past 52 weeks of the government. The hotline aims to eliminate the hassle of sifting through emergency numbers by adopting a single, unified number.

Highlighting that the Administration aims to provide the necessary care for its people swiftly, the President shed light on efforts to assist

Thalassemia patients. He said that 14 state-sponsored patients have been sent abroad for bone marrow transplants within the past 52 weeks of the Administration.

Reiterating the Administration's focus on delivering results, the President noted the progress achieved in easing housing difficulties. In that regard, the President stated that in order to make housing affordable the Administration had provided relaxations to those with social housing who are unable to pay their dues.

Emphasising that the Government budget for 2025 would focus on alleviating housing issues, the President stated that the Government is working on resolving the problem of unaffordable housing loans. He further mentioned that the Administration had introduced an affordable Shariah-compliant housing loan with no more than 5 per cent interest, as he had previously pledged. The President described the loan as which is truly affordable. The President stated that the loan scheme and the Government's efforts to compile a fishermen's registry, would assist in issuing loans to fishermen and other such families for the first time.

The President also highlighted economic activities such as the establishment of bunkering services, sea-to-air cargo services, and the Development Bank of Maldives. He mentioned that as part of ongoing efforts to decentralise governance and services, councils have been allocated uninhabited islands for commercial benefits. Additionally, administrative services such as National Identity Card (NID) and passport services are now provided nationwide. The President also pledged to budget the initiation of infrastructure projects on the islands and to ensure its completion before the end of his tenure.

As the President had stated upon assuming office, he would place equal importance on developing infrastructure, ideological, and religious education. He highlighted some efforts made in these areas within the past 52 weeks. In this regard, the President stated that 270 religious speakers had been trained and other opportunities had been provided for youth in the religious sector. The President also highlighted that teacher training opportunities have surged to levels unprecedented in the past decade.

SOURCE : The President's Office

Prioritising national interests boosts global respect – the Vice President

Vice President Uz Hussain Mohamed Latheef has said that prioritising our country's interests changes how other countries perceive us and increases their respect for us. The Vice President made these remarks in an interview with Sangu TV, marking the inaugural year of President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's Government.

Speaking further, he said that in all the opportunities he was presented with, the President has spoken in a way that no matter how small our country is or how dispersed our small population is across the islands, the audience is constantly reminded that we Maldivians are proud human beings. We, too, will have a voice.

"So, they know that our country's leader loves the nation and our country has a rich history, and no matter what had happened in the past, the current President will be able to run a patriotic government. So, Country First. He is pursuing that policy," the Vice President said.

The Vice President went on to express his pride in the fact that Maldivians are now taking charge of their own destiny. He noted that in the past, concerns were raised in parliament that the work of making underwater charts or drawings of the Maldives would fall into the hands of a particular group of people. However, he highlighted that Maldivians are doing it independently, a testament to their capabilities and the President's guidance and trust.

In his interview, the Vice President highlighted the economic situation in the Maldives and the efforts made by President Dr Muizzu's Administration to improve the country's financial crisis in the past year since assuming office. He said that the President's biggest challenge when he took over the government as a leader of a responsible opposition political party was improving the Maldives' economic situation. In this regard, the Vice President expressed his optimism about the future, highlighting that the first thing the President did was to remove the challenges in the financial system by restructuring the debts; adding that many efforts were made to overcome the situation in which Maldivian companies were at the time.

SOURCE : The President's Office



God willing, we will witness a new chapter in regional development: The President



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu announced that a new chapter in regional development is on the horizon. He made the remark at the official reception to commemorate the one year in office.

The President reiterated that high-end services will be implemented north and south of the Maldives. Seven urban centres will be built nationwide to guarantee equal access to high-quality services. He also stated that he would seek public consultation on this issue.

The Government aims to ensure that all services are accessible on every island, even in areas with small populations. The President stated that ATMs will be installed on all islands, and every island will have access to fuel at the State Trading Organisation (STO) rate. Additionally, the government plans to extend RTL services to all atolls and ensure that subsidies, Aasandha, and social security support for those in need are provided sufficiently so that no one is left without assistance.

The President announced an increase in civil servants' salaries next year and a raise for all judiciary employees by 2026.

The President stated that a significant number of housing projects will be initiated, and efforts will also be made to improve health sector infrastructure. In addition to a specialty hospital for cancer, thalassemia, and mental health, plans are underway to establish five more hospitals across the country. He emphasised that a substantial portion of next year's budget has been allocated for developing health infrastructure, purchasing equipment, and training personnel. In the coming weeks, work on establishing general practitioner (GP) clinics will continue. He also stated that the primary objective is to facilitate access for Maldivians, allowing them to receive medical treatment locally instead of travelling abroad.

The President reaffirmed his intention to provide primary healthcare services to every atoll in the nation. Additionally, he stated that direct flights to China and Europe would soon be available on wide-body aircraft that arrive in the Maldives. The President expressed confidence that the expansion of Velana International Airport would be finished by the end of the following year.

SOURCE : The President's Office

Foreign Minister Dr Khaleel sends National Day greetings to Oman



Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr Abdulla Khaleel has sent a message of felicitations to the Foreign Minister of the Sultanate of Oman, Sayyid Badr bin Hamad bin Hamood Albusaidi, on the occasion of Oman's National Day.

Minister's message reads as follows:

"On behalf of the Government and the people of the Maldives and on my own behalf, it is my pleasure to extend warm greetings and since felicitations to Your Excellency, the Government and the people of Oman on the auspicious occasion of your National Day.

It is my sincere hope that the strong bilateral relationship between the Maldives and Oman, based on our shared Islamic values, will continue to grow from strength to strength in the years ahead.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration."

SOURCE : Ministry of Foreign Affairs



President says Administration committed to reversing systemic mismanagement

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has reaffirmed his Government's commitment to addressing past mismanagement and meeting the expectations of the Maldivian people. Speaking at the official reception marking the first year of his Administration, the President highlighted the progress made so far and outlined plans for the future.

In his address, the President expressed concern over the financial practices of the previous administration, particularly the significant issuance of currency and compensation payouts totaling MVR 1 billion. He assured the public that his Administration is committed to avoiding such practices.

Detailing efforts to recover public funds, President Dr Muizzu revealed that MVR 16 billion in unpaid state funds remained when his Government assumed office. Over the past year, MVR 2.6 billion of this amount has been recovered. The President also addressed outstanding payments to fishermen, noting that his Administration had cleared arrears totaling MVR 250 million and distributed over MVR 1 billion to fishermen by 11 November 2024.

The President provided updates on key land reclamation projects. He noted that when his Government took office, only 44 per cent of the Gulhifalhu reclamation project had been completed, but this figure has now increased to 70 per cent. Similarly, Hulhumalé Phase 3, which was just 17 per cent complete a year ago, has progressed to 38 per cent, with the remaining work expected to be completed within the next six months. Additionally, the reclamation at Giraavarufalhu has advanced from 19 per cent to 33 per cent over the past year.

President Dr Muizzu reassured the public that efforts are underway to terminate unfavorable agreements made by the previous administration with foreign companies. He emphasised that such projects must benefit the Maldivian people, rather than external interests.

On the issue of land and flat allocations, the President pledged transparency and fairness. He affirmed that no legally acquired land or flats would be revoked, but allocations made through fraud or improper documentation would be canceled. "This has always been the process, and it will remain so," he said. He further explained that housing allocations would adhere strictly to established criteria and point systems, with oversight from committees and the Ministry of Housing to ensure impartiality. The President also assured that 4,000 flats would be allocated equitably.

Reflecting on the year's achievements, President Dr Muizzu acknowledged that only 44 per cent of the planned work had been completed but expressed confidence in future progress. He reiterated his Administration's commitment to completing key projects, including the reclamation of Gulhifalhu, within the coming year.

In conclusion, the President reaffirmed his Administration's dedication to ethical governance, fiscal responsibility, and ensuring that development initiatives directly benefit the Maldivian people.

SOURCE : The President's Office

Foreign Minister Dr Khaleel sends a congratulatory message to the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka



The Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives, Dr Abdulla Khaleel has sent a congratulatory message to the newly appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Sri Lanka, Vijitha Herath

The message reads as follows:

"I am writing to extend to you my heartiest congratulations and best wishes on your appointment as the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka.

The Maldives cherishes the long-standing close and cordial relations between our two countries. I look forward to working closely with you to enhance and deepen this enduring bilateral relationship. I am confident that this bond will grow stronger in the years to come.

Please accept, Your Excellency, my best wishes for the continued peace, prosperity, and well-being of the people of Sri Lanka."

SOURCE : Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Foreign Minister Dr Abdulla Khaleel sends Independence Day greetings to the Foreign Minister of Latvia

The Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Maldives, Dr Abdulla Khaleel sends message of felicitations to Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Latvia, Baiba Braže on the occasion of the Independence Day of Latvia

Minister's message reads as follows:

"On behalf of the Government and the people of the Maldives, and on my own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to extend warm felicitations to Your Excellency, the Government, and the people of Latvia on the occasion of your Independence Day.

The Maldives is committed to strengthening the friendly relations with Latvia. I am confident that we can achieve mutual progress through enhanced collaboration in the years ahead.

Please accept, Excellency, the assurances of my highest consideration."

SOURCE : Ministry of Foreign Affairs



The President states that this Administration prioritises on information disclosure



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has stated that this Administration prioritises on information disclosure, to levels Maldivians had not experienced before. He made the statement at the official reception held to commemorate the one year in office.

In his address, the President reflected on his Administration's track record of public disclosure. As such, he noted that the Administration had responded to around 91 percent of Right to Information (RTI) requests. As such, in the spirit of proactive public disclosure, he noted that the Government had created dedicated websites for publication of government and cabinet news. Additionally, he said that members of the Cabinet, had interacted with media 791 times and held 73 press conferences in the past 52 weeks, in addition to directly responding to public queries filed to the Citizen's Voices portal.

Continuing his address, the President appealed to media to adhere to tenets of fair and factual reporting, reflecting on his Administration's efforts to assist media development.

President Dr Muizzu added that no political appointee will be allowed to interfere into the judicial justice system. If in the event such an incident is observed, the President assured that swift action would be taken. He reaffirmed his commitment to keeping the judiciary free from influence, stating that such actions had no place since he assumed office one year back.

The President reiterated that the Administration will always seek public input into running the nation, noting that he had travelled to 70 islands and met 169 councils.

In his address, the President echoed his pledge to safeguard the independence and sovereignty of the nation. He said that today, it was Maldivians who oversaw monitoring the exclusive economic zone of the country, as well as having successfully removed all foreign military presence from the nation. Maldives, he repeated, will maintain friendly relations with all nations that respect our laws and religion.

Prior to concluding his address, the President thanked all who had taken part in running the nation in the past 52 weeks.

SOURCE : The President's Office

This Government will be 100 per cent with the people: President



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has stated that this Government will proceed with public consultation and will stand 100 per cent with the people. He made these remarks whilst speaking at the official reception to commemorate one year in office.

Speaking at the Maldives Centre for Social Education (MCSE) tonight, President Dr Muizzu detailed the Government's proposed solutions to the dollar issue. He noted that currently only 1.5 per cent of tourism sector revenue is being converted to banks. To address this, he said that with new MMA regulation changes, it is expected that 20 per cent of dollars will be converted to banks starting from January. As a result of these strategic efforts, Government companies will be able to access dollars at bank rates. He further announced that by the first quarter of 2026, travellers will have the opportunity to purchase up to USD 1,000 at bank rates, whilst credit card limits would be increased to USD 1,400. Starting from July, the Government will increase the dollar allocation for TT (Telegraphic Transfer) through banks for local businesses importing goods.

The President also highlighted one of the Administration's key priorities—addressing illegal immigration. When the Government took office, the number of illegal immigrants was unknown, but with efforts taken to address this issue, he noted that 5,012 expatriates have been repatriated, surpassing the number deported in the previous three years combined. The Government has now brought all relevant institutions under one umbrella to address issues of illegal immigration, gang crimes and drug-related problems.

Speaking about measures taken to address social issues, the President noted that dangerous road incidents have decreased by 33 per cent, whilst drug seizures have increased by 61 per cent compared with the previous year.

Regarding healthcare, the President highlighted efforts to reduce wastage in the Aasandha system. He mentioned that the Government has begun controlling prices by importing high-quality medicines through bulk procurement, adding that they will establish and maintain a central procurement system for medicines and consumables.

Furthermore, the President shared initiatives taken under his leadership to ban vaping and create a tobacco-free generation. He called upon doctors and relevant experts to support public awareness efforts and help build a tobacco-free society.

SOURCE : The President's Office



Muliaage vehicle garage to be transformed into dedicated 'Zuvaanunge Third Space'



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu has announced plans to transform the Muliaage vehicle garage on Lily Magu into the "Zuvaanunge Third Space," a dedicated centre addressing the lack of venues for youth activities. The space will focus on empowering young people, fostering their skills, and building strong community connections.

The decision, made during Sunday's Cabinet meeting, follows recommendations from Ministers and a proposal by the Minister of Construction and Infrastructure. The plan includes developing the space with a focus on safety, especially given the area's proximity to schools and heavy traffic. A comprehensive traffic management strategy will be implemented alongside the transformation.

The Zuvaanunge Third Space will offer diverse opportunities for skill-building, creative expression, and social interaction. Planned activities include boot camps, skill exchange programmes, virtual reality training, community art walls, culinary events, and mental health initiatives. It will also host interactive workshops and provide dedicated spaces for promoting well-being.

The centre is envisioned as an eco-friendly hub, featuring a cafeteria offering healthy, locally inspired cuisine and a platform for small and medium food vendors to showcase their products. President Dr Muizzu highlighted the importance of such spaces in nurturing the potential of Maldivian youth and creating opportunities for personal and community development.

This initiative reaffirms the Government's commitment to fostering youth welfare and providing inclusive spaces for recreational, educational, and social engagement.

SOURCE : The President's Office

Defence minister highlights redeployment of foreign troops as major milestone



Minister of Defence Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon has highlighted the redeployment of foreign military personnel from the Maldives – ensuring no foreign troops remain stationed in the country – as one of the Administration's greatest achievements.

In an exclusive interview with PSM News, Minister Ghassan discussed the significant strides made by the current Administration in bolstering the Maldives' military capabilities. He noted that, in line with President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's commitment, Indian military personnel previously stationed at three key locations across the Maldives have been redeployed, expressing confidence that under President Dr Muizzu's leadership, the sovereignty and independence of the Maldives will remain uncompromised.

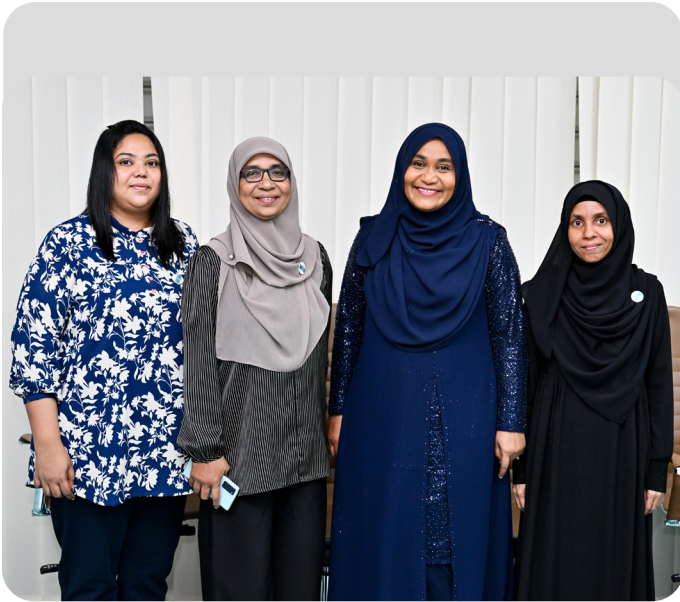
Speaking on the Government's foreign policy, Minister Ghassan emphasised the "Maldives First" principle championed by President Dr Muizzu. Whilst the Administration seeks to strengthen bilateral relations across various sectors, including military cooperation, it remains steadfast in ensuring that such partnerships respect the Maldives' sovereignty and independence.

The Minister underscored that decisions affecting the nation will be made solely by the Maldivian people. He added that the Maldives remains open to collaborations with nations that honour this principle, as it continues to navigate the global landscape whilst prioritising national interests.

SOURCE : PSM



The First Lady urges health professionals to explain the harms of vaping for the sake of public health



The First Lady, Madam Sajida Mohamed, has urged civil servants to work collectively to implement the Government's policies for the people and inform the public about the significant impact of 'vaping' on public health.

She made the remark at a function today to honour the 52 weeks of work of the Ministry of Health civil servants. Speaking on the occasion at the Orange Hiyaa, the First Lady highlighted the unwavering dedication of health professionals. She urged civil servants and policy-level workers to work together and officials to continue with the work that is already underway.

To celebrate the occasion, the longest-serving civil employee at the Ministry cut a cake. The First Lady also handed over the badge of thanks to the Ministry of Health civil servants in recognition of their work.

SOURCE : The President's Office

Maldives achieves goal of deporting 5,000 illegal expatriates



Controller General of Immigration Mohamed Shamaan Waheed has announced that the Administration has successfully deported 5,000 illegal expatriates from the Maldives.

sarukaaru.gov.mv

Foreign minister hails success of "Maldives First" policy under President Muizzu



Minister of Foreign Affairs Dr Abdulla Khaleel has lauded President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's "Maldives First" policy, describing it as a transformative approach that has delivered tangible results over the past year.

In an exclusive interview with PSM News, Minister Dr Khaleel addressed initial concerns about the country's foreign policy when the current Administration took office. He explained that President Dr Muizzu had realigned foreign policy to prioritise national interests and development. The policy emphasises fostering balanced bilateral relations whilst avoiding over-reliance on any single nation.

The Minister highlighted significant progress in foreign relations during the Administration's first year, particularly strengthened ties with multiple nations. He cited high-level discussions with China and Türkiye during President Dr Muizzu's official visits, noting the positive outcomes now materialising. These engagements have bolstered the Maldives' economic prospects and secured critical support for national development.

Minister Dr Khaleel emphasised that these strengthened bilateral relations have advanced the country's economic goals whilst addressing challenges faced by Maldivians overseas. He also affirmed that the "Maldives First" policy remains a cornerstone of the Administration's success, aligning foreign relations with national priorities whilst preserving sovereignty.

SOURCE : PSM

Upon assuming office, President Dr Mohamed Muizzu made tackling illegal immigration a priority. Sharing information about Maldives Immigration's work over the past year, Controller General Shamaan explained that the President had issued clear directives to address the issue. He revealed that those deported included individuals involved in illegal business activities and outlined plans to expand efforts next year to further identify and remove illegal immigrants.

To address this, Immigration has introduced "Immigration Watch," a platform for filing cases related to immigrants, and conducted several operations and raids to inspect foreign-owned residences and businesses for compliance. Shamaan highlighted the success of the "Border Intelligence Division," established to enhance monitoring of immigration information, track blacklisted individuals, and oversee deportees.

The Government has also been collecting comprehensive information on immigrants in the country through an initiative called "Operation Kurangi," with biometrics and data from 10,000 immigrants already gathered.

SOURCE : PSM



CPJ lauds the President’s decision to uphold rights of journalists



The Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ) Asia has commended President Dr Mohamed Muizzu for his firm stance on safeguarding press freedom by rejecting the Media and Broadcasting Commission Bill proposed to Parliament.

The President announced that the ruling People’s National Congress (PNC), which holds the majority in Parliament, would oppose the bill during the ceremony marking the first anniversary of his Administration.

Concerns about the bill had been raised by journalists, who argued that it posed a significant threat to press freedom. Addressing these, President Dr Muizzu emphasised that the proposed legislation was incompatible with his Administration’s policies, assuring that the PNC would not support it.

In a statement following this, CPJ lauded his decision, noting that the bill, if enacted, would have severely restricted press freedom. The organisation called on lawmakers to collaborate with journalists and civil society groups to draft a new media regulation bill that prioritises the protection of press freedom.

President Dr Muizzu reiterated his commitment to ensuring that no party has the power to control or influence media outlets. He also unveiled plans to empower the media, announcing that the 2025 national budget would include dedicated provisions to support media organisations.

The President’s actions have been widely regarded as a significant step towards fostering a free and independent press in the Maldives.

SOURCE : PSM

Gov’t awards five scholarships to study in Malaysia



The Ministry of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development has awarded scholarships to five students to pursue higher education in Malaysia. Minister Dr Mariyam Mariya presented these scholarships to the students selected through a lucky draw from all participants in the “Dhaalan: National Skills and Career Expo 2024.”

Subsequently, the scholarships, granted in collaboration with Education Malaysia Global Services, were presented in the fields of journalism, artificial intelligence, software engineering, marine-biotechnology and digital media.

Earlier in September, Maldives signed an agreement with Education Malaysia Global Services to provide 561 scholarship opportunities. Under this agreement, scholarships in six fields will be awarded to Maldivian students to study at selected Malaysian institutions, providing them with financial support to achieve their educational goals. As part of this initiative, students studying at Malaysian universities will receive a 70 per cent discount on their course fees.

Additionally, the Higher Education Ministry revealed that students currently seeking education and those planning to obtain education in Malaysia through loans can also benefit from this opportunity.

SOURCE : PSM

Zakat House provides over USD32,000 as assistance for medical treatment

The Maldives Zakat House announced that it provided USD 32,000 as financial assistance for medical treatment during October.

Statistics published by the Zakat House reveal that it spent a total of USD 34,351 in October, of which USD 64,370 was allocated to aid. The data indicated that Zakat Funds primarily aided four key areas, including cancer treatment, heart operations, treatment for kidney diseases, brain operations and transplants. Similar to previous months, the largest amount was allocated to cancer treatment, totalling USD 22,570. Furthermore, USD 5,224 was spent on treatment of kidney diseases,

USD 2,264 on brain operations, USD 1,650 on heart operations and USD 30,525 on other treatments.

Moreover, additional expenses were incurred by Zakat House to secure funds for the development of the Waqf buildings and to provide salaries for staff collecting Zakat. Specifically, USD 16,389 was spent on employee salaries and USD 5,989 on international travel.

Whilst the collection and distribution of Zakat was previously managed by the Ministry of Islamic Affairs, it is now the responsibility of the Maldives Zakat House. The organisation was established upon the recommendation of President Dr Mohamed Muizzu and was inaugurated in January 2024.

SOURCE : PSM



Male' Group of Hospitals contracts expansion of Hulhumale' Hospital ER to RDC



Male' Group of Hospitals has signed an agreement with Road Development Corporation (RDC) to modernise and expand the emergency room (ER) at Hulhumale' Hospital. The agreement was signed by the Chief Executive Officer of Male' Group of Hospitals, Ibrahim Abdul Razzaq Haleem, and the Managing Director of RDC, Brigadier General (Rtd) Ali Zuhair.

Under the agreement, RDC will double the current ER's capacity from seven to 14 beds, creating a dedicated space for critical and emergency care. The project is scheduled for completion within two months, with Managing Director Zuhair expressing confidence in meeting the deadline.

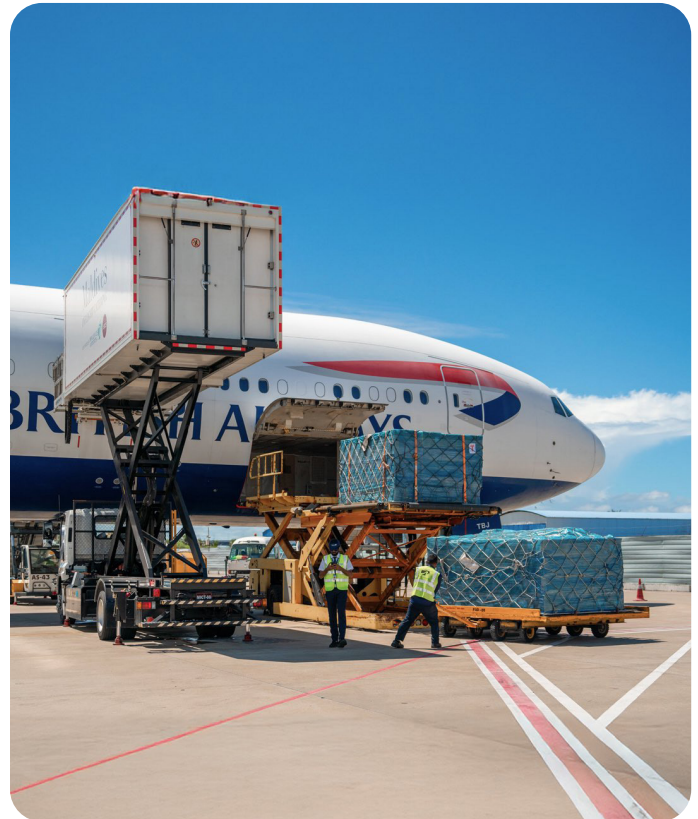
Speaking at the signing ceremony held at Hulhumale' Hospital, CEO Haleem underscored the importance of expanding the ER to accommodate the growing demands of a tertiary hospital. He assured that ER services would remain operational in another part of the hospital during the renovation. He further revealed plans to enhance the hospital's overall capacity, with an additional 28 beds expected early next year.

Hulhumale' Hospital was officially inaugurated as a tertiary hospital on 16 November, as part of President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's commitment to elevating healthcare services. The hospital now offers a range of advanced services typically provided by tertiary-level facilities, including a modern Operation Theatre Complex with four specialised rooms for ophthalmology, orthopaedics, gynaecology, and general surgery, an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) with 10 beds, an isolation unit for managing communicable diseases, and a Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) with 14 specialised beds.

The ER expansion marks another significant milestone in Hulhumale' Hospital's development, further enhancing its capacity to provide high-quality healthcare to residents.

SOURCE : PSM

Sea-to-air service expansion boosts economy



The Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Maldives Ports Limited (MPL), Mohamed Wajeeh Ibrahim, has announced that the sea-to-air cargo service launched earlier this year is expanding rapidly, having already generated over USD 3 million for the Maldivian economy.

The service, which combines maritime and air transport, enables goods to be shipped by sea before being transported by air to various international destinations. This globally adopted method offers significant economic benefits. MPL introduced this service in March, with the first shipment dispatched in May.

In a recent social media post, CEO Wajeeh hailed the initiative as a remarkable success. He noted that the service, launched during the first year of the current Government, has already made a substantial economic impact. Since operations began, it has facilitated the transportation of 210 containers, amounting to 1,008,000 kilograms of goods, to countries including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom and several European nations.

Furthermore, the service has attracted participation from 11 airlines, with the majority of exports comprising garments produced in Bangladesh.

Wajeeh highlighted the collaborative nature of the initiative between Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL), Maldives Ports Limited (MPL) and the Maldives Customs Service. He expressed optimism about the industry's future growth, emphasising its potential to deliver lasting economic benefits to the Maldives.

SOURCE : PSM