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President reaffirms stand against corruption



President Dr Mohamed Muizzu reaffirmed his unyielding stand against corruption and abuse of power in his Administration on Sunday.

Speaking to reporters outside the President's Office on Sunday afternoon, President Dr Muizzu denied receiving a letter from Ahmed Zuhoor, the former Chairman of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC), detailing the widespread corruption and abuse of power inside the corporation.

Some local media reports claimed that Zuhoor had detailed multiple instances of corruption and abuse of power inside HDC in a letter sent to the President shortly before he was dismissed from the Chairman's post.

"The claims I received a letter and did not act on are untrue. If I had received the letter as claimed, I would have taken immediate action," the President said.

"We will not hesitate to stop corruption or abuse of power. From the first day, I have asked for immediate action for all the information I have received on such things. I want to free our government from corruption and power abuse."

The President pointed out that the entire HDC board and several high-level officials have been suspended amid an extensive investigation by the Police and the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

"I don't appoint people to institutions to steal, to commit corruption or do illegal things. Instead, to serve the people with honesty and integrity. If I believe something is being done to interfere with it, I will remove or stop that person," President Dr Muizzu stressed.

He reiterated that, unlike previous governments, this administration will not tolerate corruption.

President Dr Muizzu also urged the people and public servants to cooperate and assist in his efforts to eradicate corruption from the Maldives.

The Maldives supports the request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on humanitarian access in Palestine.



The Maldives welcomes the United Nations General Assembly's adoption of the resolution requesting an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on Israel's obligations in relation to the presence and activities of the United Nations, other international organisations, and third States. Norway, along with a group of other states, presented this resolution.

The Maldives co-sponsored the resolution with other Member States. The resolution was adopted with 137 votes in favour.

The Maldives believes that this is a crucial step forward to uphold the work and mission of the United Nations, humanitarian organisations and third States to protect and preserve the humanitarian operations in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

The Maldives appreciates the overwhelming support for this resolution. It regards the support as a testament to the commitment to realise a sovereign and independent Palestinian State based on the pre-1967 borders with East Jerusalem as its capital.

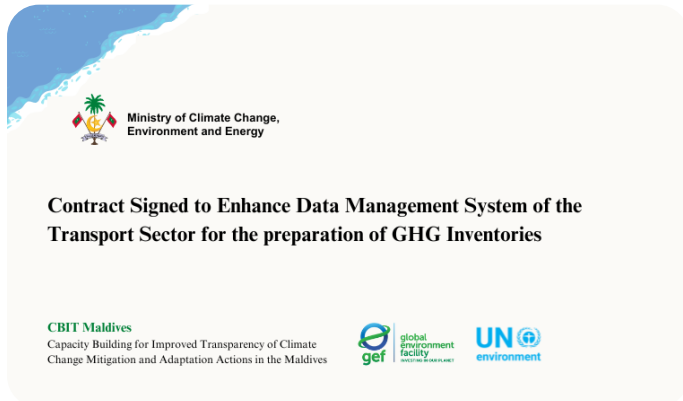
SOURCE : PSM

SOURCE : Ministry of Foreign Affairs





Contract signed to enhance data management system of the transport sector for the preparation of GHG inventories



The Ministry of Climate Change, Environment, and Energy (MCCEE) has signed a contract with Ritariworks Pvt Ltd to undertake the “Consultancy Services to Enhance Data Management System of the Transport Sector to prepare GHG Inventories”. The contract signing ceremony was held at the Ministry, with the Permanent Secretary, Mr Ajwad Musthafa, representing the Ministry, and the Managing Director, Mr Ahmed Shareef, signing on behalf of Ritariworks Pvt Ltd.

This activity is being carried out by the “Capacity Building for Improved Transparency of Climate Change Mitigation and Adaptation Actions in the Maldives” (CBIT Maldives) project under the MOU signed between the MCCEE and the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MOTCA) on 12th August 2024. The CBIT Maldives project is funded by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) and executed by the Ministry, with implementation support from the United Nations Environment Programme (UN Environment).

The consultancy aims to establish a secure and efficient system for accessing transport-related data to compile Greenhouse Gas (GHG) inventories. A key deliverable includes the development of a secure data-sharing interface integrated with a new CMS-based website for MOTCA. Additionally, a Roadworthiness System will be introduced to collect odometer data, thereby improving the accuracy and reliability of GHG inventories.

By aligning the Maldives’ transparency efforts with the Enhanced Transparency Framework (ETF) of the Paris Agreement, the CBIT Maldives project seeks to strengthen long-term institutional arrangements, systemise data collection and processing, and develop indicators and methodologies.

The project aims to improve overall data quality and management procedures for GHG inventories, mitigation and adaptation actions tracking, and climate finance, ensuring regular and transparent reporting to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process. These efforts will inform national decision-making processes and contribute to effectively managing climate change challenges.

SOURCE : Ministry of Climate Change, Environment and Energy

Former construction minister Jameel named the new HDC managing director



Former Minister of Construction and Public Infrastructure Mohamed Mauroof Jameel has been appointed the new Managing Director of the Housing Development Corporation (HDC). The HDC is mandated to develop and manage housing, real estate, and infrastructure projects throughout the country.

Mauroof Jameel, who previously played a pivotal role in developing Hulhumalé during his tenure as Construction Minister, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new position. In addition to his governmental role, Mauroof Jameel is also a renowned architect and an independent researcher focused on the architectural heritage of the Maldives.

This appointment follows Ibrahim Fazul Rasheed’s resignation from the post on 21 December. His suspension following a police inquiry into allegations of mismanagement related to the distribution of land plots under the ‘Binveriya’ housing schemes prompted his resignation.

SOURCE : PSM





Gov't to waive duty on council equipment for municipal services



Minister of Cities, Local Government and Public Works Adam Shareef Umar has announced that the government will waive import duty on equipment imported by local councils to provide municipal services.

Speaking on a PSM News programme, the Minister highlighted the government's commitment to empowering local councils financially in efforts to enhance the decentralisation system. To alleviate financial burdens on local councils, the government will provide duty exemption on machinery and equipment imported by local councils for municipal services.

"For example, Vaadhoo island of Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll is importing an excavator. When the machine arrives, the Ministry will commence the process to waive the duty incurred on that item. Similarly, councils can request duty waivers for imports intended for municipal services," he explained.

The Minister emphasised that an empowered, financially independent council that provides efficient services will benefit the people and further strengthen and enhance the decentralisation system.

Shedding light on other efforts to empower councils, the Minister said a share of the tax revenue generated from local guesthouses will be directed to local councils shortly. He added that the Ministry is collaborating with the Attorney General's Office (AGO) to draft legal amendments to achieve this.

Additionally, the Government has already decided to grant control of nearby lagoons and uninhabited islands beyond a council's jurisdiction to local councils to engage in economic activity and generate revenue.

SOURCE : PSM

Court to officiate weddings every day, including weekends next year



Family Court announced on Sunday its decision to officiate weddings, even on the weekends, starting next year.

The Family Court said it will officiate weddings on all days next year, including weekends.

Considering multiple public requests, the court has decided to lift the exception on weekends starting next year.

According to the Family Court, weddings will be officiated on Fridays from 3 PM to 9:30 PM and Saturdays from 10 AM to 9:30 PM.

In addition, court marriages will be held between 9 a.m. and 9:30 p.m. on weekdays. The timings to officiate weddings outside of court would be between 3 p.m. and 9:30 p.m.

Special requests like officiate weddings on resorts and safaris will be based on individual requests, the Family Court said

The court added that the timings for officiating weddings during the upcoming Holy month of Ramadan will be announced later.

SOURCE : PSM





Maldivian to expand wide-body operations to Europe after China



The national flag carrier, Maldivian, plans to expand its wide-body aircraft operations to Europe after launching direct flights to three Chinese cities.

Next year, Maldivian will use a wide-body Airbus A330-200 aircraft to connect Velana International Airport (VIA) with three major Chinese cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Chengdu.

The first of its newly acquired wide-body aircraft is expected to arrive on 7 January 2025.

In an interview with PSM News, Maldivian Deputy Managing Director Ali Saleem said the airline is preparing to launch its wide-body operations.

Ali Saleem described it as an important milestone for the airline's growth and said the wide-body operations will significantly boost the endeavour.

He said the operations are expected to carry 60,000 passengers annually to the Maldives, which will be a huge financial boost for the airline.

Saleem said the wide-body operations are scheduled to be launched in China.

China remains the top source market for Maldives tourism.

"With these flights to China, we can carry 60,000 passengers a year as planned. This will also bring financial benefits. And expanding our services to the world will also help the airline's growth," he said.

Maldivian's Chief Strategist Mohamed Saffah said the operations will be first launched to three destinations in China. After that, operations will be launched in Europe, he added.

"The flights will start in Shanghai, Chengdu, and Beijing, China. And we are working very hard to start flights to Europe," Saffah said.

According to Maldivian, the airline will operate flights to the three Chinese cities three times a week and accommodate economy, business and premier class passengers.

SOURCE : PSM

Addu City Garment Factory development on track, affirms BCC



Officials of Business Centre Corporation (BCC) inspect the land plot designated for the development of a garment factory, Addu City | Image courtesy: BCC

Business Centre Corporation (BCC) has confirmed that the development of a garment factory in Addu City is progressing as planned. This statement follows recent allegations on social media regarding suspending the project, which BCC categorically denies.

In June, BCC signed an agreement with the Addu City Council to allocate land for the garment factory's development. By September, BCC announced that it was seeking investors for the project. According to BCC, the development aims to provide new opportunities for those involved in the clothing and garment sector, including enhanced marketing services.

Responding to allegations of suspension, BCC Managing Director Ibrahim Ziyau Mohamed stated that BCC is prepared to carry out the project as planned. BCC has formally requested the Addu City Council to allocate an alternative land plot for the factory's location, said Ziyau. This request arises because a portion of the initially designated land has been earmarked for another project, which could result in BCC forfeiting part of the land.

Ziyau assured that development work would proceed as planned and that BCC would be ready to commence physical construction once a new land plot was allocated. He noted that BCC aims to complete the facility's development as soon as possible. The Addu City Council had handed over a 30,000-square-foot parcel of land for the factory's development.

The project, initiated by the Ministry of Economic Development, seeks to reduce garment imports, increase employment opportunities, and bring economic and industrial development to Addu City, as President Dr Mohamed Muizzu's administration envisioned.

BCC supports and develops small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This includes creating a centralised database for SMEs, identifying self-employed individuals and their areas of operation, and fostering a supportive business environment.

SOURCE : PSM