

# TOURISM the heart of Maldives

TOURISM DAY SPECIAL  
SUPPLEMENT

3 OCTOBER 2024



MINISTRY OF TOURISM  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

# MINISTER'S *note*

On this National Tourism Day, we celebrate the remarkable achievements of the Maldives tourism industry, a cornerstone of our nation's prosperity. Our pristine islands, vibrant culture, and renowned hospitality continue to draw visitors from around the globe, firmly establishing the Maldives as a world-class destination.

As we reflect on our journey, our focus remains on sustainability—ensuring that tourism growth not only boosts our economy but also protects our environment and enhances the well-being of our people. We aim to showcase the true essence of the Maldives to the world through our unique culture, authentic cuisine, and rich heritage, fostering deeper connections between our visitors and our islands.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to everyone in the Maldives tourism industry—from resort staff to guesthouses, travel agents to tour operators. Your commitment and passion are what make our country a beacon of hospitality. I also want to express my thanks to His Excellency President Muizzu for his leadership and support in advancing the Maldives as a global leader in tourism.

Tourism has long been the lifeblood of our nation, shaping the Maldives into the vibrant and thriving society it is today. It has opened doors for countless opportunities, from economic growth to cultural exchange, and has showcased the unparalleled beauty of our islands to the world. The industry's contributions are deeply intertwined with the development and progress of the Maldives, and its success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of every individual involved.

Let us continue working together to elevate the Maldives' tourism industry, preserving its unique charm while creating meaningful experiences for visitors from all around the globe.

Happy National Tourism Day!

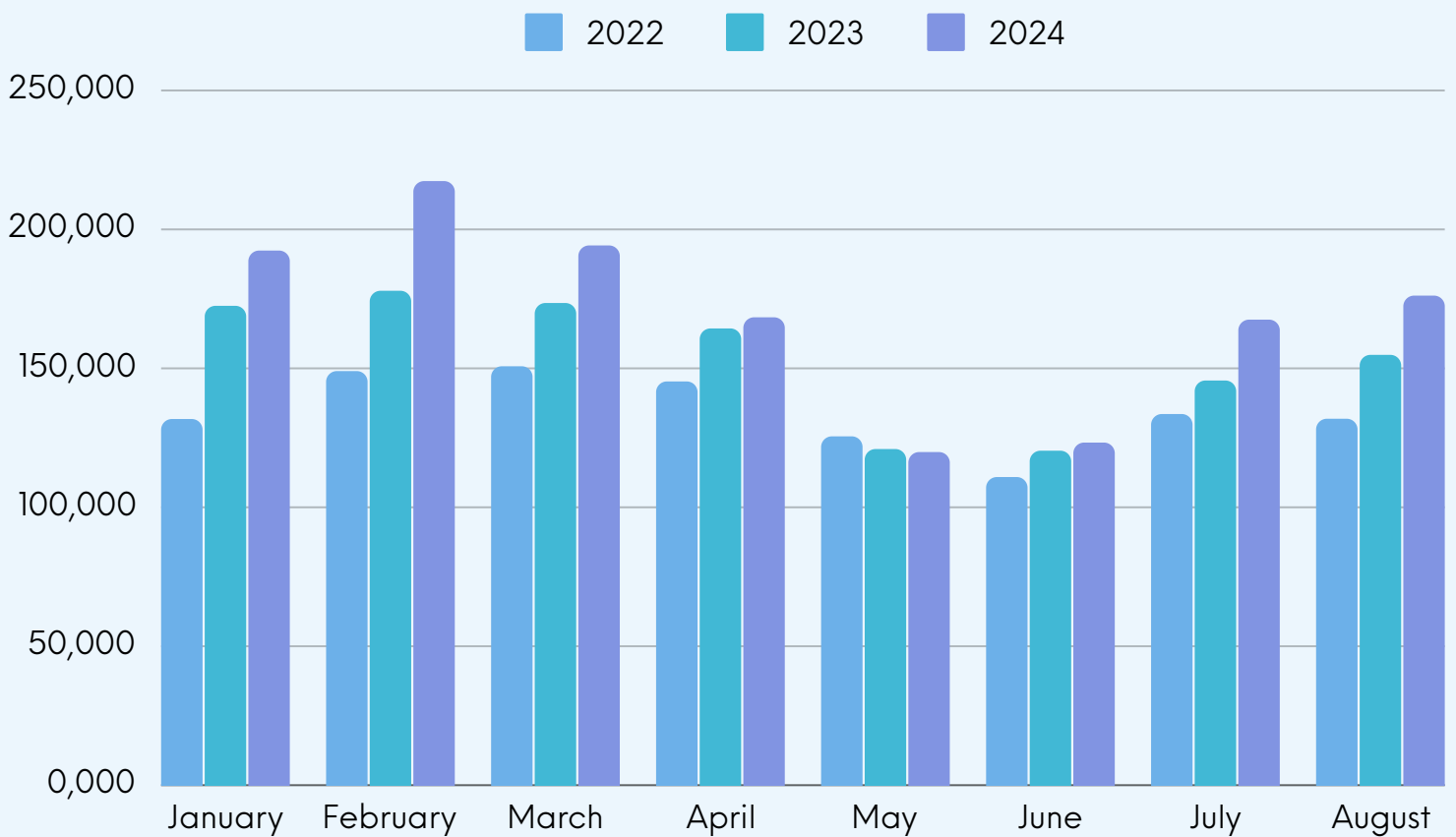


*Ibrahim Faisal*

# 2024 AT A

## *Glance*

### MONTHLY TOURIST ARRIVALS



Daily Average

5,571

Average Duration of Stay

7.7 days

# MALDIVIAN TOURISM IN 2024:

## *Riding the Wave of Global Trends*

By Mohamed Munsif Rushdi, Deputy Minister of Tourism

As the sun continues to rise on the Maldives, one of the world's most sought-after tourist destinations, 2024 has marked a year of both challenges and triumphs for the island nation's tourism sector. With over **1.2 million** visitors as of August and projections indicating that this number could surpass **2 million by the year's end**, the Maldives remains a heavyweight in global travel.

### **A Steady Stream of Visitors**

The tourism landscape has seen a **10.2%** growth compared to the same period last year.

China's resurgence as a key market, contributing **13.6%** of total arrivals, has been crucial in bolstering these numbers. Additionally, markets like the UK, Russia, and Italy have helped maintain momentum, underscoring the Maldives' strong appeal across continents.

## **BUT WHAT KEEPS THESE NUMBERS CLIMBING?**

It's the Maldives' uncanny ability to cater to a wide range of travellers, from high-end luxury seekers to adventurous budget tourists. The nation's **1,216 tourist establishments**, including **182 resorts** and **795 operating guesthouses**, ensure that no traveller is left without options.

### **Global Trends: The Driving Force Behind Growth**

Luxury Experiences and Beyond: In an age where unique, curated travel experiences reign supreme, the Maldives has mastered the art of luxury. From private overwater villas to one-of-a-kind underwater restaurants, the islands offer unparalleled opulence. The persistent demand for high-end vacations remains a key driver of growth.

Sustainable Tourism on the Rise: Today's global traveller is more eco-conscious than ever. The Maldives has embraced this shift by promoting sustainable tourism, making it a prime destination for those looking to experience nature while preserving it. The efforts to conserve marine life and mitigate the impacts of climate change appeal to a growing niche of travellers looking for ethical travel options.

A Diverse Traveller Base: Established markets to the Maldives like India, Germany and France maintains commendable market shares throughout 2024, contributing significantly to tourist arrivals. Tourists generating from Australia and Saudi Arabia have been on a surge, demonstrating competitive market shares. Furthermore, East Asian markets such as Korea and Japan are in line with this trend by making a strong comeback - offering resilience against over-dependence on a few key regions.

## HOWEVER, CHALLENGES ARE LOOMING ON THE HORIZON

Despite these successes, the Maldives faces critical challenges in maintaining its status as the world's premier high-end luxury destination:

### **Global Economic Instability**

With looming concerns over a potential economic downturn, there is an underlying fear that luxury travellers may cut back on extravagant trips. The rising cost of travel could also play a part in curbing enthusiasm among some demographics.

### **Environmental Vulnerability**

The Maldives sits on the front line of climate change. Rising sea levels and environmental degradation could pose severe risks to the island nation's natural beauty, a major draw for tourists. Safeguarding these natural assets will require significant investment and global cooperation.

### **Competition in the Luxury Market**

As more destinations around the world aim to capitalise on luxury tourism, the Maldives must continually innovate to stay ahead. Expanding unique experiences and enhancing service offerings will be crucial in maintaining its top-tier status.

### **A Bright Future, but Caution is Key**

As the year progresses, the Maldives' tourism sector shows no signs of slowing down. New resorts, enhanced airport facilities, and a continued focus on luxury will likely keep the Maldives in the spotlight. However, staying vigilant in addressing economic and environmental challenges will be essential to preserving the country's crown as the ultimate luxury destination.

WITH THE RIGHT MIX OF INNOVATION AND PRESERVATION, THE MALDIVES COULD REMAIN AN IDYLIC PARADISE FOR TOURISTS WORLDWIDE FOR DECADES TO COME.



# IBRAHIM SHIUREE

**CEO & MD, MALDIVES  
MARKETING AND PUBLIC  
RELATIONS CORPORATION**



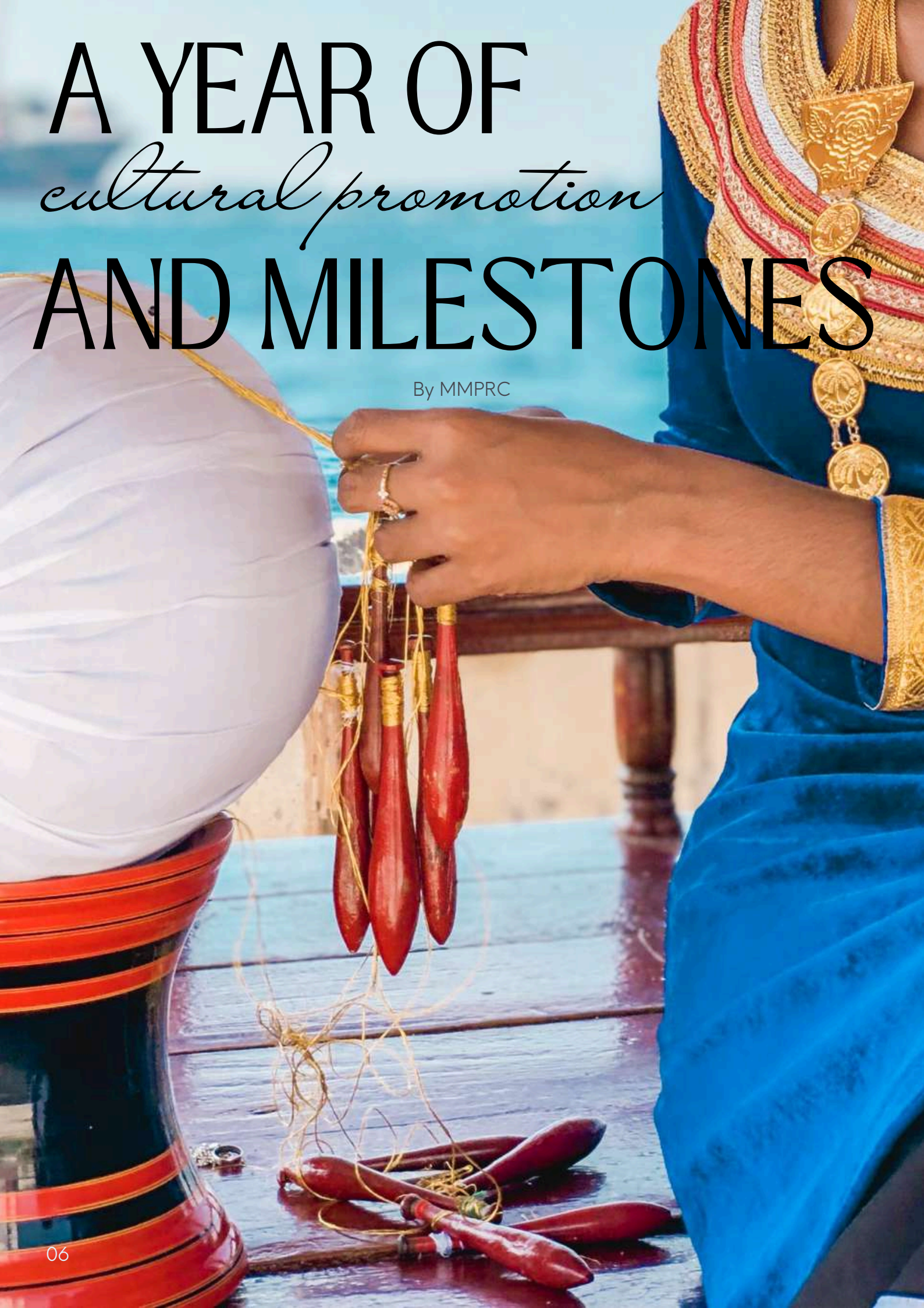
World Tourism Day reminds us of the power of travel to connect people and cultures. The Maldives remains committed to sustainable tourism, preserving our unique heritage and natural beauty while creating opportunities for local communities. As we welcome visitors from around the world, we will continue to strive to promote experiences that leave a lasting positive impact on our visitors and our islands

**IN THE MALDIVES,  
TOURISM  
DIVERSIFICATION AND  
COMMUNITY-BASED  
TOURISM PLAY A  
CRUCIAL ROLE IN  
ENSURING  
SUSTAINABLE  
DEVELOPMENT.**

By maintaining the strength of the Maldives brand while introducing diversified tourism products and services, we can attract more visitors, boost the economy, and create opportunities for local communities to thrive.

# A YEAR OF *cultural promotion* AND MILESTONES

By MMPRC



The Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) has been actively promoting the Maldives as a premier travel destination throughout 2024, aligning with the President's national goal of welcoming 2 million tourists.

This year has seen the Maldives make remarkable strides in tourism, marked by a series of milestones and events. February 2024 saw an unprecedented surge in tourist arrivals, with over 217,394 visitors entering the Maldives- a new national record. Another significant milestone was reached on 27th June with the arrival of the 1 millionth tourist for the year. The Chinese market has also shown strong recovery, with over 200,000 Chinese tourists visiting the Maldives by September 8th.

Focusing on our unique heritage and sustainable tourism development, MMPRC has conducted various campaigns and participated in several key international fairs this year.

We participated in ITB Berlin with 214 industry representatives, with the Maldives stand featuring captivating imagery, traditional performances, and culinary experiences that enthralled visitors. MMPRC hosted a Maldives Media Meet in addition to the special "Maldivian Evening" event where our cuisine took centre stage through the expertise of local chefs. The launch of the NHGAM annual magazine and the MATATO Media Kit for Maldives Finder 2024 at the event further enhanced the visibility of the Maldives' tourism industry.

In May, MMPRC represented the Maldives at ATM Dubai with 253 industry representatives. A dedicated cultural performance area and the Maldives Media Meet were key highlights, promoting our unique experiences and sustainable tourism initiatives. At ATM, the Maldives was also honoured with four prestigious awards in the WTA Indian Oceans Category, including the title of Leading Green Destination for the first time. Another major highlight was our participation in ITB China 2024 as the Official Destination Partner for the first time. High-level meetings, cultural performances, and Dhivehi calligraphy demonstrations showcased our rich heritage at the Maldives stand. An MOU was also signed between MMPRC and Weixin Pay at the Maldives Media Meet held at the event, further strengthening ties with the Chinese market.

Throughout these events, MMPRC prioritised opportunities for local businesses and talent to ensure the sustainable development of our tourism industry. The future of Maldivian tourism looks promising, driven by our rich heritage and innovative marketing strategies.



# SAILING *through* EXCELLENCE

By NBAM



# THE BOATING INDUSTRY'S ROLE IN MALDIVIAN TOURISM

Renowned for its breathtaking turquoise lagoons and pristine white-sand islands, the Maldives is a dream destination for travelers worldwide. Central to this success is the boating industry, which serves as a vital link between visitors and the stunning natural wonders of the archipelago. Whether through liveaboard diving adventures or luxury yacht charters, the boating sector has firmly established itself as a pillar of Maldivian tourism, consistently advancing in service, innovation, and sustainability to offer unparalleled experiences.



A major milestone in the industry is the Life Jacket Campaign initiated by the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM). This nationwide effort emphasizes the importance of water safety by promoting the use of life jackets. By engaging schools, councils, and local communities, the campaign aims to elevate safety standards and ensure that both locals and tourists are well-protected on the water. The initiative reflects NBAM's commitment to not only providing exceptional experiences but also ensuring safety remains a top priority.

Another significant event is the Maldives Marine Expo, an international showcase organized by NBAM. This prestigious event brings together marine-related businesses from around the world, providing a platform for them to exhibit their products and services. The Expo highlights cutting-edge technology, sustainable solutions, and high-end products, reinforcing the Maldives' position as a hub for marine tourism and business. It fosters collaboration and innovation, driving the industry forward and enhancing the country's global appeal.

The Maldives Boating Awards, launched in 2016, are a testament to the industry's dedication to excellence. These awards recognize outstanding achievements within the sector, celebrating operators who excel in service, innovation, and sustainability.

By setting high standards, the awards inspire local operators to continuously improve and push the boundaries of maritime tourism, ensuring that the Maldives remains at the forefront of global marine tourism.

# HAWWA SHIUNA KHALID

MD OF MALDIVES INTEGRATED TOURISM  
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION



Empowering women leaders in tourism must begin with strong support from the highest levels of decision-making. True empowerment is about fostering an environment of encouragement, respect, and support, especially in an industry as pivotal as tourism.

Tourism diversification and community-based tourism are essential to achieving sustainable development in the Maldives. By preserving the strength of the Maldives brand and offering a wider range of tourism products and services, we can attract more visitors, strengthen the economy, and empower local communities to flourish.

**FOR WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP ROLES TO TRULY SUCCEED, IT'S ESSENTIAL THAT THOSE IN INFLUENTIAL POSITIONS ADDRESS IMPORTANT CHALLENGES AND TAKE DECISIVE ACTION.**

With the right support, we can bridge gaps and ensure that tourism in the Maldives benefits everyone, from leaders to communities.



# MOHAMED UMAR MANIKU



## **CHAIRMAN OF THE MALDIVES ASSOCIATION OF TOURISM INDUSTRY**

In these times of global turmoil, UN Tourism's choice of "Tourism and Peace" as this year's World Tourism Day theme is both timely and profound. Tourism has long served as a bridge between communities, helping to narrow the divides that separate us. While it may not have the power to end conflicts outright, the exchange of experiences, values, and cultures facilitated by tourism fosters a sense of unity and shared humanity, promoting better understanding among diverse peoples.

Maldivians have always embodied a spirit of peace and hospitality. This is evident in the warm welcome extended to visitors from all corners of the globe, regardless of their background.

Our natural inclination to embrace diversity is a testament to our values, and I hope we will continue to uphold this tradition of openness and acceptance.

As I conclude, I must express my heartfelt appreciation for the dedicated professionals who form the backbone of our industry. Their unwavering commitment and tireless efforts have been the driving force behind our remarkable progress. The passion and strong work ethic they demonstrate are among our industry's greatest assets. It is crucial that we pass these values on to future generations as we continue to push the boundaries of excellence in sustainable tourism.

# BITES OF *paradise*



## **SAVOURING THE MALDIVES THROUGH GASTRONOMY TOURISM**

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By Mariyam Nasheetha Nasheed,  
Deputy Minister of Tourism

The Maldives is renowned for its stunning waters and luxury resorts, but a new experience is emerging—Gastronomy Tourism. As travellers seek more immersive and authentic adventures, Maldivian cuisine offers a flavorful gateway to the country's rich culture, poised to become the next big thing in tourism.

Imagine enjoying a high tea on a secluded island, not with typical scones, but with local Maldivian hedhikaa—savory bites like bajiya, masroshi, and gulha, all freshly prepared by island communities. Or picture dining under the stars, indulging in freshly caught tuna, coconut curries, and roshi made by local chefs. These culinary experiences allow visitors to taste the Maldives in a whole new way.

# HOWEVER, GASTRONOMY TOURISM ISN'T JUST ABOUT INDULGENCE; IT'S ABOUT IMPACT.

By encouraging visitors to explore authentic Maldivian food, we create new income opportunities for local families through home-based restaurants, food tours, and island culinary events. It brings direct benefits to communities that may not typically gain from traditional tourism.



The Maldives' Tourism Master Plan has already laid out a clear path to unlock the potential of Gastronomy Tourism. It emphasises the importance of showcasing Maldivian cuisine to global travellers through distinctive culinary experiences. By supporting local food festivals, developing specialty restaurants, and providing training for island-based entrepreneurs, the plan seeks to make Gastronomy Tourism a cornerstone of the Maldives' tourism future.

Yet, the real magic lies in creating personal, community-driven experiences, such as enjoying meals with local families. Envision stepping onto a small island where a local family welcomes you to a traditional Maldivian feast—sharing not just their food, but the stories and history behind every dish. These authentic connections will ensure that Gastronomy Tourism in the Maldives is both unforgettable and deeply meaningful.

Gastronomy Tourism presents a vibrant opportunity to enhance the Maldives' allure while uplifting local communities. By embracing this culinary journey, we can showcase the rich flavours and traditions of the Maldives, ensuring that both travellers and islanders benefit from this cultural exchange. Now is the time to let the world experience the flavours of the Maldives—one bite at a time.

# ABDULLA GHIYAS

As we celebrate World Tourism Day 2024, I would like to reflect on the incredible journey we have taken together over the past year. This year's theme, "Peace and Tourism," resonates deeply with our vision to foster a tourism industry that promotes harmony, inclusivity, and shared prosperity.

Our biggest milestone this year was undoubtedly the successful India Road Show, where we brought the Maldivian tourism industry to three major cities. This was followed by our event in Bangkok at PATA Mart, which showcased the Maldives to a wider audience and strengthened our ties within the Asia-Pacific region. These efforts have opened new doors for our members, especially SMEs, and we remain committed to providing opportunities to help them thrive.

Another key initiative was the formation of the MATATO Aviation Committee, a significant step toward addressing critical issues such as connectivity and the future of air travel to and from the Maldives. The committee will continue to serve as a platform for constructive dialogue between aviation stakeholders and our industry.

Women empowerment has been a cornerstone of our work this year. We hosted the inaugural Women Maldives Travel Conference, creating a space for women leaders in tourism to share their insights and inspire the next generation.

## PRESIDENT OF THE MALDIVES ASSOCIATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS AND TOUR OPERATORS

Furthermore, our Ramadan Gada Chef Cooking Show highlighted local talent, and celebrated the culinary arts, all while bringing the community together during the holy month.



Our lobbying efforts and training programs have also taken center stage, as we continue to advocate for policies that benefit our members and the broader industry. We've facilitated numerous workshops, creating invaluable opportunities for skill development and networking.

Finally, I am excited to share that we've begun forming the MATATO student chapter. This initiative will empower the next generation of tourism professionals by providing mentorship, resources, and opportunities to engage with the industry from a young age.

As we look ahead, MATATO remains dedicated to empowering our members, driving sustainable growth, and supporting SMEs. Together, we will continue to shape the future of tourism in the Maldives while contributing to global peace through our shared values and collaborations.

## HAPPY TOURISM DAY 2024!





# EMPOWERING WOMEN, ENHANCING WELLNESS, AND EMBRACING SUSTAINABILITY: A HOLISTIC VENTURE IN THE MALDIVES

In the heart of the Maldives, amidst the turquoise waters and pristine beaches, lies a venture that embodies the essence of female empowerment, holistic wellness, and environmental consciousness. This venture, spearheaded by a group of dedicated women, is a beacon of hope for sustainable tourism practices and the upliftment of local communities.

*Mystic  
Maldives*

## PILLARS OF THE VENTURE

The venture's core philosophy revolves around promoting human development through the integration of yoga, mindfulness, and healthy lifestyle practices. It aims to empower individuals to take control of their well-being, slowing down the life cycle and rewinding towards a healthier and more fulfilling existence.

# HUMAN DEVELOPMENT AND WELL-BEING

The venture champions sustainable tourism practices, ensuring minimal environmental impact while maximizing positive social and economic benefits for local communities. Women are at the forefront of this initiative, employed as guides, facilitators, and artisans, creating a thriving ecosystem of female entrepreneurship.

# SUSTAINABLE TOURISM AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

Environmental consciousness is deeply ingrained in the venture's ethos. Plastic reduction strategies are implemented, and awareness campaigns are conducted to promote eco-friendly practices among tourists and locals alike. The venture strives to minimize its environmental footprint and contribute to the preservation of the Maldives' natural beauty.



# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

The venture's impact extends far beyond its immediate operations. It serves as a model for sustainable tourism and women empowerment, inspiring other enterprises to adopt similar practices. The venture's success demonstrates the transformative power of female leadership and its ability to drive positive change in the tourism sector and beyond.

# IMPACT AND SIGNIFICANCE

This women-led venture stands as a testament to the potential of tourism to not only enhance personal wellbeing but also empower communities, promote environmental sustainability, and foster cultural preservation. Its holistic approach to tourism sets a new standard, paving the way for a more responsible and sustainable future for the industry.



# AMIR MANSOOR



## **PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL BOATING ASSOCIATION OF THE MALDIVES**

Tourism is the lifeblood of the Maldives, and the boating industry stands at the helm of this vibrant sector, connecting travelers to the heart of our islands.

As we celebrate World Tourism Day,

**WE CELEBRATE THE  
INGENUITY,  
PERSISTENCE AND  
PARTNERSHIPS  
THAT HAVE DRIVEN  
OUR INDUSTRY'S  
REMARKABLE  
PROGRESS.**

The boating community continues to play a crucial role in shaping unforgettable experiences, fostering sustainable growth, and safeguarding the natural wonders that make the Maldives a world-class destination.





At the forefront of these initiatives is the leadership of NBAM's President, Mr. Amir Mansoor, whose dedication and expertise continue to drive the boating industry toward new heights. With a deep understanding of the industry's challenges and opportunities, Mr. Mansoor has been instrumental in driving innovation and safety within the boating sector. His leadership ensures that the industry remains committed to providing exceptional experiences while upholding the highest standards of sustainability and safety.

Collaboration remains essential to the success of the Maldivian boating industry. NBAM works closely with the Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) and the Ministry of Tourism to highlight the country's marine attractions to a global audience.

Through international roadshows, joint marketing efforts, and strategic partnerships, the boating industry continues to enhance the Maldives' appeal as a top-tier destination.

**WITH ITS UNWAVERING DEDICATION TO INNOVATION, SAFETY, AND SUSTAINABILITY, THE MALDIVIAN BOATING INDUSTRY IS NAVIGATING A BRIGHT FUTURE, ENSURING IT REMAINS A VITAL PILLAR OF THE COUNTRY'S THRIVING TOURISM SECTOR.**

# ABDULLA NASHEED



**PRESIDENT OF NATIONAL HOTEL  
AND GUESTHOUSE ASSOCIATION  
OF THE MALDIVES**

Maldivian tourism thrives on its ability to blend innovation with the preservation of our natural beauty.

**OUR COMMITMENT TO  
SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES AND  
COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS HAS  
ENABLED US TO OFFER AUTHENTIC  
EXPERIENCES THAT RESONATE  
GLOBALLY.**

As we celebrate Tourism Day 2024, we reflect on the resilience and creativity of the Maldivian tourism industry, looking forward to even greater achievements in the years ahead.



**ALHAMDULILLAH, WE ARE TRULY  
BLESSED WITH 'BLUE GOLD' ALL  
AROUND US.**

By fully harnessing its potential, the maritime industry, along with coastal and maritime tourism sector as the backbone of our trade and economy, will help us remain resilient despite occasional disruptions.

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# MOHAMED NASHEED

**PRESIDENT OF MALDIVES  
ASSOCIATION OF YACHT AGENTS**



# CHARTING *Luxury* IN MALDIVES

By MAYA





The Maldives, renowned for its breathtaking islands and pristine waters, is increasingly becoming a hub for superyachts and cruise liners. Often referred to as 'the pearls of the Indian Ocean,' our tropical paradise offers a unique blend of luxury, adventure, and natural beauty, making it a top destination for high-end travellers.

Since the early 2000s, the Maldives has seen a surge in superyacht visits, with these vessels becoming the preferred choice for elite travellers. Our clear blue waters, vibrant coral reefs, and secluded islands offer the ideal backdrop for superyacht cruises. Many of these islands are uninhabited, providing visitors with unparalleled privacy, exclusivity, and luxury, all of which distinguish the Maldives as a unique destination.

We are pleased that the government has recognized the potential of this market by improving regulations, upcoming development of facilities, and easing restrictions for foreign-flagged vessels. Local businesses, especially in resorts and local tourism, are benefiting directly and indirectly from this growth. Now is the perfect time for local businesses to invest in private facilities to further extend Maldivian hospitality to travellers on superyachts and cruise liners.

Meanwhile, our cruise tourism segment is rapidly growing, and we believe that the Indian Ocean region is on track to become the next Caribbean. Cruise tourism provides a boost to our economy with a significant increase in tourist arrivals. Major cruise liners now include the Maldives in their Indian Ocean itineraries, giving passengers the chance to explore our country's stunning natural beauty.

Male', our capital, remains the primary port of call for cruise ships, and further developments are necessary to accommodate this growing sector. Unlike superyachts, which cater to a selected few, cruise ships bring large groups of tourists at once, creating opportunities for local businesses and tourism services.

Our azure waters and idyllic islands have made the Maldives a prominent destination for both superyachts and cruise ships. While superyachts offer exclusivity and luxury, cruise tourism provides more accessible yet equally breathtaking experiences.

Both sectors play a pivotal role in our economy, and the Maldivian tourism industry would not be complete without them.





## THE EVOLUTION OF MALDIVIAN TOURISM: A COMMITMENT TO EXCELLENCE

By NHGAM

The Maldivian tourism industry, recognized as one of the world's premier destinations, has continually evolved, driven by a commitment to excellence, sustainability, and collaboration. Over the years, we have witnessed transformative changes that have shaped the industry, from the rise of eco-tourism initiatives to innovations in guest experiences.

A key factor in the ongoing success of Maldivian tourism has been the sector's commitment to sustainability. Resorts and guesthouses alike have embraced eco-friendly practices, reducing waste, conserving energy, and protecting marine ecosystems. These efforts not only align with global environmental standards but also enhance the natural allure that draws millions of visitors to our shores each year.

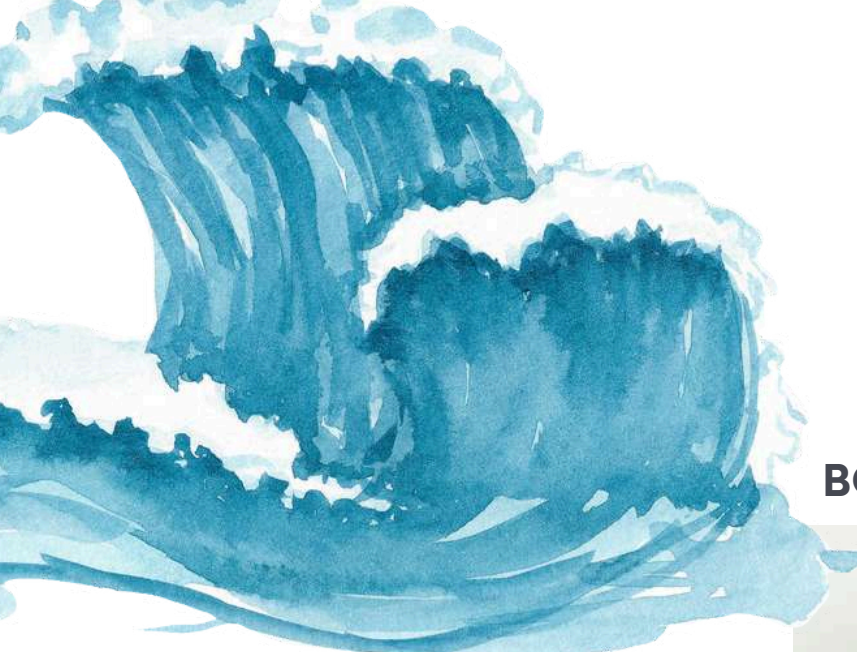
Collaboration across the tourism ecosystem, government bodies, private sector stakeholders, and local communities has been instrumental in maintaining high standards and adapting to changing market demands. Initiatives such as the development of local tourism in islands like Maafushi, Ukulhas, Thoddoo and other central regions have created opportunities for local communities to engage in the industry while preserving their cultural heritage. This balance of growth and preservation is critical to the continued success of Maldivian tourism.

Furthermore, the achievements of notable personalities in the sector visionary leaders, entrepreneurs, and environmental advocates have fueled its growth. Their efforts in innovating guest experiences, promoting sustainability, and championing the Maldives as a destination of choice have brought international recognition.

As we look to the future, Maldivian tourism remains committed to maintaining the highest standards.

CONTINUOUS INNOVATION,  
PAIRED WITH RESPONSIBLE  
TOURISM PRACTICES, WILL  
ENSURE THAT THE  
MALDIVES CONTINUES TO  
BE A LEADING DESTINATION  
FOR TRAVELERS SEEKING  
UNPARALLELED NATURAL  
BEAUTY, LUXURY, AND  
AUTHENTIC CULTURAL  
EXPERIENCES.





# HUSSAIN NIZAM

**PRESIDENT OF MALDIVES  
BODYBOARDING ASSOCIATION**

The Maldives continues to shine as a global destination, not only for its natural beauty but also for its growing prominence in sports tourism.

At the Maldives Bodyboarding Association, we are proud to contribute to this by showcasing our islands through world-class bodyboarding events.

This year, in line with the theme of 'Tourism and Peace,'

**WE EMPHASISE THE  
UNIFYING POWER OF  
SPORTS, FOSTERING  
CULTURAL EXCHANGE  
WHILE PROTECTING OUR  
SURF BREAKS TO ENSURE  
SURFERS AND  
BODYBOARDERS CAN  
ENJOY THE MALDIVES  
SUSTAINABLY AND  
PEACEFULLY.**



*Maldives*

# YACHT RALLY

By MITDC





# A CELEBRATION OF CULTURE AND NAUTICAL TOURISM

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In 2023, the rally continued to evolve, enabling participants to delve deeper into the diverse lifestyles of the Maldives. From agricultural practices in AA. Thoddoo to marine biodiversity in ADh. Maamigili, each stop celebrated local heritage and promoted sustainable tourism. The rally culminated in a festive Gala Night, bringing locals and participants together to celebrate shared experiences.

The 2024 edition, inaugurated on February 10, emphasises the theme “Maldives: Small Country with a Big Heart.” With stops at islands such as V.Fulidhoo and S.Hithadhoo, participants engage with Maldivian traditions through food, music, and local customs, fostering a deep connection with islanders. This year also featured a significant milestone as participants crossed the equator and travelled to Addu City.

The Maldives Yacht Rally organised by (Maldives Integrated Tourism Development Corporation) MITDC, has quickly established itself as a cornerstone of nautical tourism since its launch in 2022. This event goes beyond a thrilling sailing adventure; it serves as a vibrant platform for showcasing the rich culture and heritage of the Maldivian islands. With three successful editions behind it, the rally continues to draw international attention, offering participants a unique opportunity to engage with local traditions.

The inaugural edition in 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of Maldivian tourism, allowing participants to explore various islands while immersing themselves in local culture and building meaningful connections with the communities they visited. This edition featured an expanded itinerary, covering 169.62 nautical miles and stopping at 15 islands across five atolls. Each destination hosted cultural activities, from traditional fishing trips to tours highlighting local craftsmanship. Participants transformed from mere tourists into cultural ambassadors, gaining insights into Maldivian history and traditions while stimulating local economies.



The Maldives Yacht Rally plays a vital role in promoting sustainable tourism by integrating local communities into the tourism sector. Residents benefit economically as participants rely on their services, creating a symbiotic relationship that strengthens local economies. The rally acts as a cultural ambassador, showcasing the Maldives' unique heritage to a global audience. By experiencing traditional practices and local arts, participants become advocates for the Maldives, enriching their own experiences while fostering appreciation for this vibrant culture.



**IN ESSENCE, THE MALDIVES YACHT RALLY, IS NOT JUST A NAUTICAL EVENT; IT IS A CELEBRATION OF MALDIVIAN IDENTITY AND COMMUNITY.**

By connecting international participants with local traditions, the rally ensures that the beauty and culture of the Maldives thrive for generations to come.

# FROM ENTRY-LEVEL TO

# Leadership

# IN MALDIVES TOURISM

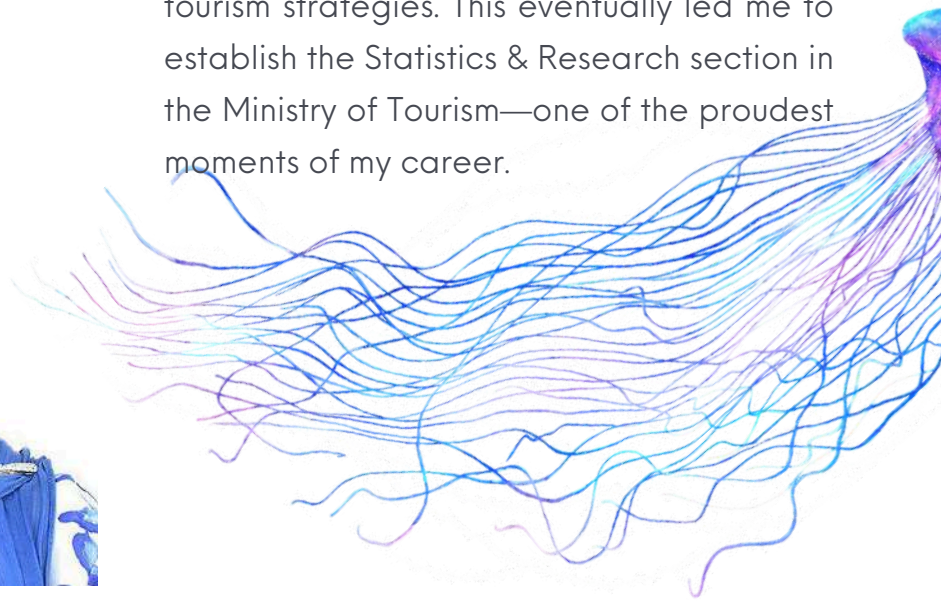


Nashima Abdul Latheef, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Tourism

*i*

My journey into tourism happened purely by chance, actually. Back then, secondary school leavers were assigned to various government departments by the President's Office. When I got the call, I was informed that I'd be working at the (then) Department of Tourism and Investments. It came as a surprise, and my parents were quite alarmed. They even tried to change my post, concerned that tourism was a 'man's world.' However, their efforts were unsuccessful, and so my journey began.

I started as an Assistant Information Officer, working at the tourist information desk at Hulhule' International Airport. It was an exciting time, especially because tourism was still in its early stages. While I was working, I pursued higher studies in Statistics, which sparked my passion for analyzing data, understanding trends, and applying this knowledge to optimize tourism strategies. This eventually led me to establish the Statistics & Research section in the Ministry of Tourism—one of the proudest moments of my career.



There were several key moments. One of the most significant was working on the first tourism statistical yearbook in the Maldives, which I completed while on an exchange program at the World Tourism Organization's Statistics section. This marked the beginning of publishing internationally recognized statistics in the Maldives. Another milestone was leading the first-ever national survey on the economic impact of tourism. Reflecting back, I'm deeply fulfilled by the hard work and dedication that took me from an Assistant Officer to Senior Management in just eight years.

Rejoining the sector has been a unique experience, and several things keep me motivated. Having played a central role in establishing a systematic collection of data and globally accepted statistics during the early stages of Maldives tourism, I'm excited to further develop and advance current practices in the Statistics and Research section. Additionally, the landscape for women in tourism has dramatically improved since I first joined. Back then, there were very few women, and we faced many common obstacles. Today, seeing more women entering the industry and pursuing opportunities with such tenacity is truly inspiring. I'm committed to further encouraging and empowering women in tourism.

It's been surreal, to say the least. From the humble beginnings, working on developing travel spots in the atolls outside Malé, to witnessing the Maldives become one of the world's most coveted travel destinations, it's incredible. We've expanded into diverse global markets and now boast the largest seaplane fleet in the world. The experiences and education I gained during my earlier years in the ministry have stayed with me, keeping me invested in the industry's fast-paced developments even when I was away. It's been a great honour to return to the ministry in this capacity and continue my service toward achieving impactful change.

I'm focused on supporting HEP's pledges for the growth of our tourism industry. This includes overseeing frameworks to promote local tourism and increase women's participation in the sector. Specifically, I'm working on increasing the number of women in top management positions within the industry. It's a crucial area for me, personally and professionally.

My advice would be to

**EMBRACE EVERY CHALLENGE AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO GROW, AND SEE EVERY ROADBLOCK AS A STEPPING STONE. NEVER STOP LEARNING.**

My own journey has taught me that persistence and passion will take you far.



# FOSTERING GROWTH IN SPORTS TOURISM THROUGH *bodyboarding*

by MBBA





The Maldives has long been celebrated for its crystal-clear waters, vibrant coral reefs, and stunning landscapes, making it a sought after destination for travellers from around the globe. In recent years, however, the country has gained recognition for its role in sports tourism, particularly in water sports.

A leading contributor to this sector is bodyboarding, a sport that has rapidly gained popularity both locally and internationally.

## **BODYBOARDING TAPS INTO THE NATURAL RESOURCES OF THE MALDIVES IN A SUSTAINABLE WAY, OFFERING A UNIQUE BLEND OF ADVENTURE AND RELAXATION.**

The Maldives Bodyboarding Association (MBBA) has been at the forefront of promoting this sport, organizing both local and international competitions that attract athletes and tourists alike. Our flagship international event, the Maldives Pro, part of the bodyboarding world tour, has become a highlight on the sports tourism calendar. This event draws participants from around the globe, providing a platform for athletes to showcase their talents while positioning the Maldives as a premier destination for water sports enthusiasts.



Bodyboarding taps into the natural resources of the Maldives in a sustainable way, offering a unique blend of adventure and relaxation. Tourists who visit for competitions often extend their stay to fully experience the Maldives' diverse tourism offerings, including luxurious resorts, the unique charm of local islands, and the liveaboard lifestyle. These extended trips benefit the local economy and contribute to the overall growth of the tourism sector, while allowing visitors to immerse themselves in the country's rich culture and breathtaking natural beauty.

Moreover, the collaborative efforts between the MBBA, the tourism industry, and local communities have been vital to the sport's success. From offering training programs and clinics to encouraging youth participation, the association remains committed to fostering local talent. We aim to provide opportunities for Maldivian athletes to compete internationally while showcasing the Maldives as a key destination for sports tourism.

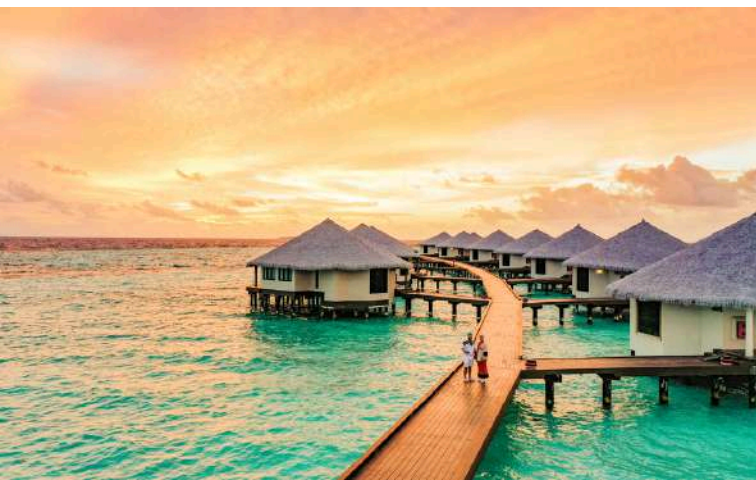
As we celebrate World Tourism Day 2024, with its theme of "Tourism and Peace," the Maldives Bodyboarding Association reaffirms its dedication to elevating the nation's profile in sports tourism. We believe that bodyboarding not only promotes physical well-being but also serves as a bridge for cultural exchange, bringing people together in the spirit of peace and mutual respect. Through our events, we ensure that visitors experience both the beauty of our islands and the excitement of world-class sporting events.



# BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE: THE 5TH TOURISM MASTERPLAN

By Ali Shinan, Deputy Director General, Ministry of Tourism

Since tourism is both the national identity and the lifeline of our economy, ensuring its future sustainability is paramount. The 5th Tourism Masterplan (5TMP) aims to embed true sustainability within the industry in a holistic manner and envisions positioning the Maldives as a global leader in sustainable tourism. To achieve our vision and retain our strong global standing in tourism, it is vital for us to continuously improve our performance and competitiveness. The 5TMP sets a target of 6 billion USD annually in international tourism receipts by 2027, a goal that will require collaboration among industry stakeholders, the government, and communities.



Our goal is to offer the world's best tourism services and deliver unforgettable experiences, while ensuring that the industry provides lasting benefits to local communities, workers, and tourism-related businesses. As we transition into a more digitized era driven by artificial intelligence and innovation, we must preserve the human touch that defines Maldivian hospitality.

Moving forward, we are committed to working across all sectors to prioritize tourism and ensure its continued growth in a sustainable manner. As we align our policies with the anticipated growth in tourism, it is imperative to protect our fragile ecosystems and uphold sustainable practices. Through collaboration and adherence to the 5TMP, we can secure the future of our tourism for the benefit of our people, our planet, and our shared prosperity.





**MINISTRY OF TOURISM**  
REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

**HAPPY TOURISM DAY**  
**2024!**