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MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY NBAM



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MANHATTAN GRAND : TO REDEFINE HULHUMALÉ'S HOSPITALITY LANDSCAPE

Welcome aboard!

As the voice of the marine industry in the Maldives, the National Boating Association of Maldives proudly presents to you our monthly magazine, manifestly designed to keep you updated on the pulse of the nation's thriving marine field.

As members of this unique fraternity, dive into an ocean of articles featuring our fellow sailors and their marine-related businesses, from Safari boat operations to sellers of top-notch diving equipment and boat supplies.

Immerse yourself in a sea of knowledge and find your safe harbor within our contents.

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Mohamed Umar M.U. Maniku, A Legacy in Maldivian Tourism

It is with deep sadness that we note the passing of Mohamed Umar 'M.U.' Maniku on 30th August 2025 at Mount Elizabeth Hospital, Singapore. As Chairman of Universal Enterprises, Maniku will be remembered as a visionary whose integrity, loyalty, and leadership shaped generations of industry professionals. His contributions to the inception and growth of tourism in the Maldives have left an enduring legacy that transcends time and place.

A trailblazer in the industry, Maniku was part of the group that opened Kurumba Maldives in 1972, the country's first resort and widely regarded as the starting point of modern Maldivian tourism. He went on to oversee the development of Universal Enterprises' portfolio, which includes iconic properties such as Kurumba, Kuramathi, Baros, Velassaru, Kandolhu, Milaidhoo, and Huvafen Fushi. Beyond the Maldives, he served as Chairman of Mahaweli Reach Hotels PLC in Sri Lanka, reflecting his influence on hospitality in the region.

Maniku also played a critical role in institution-building. As long-time Chairman of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), formed in 1982, he fostered private-sector collaboration, guided policy dialogue with the government, and championed industry standards and workforce development.

His contributions span pioneering market entry, guiding resort development and diversification, and shaping platforms for industry coordination. Those close to him remember him as a steady guide, mentor, and a driving force behind the growth of Maldivian tourism.

Though MU Maniku has passed, his vision and leadership continue to influence the Maldives' tourism sector, leaving a legacy that will endure for generations.





TTM Awards & Gala 2025

Celebrates Excellence in Maldives Hospitality



Siyam World Maldives Launches Nation's First Resort-Based Plastic Upcycling Center



Siyam World Maldives, in collaboration with environmental NGO CLEAN Maldives, has launched the country's first resort-based Plastic Upcycling Center, marking a milestone in sustainable hospitality. The facility transforms discarded plastics—such as oil containers and shampoo bottles—into functional items like sunbeds, planters, and outdoor seating, setting a new standard for large-scale circular processes in the Maldives.

Beyond resort waste, the center accepts plastics from the nearby island of Kudafari. Under a shared model, 60% of upcycled products remain at the resort, while 40% are distributed by CLEAN Maldives for use in public spaces. The center currently recycles around 800 kilograms of hard plastics monthly and has created three local jobs, while also offering educational tours for guests and school groups.

Inaugurated by Mr. Abdulla Thamheed, Vice President of Sun Siyam Resorts, and Ms. Hafsath Aleem, President of CLEAN Maldives, the facility operates under the Plastic Free Rivers and Seas for South Asia (PLEASE) Project, funded by the World Bank and implemented by SACEP with UNOPS support. The initiative has already inspired interest from other resorts, promoting community-focused, sustainable tourism while advancing SDGs on responsible consumption, partnerships, and innovation.









13th Maldives Living Expo Brings Home Design and Inspiration to Hulhumale

The 13th edition of the Maldives Living Expo commenced at Central Park, Hulhumale', featuring more than 30 exhibitors showcasing a diverse range of products and services. The event was inaugurated by Dr. Ali Haidar Ahmed, Minister of Higher Education, Labour and Skills Development; Ahmed Shiyam, Minister of Fisheries and Ocean Resources; and Brigadier General (Retd) Ali Zuhair, Managing Director of Housing Development Corporation (HDC).

The opening ceremony began with welcome remarks from the event's main sponsor, VCL Group, delivered by Abhijeet Jakka, Head of Sales & Marketing. The formal proceedings concluded with a Vote of Thanks by the organizer, Highrise Private Limited. Speaking on behalf of Highrise, Mohamed Hassaan, Sales & Marketing Manager — Events, noted that reaching the 13th edition of the expo represented a significant milestone, achieved through the continued support of sponsors and partners.

Maldives Living Expo 2025 offered visitors an opportunity to explore innovative home designs, stylish furnishings, and banking and financing solutions, among other offerings. Beyond its role as an exhibition, the event served as a platform to connect industry professionals, exchange ideas, and inspire new approaches to modern living in the Maldives.

The occasion was proudly organized by Highrise Private Limited and sponsored by Blue Lagoon by VCL, with co-sponsors including Brain Coral, TATA Housing, and Maldives Islamic Bank, in collaboration with Allied Takaful. The expo remained open from 14th to 17th August 2025 at Central Park, Hulhumale'.











Step aboard the 36m Princess Haleema for an unforgettable Maldives diving adventure. Departing from a dedicated diving Dhoni for extra space and comfort, explore North Male, Ari, Vaavu, South Male, and the deep south's untouched atolls. Dive and snorkel with manta rays and whale sharks, then relax in 11 elegantly appointed cabins, soak up the sun on the sundeck, or unwind in the indoor salon. With 12 experienced crew and dive guides on hand, every moment promises a seamless and memorable Maldivian journey above and below the waves.



Manhattan Grand

To Redefine Hulhumalé's Hospitality Landscape



Hulhumalé is set to welcome a new chapter in luxury tourism with the upcoming Manhattan Grand, a five-star hotel development that will bring world -class hospitality to the fast-growing urban hub.

The project breathes new life into a long-dormant structure, originally planned as a city hotel almost two decades ago, now reimagined through foreign investment. The Housing Development Corporation (HDC) has partnered with World of Business Pvt Ltd, in collaboration with UAE-based Deep Seafood Company, to transform the building into a premier hospitality address in the Maldives.

Planned as a 158-room property, the Manhattan Grand will offer a full suite of luxury amenities, including a banquet hall, conference and multipurpose halls, a gym, spa, swimming pool, and four international dining outlets. With its operations closely linked to Velana International Airport, the hotel is expected to serve as a seamless transit and leisure destination, supported by partnerships with twelve airlines. Completion is targeted within twelve months.

Beyond tourism, the development will also contribute to Hulhumalé's role as a thriving city. Three and a half floors of the building will be dedicated to public facilities, including a media village, a medical college, a heritage college, and a youth centre, which are set to be completed within six months at an investment of USD 7 million.

For Hulhumalé, the arrival of the Manhattan Grand marks more than the launch of a luxury hotel—it signals the evolution of the island as an emerging tourism and lifestyle hub. Once left incomplete for 17 years, the site will soon stand as a landmark destination that blends hospitality, community, and urban development.









Maldives Blood Service Partners with

Al-Shali Marine for Blood Drive





The Maldives Blood Service, in partnership with Al-Shali Marine, conducted a community blood donation programme at the Blood Service Centre in Hulhuma-lé.

The initiative brought together Al-Shali Marine staff, volunteers, and members of the public, all joining hands to support the vital cause of strengthening the national blood supply. Organisers noted that collaborations of this kind between public institutions and private companies were instrumental in maintaining a steady and safe stock of blood for patients across the Maldives.

Donors who arrived at the Hulhumalé centre were welcomed by staff and volunteers who guided them through the process with care. The programme continued throughout the day, providing ample opportunity for the public to contribute to this life-saving effort.

The Maldives Blood Service reiterated the critical importance of regular donations, reminding the community that every pint of blood had the power to save multiple lives. Initiatives such as this underscored the role of community-driven programmes in meeting the growing needs of national healthcare.





WHAT IT IS

A marine autopilot is an advanced electronic system that automatically steers a boat or vessel without constant human input. It maintains a set heading or navigates a specific route using real-time data from instruments like compasses, GPS, gyroscopes, and rudder sensors.

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World Travel Awards 2025:

Lily Beach Takes the Lead in All-Inclusive Luxury



Lily Beach Resort & Spa Maldives has been recognised as Maldives' Leading All-Inclusive Resort 2025 at the World Travel Awards, reaffirming its standing as a pioneer of luxury hospitality in the country. The accolade highlights the resort's consistent delivery of excellence and the continued success of its signature Platinum Plan, which has set the benchmark for all-inclusive experiences in the Maldives.

Located in the heart of South Ari Atoll, Lily Beach offers direct access to the renowned South Ari Marine Protected Area, one of the world's most celebrated sites for whale shark encounters. Complementing this, the island's own vibrant 360-degree house reef provides guests with the rare privilege of exploring rich marine life just steps from their villas.

The Platinum Plan distinguishes Lily Beach by offering a complete and indulgent experience. Guests can enjoy international gourmet buffets with live cooking stations at Lily Maa, elegant Indian-Thai fusion cuisine over the water at Tamarind, interactive Japanese dining at Teppanyaki by AQVA, and exclusive fine dining with curated wine pairings at Les Turquoise d'Aqua. Adding to its culinary achievements, the resort's award-winning wine cellar, recognised by the Wine Spectator Award 2024, showcases an impressive collection of over 80 premium wines from across the globe.

Beyond dining, the resort provides unlimited cocktails, champagnes, spirits,

and specialty coffees at its lively bars. The Platinum Plan also includes three complimentary excursions, such as coral garden snorkelling, a sunset cruise, and a choice between big game fishing or a visit to a local island. Evenings are brought to life with live music, cultural performances, and DJ nights, ensuring entertainment for every taste.

Lily Beach further enhances the guest experience through wellness and recreation. Tamara Spa, perched elegantly over the lagoon, offers daily yoga sessions, holistic wellness programmes, and a fully equipped gym. Families are well catered for with the Turtle Kids' Club, where younger travellers can enjoy fun and educational activities. Adventurers, meanwhile, can take to the waters with both motorised and non-motorised sports, including paddleboarding and jet skiing.

With its luxurious beachfront and overwater villas, exceptional service, and one of the Maldives' most comprehensive all-inclusive offerings, Lily Beach continues to be a preferred destination for hassle-free luxury travel. Its prime location near whale shark hotspots, outstanding culinary experiences, and commitment to excellence set it apart year after year.

This latest honour at the World Travel Awards 2025 further cements Lily Beach Resort & Spa's reputation as a leader in Maldivian hospitality.







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