

60th EDITION | JANUARY 2026

BOATING INSIDER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER BY NBAM

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MALDIVES MARINE EXPO 2026

PG 05

BRIDE FAIR 2026

PG 09

MALDIVES MARINE EXPO 2026

PG 10

FOOD AND BEVERAGE SHOW

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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MATATO to Host Industry-wide AI Productivity Workshop for Maldives Tourism Sector

The Maldives Association of Travel Agents & Tour Operators (MATATO) will host an AI Productivity Workshop for the Maldives Tourism Industry on Sunday, 14 February 2026, from 08:00 hrs. This one-day pilot programme is designed to equip tourism professionals with practical skills to use Artificial Intelligence safely, responsibly, and productively in day-to-day operations, improving communication, decision-making, and operational efficiency while ensuring compliance and data safety.

The training will cover AI fundamentals, safe data handling, com-

pliance, and practical prompting techniques. Strategic partners, including NBAM, NHGAM, IHTO, and ISIC, will enjoy a special discounted participation fee. The workshop will be hosted at Mookai Hotel, with Ace Travels Maldives as the official travel partner and Resort Life Travel as a supporting partner.

This initiative brings together travel agents, tour operators, resorts, guesthouses, boating operators, and young professionals, reinforcing MATATO's and NBAM's commitment to strengthening industry skills and future readiness.

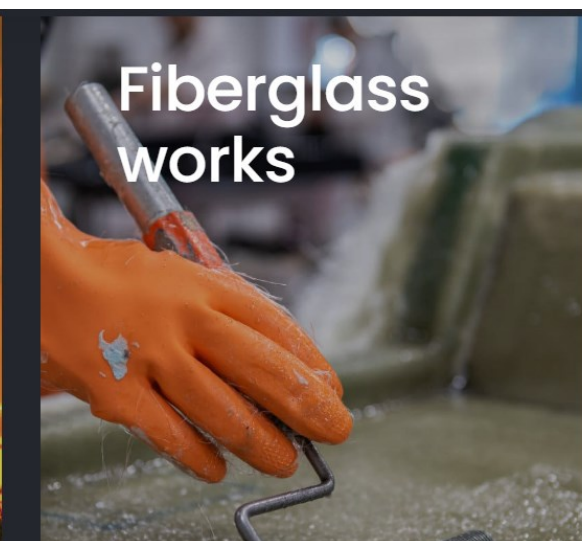
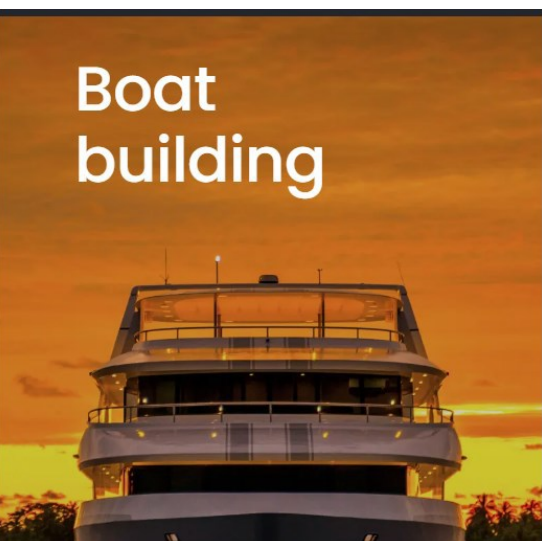
LIMITED SEATS

MATATO

Date & Time
14th February, 2026
8 AM-5 PM

AI PRODUCTIVITY
FOR THE MALDIVES TOURISM INDUSTRY

STRATEGIC PARTNERS SUPPORTED BY OFFICIAL TRAVEL PARTNER HOST PARTNER



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Bride Fair 2026: A Great Return to Barceló Nasandhura Malé

Bride Maldives has officially announced the return of its flagship event, the Bride Fair, scheduled for 4–5 June 2026, marking a homecoming to the iconic Barceló Nasandhura Malé. The announcement was formalized during a signing ceremony on 14 January between Mr Enrique Rene, Deputy General Manager of Barceló Nasandhura Malé, and Mr Shafy, CEO of Bride Maldives, establishing the newly redeveloped hotel as the official host of the premier wedding showcase.

First launched in 2010, the Bride Fair quickly became the definitive platform for Maldivian fashion designers, makeup artists, and wedding service providers. After a brief hiatus and the hotel's full redevelopment, the fair's return signals a restoration of Malé's cultural and social fabric, providing a much-needed venue for large-scale events amid the city's ongoing venue shortages.

The 2026 fair, managed by Highrise in collaboration with Bride Maldives, will feature a Designer's Stage highlighting the evolution of Maldivian bridal fashion, an Industry Hub for photographers, florists, and planners, and a one-stop space for couples to plan their weddings in the heart of the capital. According to Shafy, CEO of Bride Maldives, "Hosting this event at Nasandhura is not just about the venue; it's about the heritage. Returning to this location allows us to provide a world-class experience that Malé has been missing."



Maldives Gears Up for Muslim Travel Show 2026: A Spotlight on Halal Tourism

The Maldives will proudly showcase itself at the Muslim Travel Show 2026 in London on 7–8 February at ExCeL London, one of the world’s largest events for halal and Muslim-friendly tourism.

Led by the International Halal Tourism Organization (IHTO), the Maldives is positioning itself as a top destination for Muslim travellers, highlighting its pristine resorts, guesthouses, liveaboards, and marine experiences. Visitors will learn about halal-friendly services, including private prayer facilities, halal-certified dining, and activities that respect Islamic principles, demonstrating that the Maldives offers luxury, tranquillity, and cultural respect for Muslim travellers.

The initiative is supported by key Maldivian tourism organizations, including MPRC / Visit Maldives, MATATO, MBA, and NHGAM, representing the full spectrum of the nation’s tourism industry.

The Muslim Travel Show 2026 is expected to host 20,000 visitors and 200 exhibitors from around the world, offering an opportunity to build partnerships, strengthen trade connections, and increase awareness of the Maldives’ halal tourism offerings.

With global Muslim travel projected to reach 245 million travellers by 2030, the Maldives aims to capture this growing market by promoting faith-friendly tourism experiences and building long-term partnerships with international travel industry leaders.

IHTO also invites eligible Maldivian businesses to join the Maldives National Stand, offering exposure to a global audience and reinforcing the country’s commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and halal-conscious tourism.

Maldives official Stand at

MUSLIM TRAVEL SHOW
7TH - 8TH FEB 2026
EXCEL LONDON

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Maldives launches marine hatchery training

The Maldives has launched a new cohort of its Marine Hatchery Skills Development Program, part of a broader strategy to diversify the national economy, reduce dependence on tourism, and enhance food security in one of the world's most climate-vulnerable island nations.

Inaugurated this month at Maniyafushi, Kaafu Atoll, the program is led by the Maldives Marine Research Institute with support from the Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources and the World Bank-funded Transform Project.

Officials highlight that the initiative aims to build local expertise in mariculture, or the farming of marine species, at a time when small island nations face increasing pressure to secure sustainable livelihoods amid climate change, fluctuating tourism revenues, and global supply chain challenges.

Over the past two years, four batches of the training program have been completed, educating 53 participants, predominantly from the outer atolls. The current batch represents a continued effort to expand domestic aquaculture capacity, generate alternative income streams,

and create employment opportunities outside the tourism sector, which remains the country's primary source of foreign earnings.

The program's curriculum combines theoretical knowledge with hands-on experience, covering hatchery operations, aquaculture systems, and practical breeding of commercially valuable species such as groupers, sea cucumbers, Maldives anemone fish, and nacre-producing shellfish. These species are considered promising for export markets while also promoting reef conservation by alleviating pressure on wild populations.

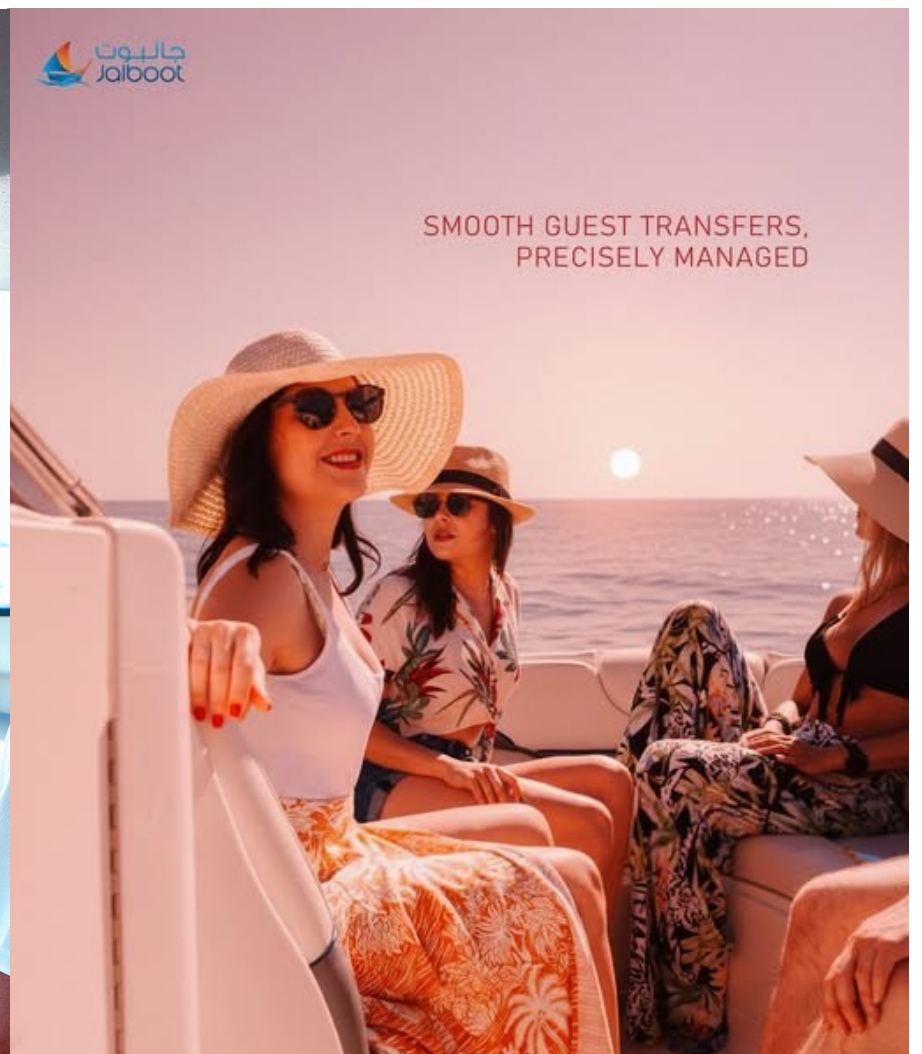
Experts emphasize that mariculture is becoming a strategic sector for low-lying island nations like the Maldives, where rising sea levels, warming oceans, and coral degradation are threatening traditional fisheries and coastal livelihoods.

International financial institutions have encouraged investment in sustainable, ocean-based industries as part of climate adaptation and economic resilience strategies. By prioritizing skills development and local innovation, Maldivian authorities aim to position the country not only as a global tourism destination but also as a responsible contributor to the blue economy.



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Maldives Marine Expo 2026 Unveils Sponsors & Partners

The Maldives Marine Expo, the official exhibition of the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) and the country's longest-running marine show, is back! Taking place from 5th to 8th February 2026, this flagship event promises the biggest gathering of the Maldivian marine industry yet.

Visitors will explore boat building, marine machinery, fishing and diving equipment, and watersports gear, while discovering the latest innovations and networking with industry leaders. The 2026 edition will feature new product launches, engaging presentations, and vibrant entertainment, making it a must-attend event for marine enthusiasts.

Highlights

Let's Dive Campaign – Daily morning dive trips for new, experienced, and technical divers. Sign up in advance to join this immersive experience.

Captains Night – On 6th February, certified captains from across the Maldives will enjoy a special networking evening with exhibitors and explore the latest marine products.

Sponsors & Partners Ceremony – Kicking off the year, the 2026 sponsors and partners were announced in a lively underwater ceremony at Villimalé, celebrating the key supporters of the expo.

Sponsors & Partners

Main Sponsor: Gulf Craft Maldives

Co-Sponsors: LEO Stores & Supply, MTCC

Official Watersports Partner: OCEAN Group

Official Adventure Partner: Sea Gear Maldives

Official Product: Mercury Outboard Engines by Hassan Marine

Official Boat Yard: Marine Master

Official Boat Builder: Al Shaali Marine Maldives

Official Supplier: Palm Tree Maldives



The 9th Edition of Food & Beverage Show

The 9th edition of the Food & Beverage (F&B) Show was successfully held from 21 to 24 January 2026 at Central Park, Hulhumalé, organized by Highrise Pvt Ltd. Presented by Nescafé, the event featured over 50 exhibitors showcasing innovative beverages and a wide variety of delectable foods catering to diverse tastes. Sosun Store and Miyami Traders collaborated as Co-Sponsors, with the Chefs Guild of Maldives as a supporting partner and Maldivian Gas as the official Gas Partner.

The Show was inaugurated with a ribbon-cutting ceremony attended by notable guests, including Honorable Minister Ahmed Shiyam (Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources), Dishan Wijayawardena (Assistant Director – Exports and Maldives, Nestlé Lanka Limited), Maduranga Perera (Assistant Director, Nestlé Professional), the British High Commissioner to Maldives, Dr. Abdulla Khaleel, Sri Lankan High Commissioner His Excellency Mohamed Rizvi Hassen, and Indian High Com-

missioner His Excellency G. Balasubramaniam.

Highrise Pvt Ltd, with over 15 years of industry experience, successfully delivered an engaging platform for culinary innovation and networking. The F&B Show 2026 provided chefs, restaurant owners, and food enthusiasts the opportunity to explore the latest trends, discover new products, and interact with industry pioneers shaping the future of the culinary world.



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Government Amends Regulations to Ban Safaris Near Inhabited Island



In January 2026, the one-kilometre anchoring rule remained a central topic in the Maldivian boating and marine tourism industry. Introduced through recent government amendments, the rule requires safari vessels and commercial boats to anchor at least one kilometre from inhabited islands. Its primary aim is to protect local communities, safeguard coastal environments, and prevent unauthorised activities, such as the sale of alcohol near residential areas.

For safari operators, the rule has created operational challenges. Anchoring farther from islands complicates supply and passenger transfers, increases travel times for auxiliary boats, and raises operational costs. Safety and emergency response concerns have also been highlighted, as greater offshore distances can slow assistance during adverse conditions.

The government emphasizes compliance, maritime safety, and community welfare, framing the rule as essential for enforcing

legal standards and supporting coexistence between tourism operators and local residents.

In response, the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) has engaged with authorities to highlight practical difficulties and advocate for clearer guidance and coordinated enforcement. NBAM promotes a balanced approach that maintains safety and compliance while allowing operators to function efficiently, including clarifying high- versus low-risk activities and permitted anchoring zones.

Ongoing dialogues reflect a shared interest between authorities and industry in protecting communities, upholding the law, and supporting a sustainable marine tourism sector, ensuring that both regulatory and operational needs are addressed.



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- 3 INVITATION TO NBAM EVENTS AND GATHERINGS
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- 5 SPECIAL TERMS AND PRICES ON FUEL SUPPLIERS

- 6 FREE WEBSITE LISTING FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS AND MARINE EQUIPMENT SELLERS
- 7 SPECIAL MEMBER PACKAGES ON INSURANCE PREMIUMS FROM ALLIED INSURANCE COMPANY (EXCLUSIVE FOR NBAM)
- 8 SPECIAL ASSISTANCE ON REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES
- 9 SAFETY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES FOR CREW MEMBERS
- 10 SPECIAL RATES FOR MEMBERS TO PARTICIPATE IN MALDIVES MARINE EXPO

- 11 MEMBER TO MEMBER NETWORKING
- 12 PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM DISCOUNTS
- 13 FREE LISTINGS FOR MEMBER BOATS ON LIVEBOARDS OF MALDIVES MAGAZINE
- 14 LOGO ON BROCHURES AND ADDRESS CARDS / PROMOTIONS
- 15 SPECIAL DISCOUNTS FROM BOATING PRIVILEGE PARTNER BUSINESSES

- 16 EXCLUSIVE BENEFITS IN NOMINATING TO MALDIVES NATIONAL BOATING AWARDS
- 17 OPPORTUNITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH GOVERNMENT AND AUTHORITIES AS A TEAM AND COMMENT ON REGULATIONS

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

NBAM Strengthens Industry Engagement Through Strategic Meetings with Key Stakeholders – January 2026



Throughout January 2026, the National Boating Association of Maldives (NBAM) conducted a series of high-level engagements with government authorities, diplomatic missions, financial institutions, and industry bodies to address sector challenges, enhance maritime safety, and explore collaborative opportunities for the marine tourism industry. These meetings underscored NBAM’s commitment to compliance, international cooperation, and sustainable growth.

The month began on 6 January with a courtesy meeting with His Excellency Vice Admiral (Retired) Faisal Rasul Lodhi, High Commissioner of Pakistan to the Maldives. Discus-

sions focused on boating and maritime safety, including jet ski operations and rescue preparedness. NBAM shared standard safety practices and explored joint awareness, training, and capacity-building initiatives. The High Commissioner expressed support for training programs, coordinated via the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the High Commission. NBAM also invited the High Commissioner to the Maldives Marine Expo 2026.

On 11 January, NBAM met with the Commissioner General of Customs and senior officials to discuss operational challenges for safari vessel operators, particularly around alcohol permits, guest verification, and customs procedures. Customs agreed to implement flexible processes for low-risk vessels while emphasizing enforcement against illegal activities. Both parties committed to clearer classifications of high- versus low-risk operations and strengthened communication to support compliance and transparency.

The following day, NBAM engaged with the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI) on liquor transport to safari vessels and compliance with the one-kilometre anchoring rule. Discussions focused on practical guidelines, inter-agency coordination, and transparent communication with operators.

MATI reaffirmed collaboration with Customs and other authorities to develop workable solutions.

On 13 January, NBAM met the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to explore ways to strengthen the marine industry and promote bilateral cooperation. This led to a virtual session with the Sri Lankan Chamber of Marine Commerce on 14 January, where both sides discussed trade, supplier linkages, and knowledge-sharing opportunities. The upcoming Sri Lankan Boat Show (31 January – 2 February) was highlighted as a key engagement opportunity, with both parties committing to continued collaboration for mutual growth.



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NBAM Strengthens Industry Engagement Through Strategic Meetings with Key Stakeholders – January 2026

Continuing its diplomatic outreach, NBAM met with His Excellency Mr. David Jessup, Australian High Commissioner to the Maldives, on 15 January 2026 to discuss strategies for supporting and growing the marine tourism industry. Discussions focused on attracting marine tourists, including surfers, and promoting marine safety practices such as life jacket usage and adherence to international boating standards. NBAM emphasized its role in supporting industry stakeholders and facilitating connections within the sector. The President extended an invitation to the High Commissioner to attend the Maldives Marine Expo (5–7 February) to further explore collaborative opportunities. Both parties agreed on the importance of ongoing dialogue to enhance growth, safety, and the international reputation of Maldivian marine tourism.

On the same day, NBAM representatives met with officials from the Bank of Ceylon (Maldives Branch) to examine financial facilitation and banking support for boating industry members. BOC noted that, following the country’s recent credit rating downgrade, new financing or credit facilities are currently limited to existing clients with established banking relationships. The meeting provided valuable insights into the prevailing banking environment, compliance requirements, and broader economic challenges affecting the sector. Both parties agreed to continue discussions and review opportunities as economic conditions or banking policies evolve.

Later in the month, NBAM held a pre-meeting with Parliament member Mr. Falah at

Majilis Idhaaraa on 21 January 2026 to discuss pressing issues in the boating sector ahead of a scheduled meeting with the President. Key topics included harbour safety, operational challenges, workforce development, regulatory enforcement, and financial sustainability. Participants highlighted the need for safe harbours, improved infrastructure, formal training for local operators, and practical financial mechanisms to support licensed operators. MP Falah suggested including additional boat owners to ensure broader representation and confirmed that the President is aware of the sector’s challenges. The meeting concluded with a shared commitment to collaborative solutions for sustainable growth, enhanced safety, and expanded opportunities for Maldivians in the marine industry.



Insights from 02_2025-2027

BOARD MEETING

The second Executive Board meeting was convened on 12th January at the Voyages Meeting Room, bringing together Board members to deliberate on a range of strategic matters critical to NBAM's ongoing engagement with the maritime and tourism sectors. The meeting commenced with a comprehensive review of the recent interaction with representatives of the Maldives Association of Tourism Industry (MATI), during which several pressing industry concerns were raised. The Board engaged in an in-depth discussion regarding these issues, carefully examining their potential implications for the sector and for NBAM members. In particular, the meeting addressed proposals to escalate specific matters to higher authorities, ensuring that the concerns of the industry receive appropriate attention and consideration at the national level.

Following this, the Board turned its focus to matters of organizational representation and member engagement. The discussions explored the possibility of updating NBAM's participation in broader industry forums, aiming to strengthen the association's influence and visibility. The Board also deliberated on initiatives to enhance member services, including the adoption of digital tools and platforms to streamline operations, improve communication, and provide more value to NBAM members.

Preparations for upcoming events featured prominently in the agenda, with special emphasis on NBAM's planned participation in the Maldives Marine Expo. The Board explored strategies to maximize the association's presence at the event and to leverage opportunities for networking, collaboration, and sectoral promotion. Additionally, the members considered reaching out to former Board members to gain their insights, guidance, and historical perspective, recognizing the value of their experience in informing current decision-making.

Throughout the meeting, the Board acknowledged the ongoing challenges facing the industry and emphasized the importance of timely, proactive, and strategic action to address these issues effectively. Members underscored the need for coordinated efforts, informed decision-making, and continuous engagement with stakeholders to ensure that NBAM remains at the forefront of addressing industry concerns and advancing the interests of its members. The meeting concluded with a consensus on prioritizing key initiatives, enhancing organizational capabilities, and maintaining an active role in shaping the future of the maritime and tourism sectors.



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