



Maldives welcomes the 100,000th tourist since the border reopening

Joint Press Statement by Ministry of Tourism, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Maldives Immigration and Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL)

The year 2019 was a remarkable one in the history of Maldives' tourism, with a groundbreaking record of 1.7 million tourist arrivals to the country. 2020 started off with more diversified and aggressive marketing strategies to break this record and reach a target of 2 million tourist arrivals by the end of the year.

However, due to the ongoing global pandemic, Maldives had to close its borders on 27th March 2020. After almost four months of border closure, the tourism industry reopened on 15th July, with enhanced precautionary measures against COVID-19. A safe tourism guideline was issued by the Ministry of Tourism. Resorts and liveaboards resumed operations on this date, whereas guesthouses resumed operations on 15th October. As of 14th December, guesthouses and hotels in the greater Male' region are also scheduled to reopen.

Since the reopening, there has been a gradual increase in tourist arrivals with the establishment of travel bubbles between Maldives and other countries, as well as a greater connectivity in terms of flight operations. Over 18 airlines are currently traveling to and from Maldives, from all around the globe.

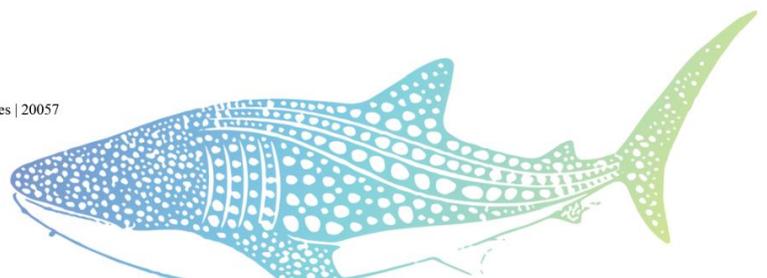
On 6th December, Maldives broke the record of daily arrivals since the reopening which was a total of 3,006 tourists, whereas the air traffic movement on this date was 352.

The Minister of Tourism Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom stated, "Surpassing the milestone of 100,000 tourists in advance of the projections is really encouraging. This achievement is the outcome of a unified #MaldivesApproach to a global challenge. This is the result of HEP Solih's courageous decision to open the Maldives borders with a whole of government, whole of travel and tourism industry and whole of community approach to ensure this vital industry is set in motion with a strong focus on safety with the minimum possible inconvenience to tourists. Thanks to travel and tourism industry partners, employees, and associations; health professionals, related government authorities and councils; the diplomatic and international community and lovely people of the Maldives; the team members of Immigration, Airports Company, Tourist Police, Port Health, Customs, MMPRC and Ministry of Tourism. We thank the tourists for visiting us and sharing their #MaldivesExperience to the world. You all made this possible."

During a grand event held today at Velana International Airport, the 100,000th tourist was identified by the Ministry of Tourism, together with Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Maldives Immigration and Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL). The 100,000th tourist, Ms. Jasmin Burki, arrived from Switzerland via Emirates.

On arrival, she was escorted outside by officials of MMPRC and Maldives Immigration, and greeted by the Deputy Minister of Ministry of Tourism, Managing Director of MMPRC, Controller General of Immigration and CEO and Managing Director of MACL. The Controller General of Immigration, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Hussain, also handed over a special gift to her: Tanu.

He stated, "I am delighted to welcome the 100,000th tourist today. It was unimaginable, but I saw the thirst of the related agencies and industry stakeholders to achieve this milestone in such a short period of time. This gives us the assurance that, even under dire circumstances, we can achieve remarkable things by working together. With wishful thinking, dedication and significant innovation on the policy front, our tourism industry is coming back from the depths of collapse by a swift rebound in growth. I would also like to ensure that Maldives Immigration will embrace new technologies and utilize all available resources to fast-track the passage for tourists. The launching of the world's first nation-wide loyalty program, Maldives Border Miles is one such initiative and we aim to achieve new heights in 2021, together with our joint stakeholders."





Upon the receipt of the special gift pack, Jasmin then took a photo by the Official Jetty with the special "Instagram Frame" which highlights that Maldives is the World's Leading Destination of 2020. This was followed by the presentation of Holiday Voucher by the Managing Director of MMPRC and a special gift by the CEO & MD of MACL, as well as the Deputy Minister of Tourism.

The Managing Director of MMPRC Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed congratulated her and gave her a warm welcome. "I am beyond thrilled to welcome the 100,000th visitor to the sunny side of life, today. This is indeed, the success of joint efforts and collaborations with everyone working in the tourism industry. Our teamwork ensured that we reached this stage during such challenging times. I would like to assure everyone that Maldives is one of the safest countries to visit right now and that we will work strategically in order for it to remain on top of the preferred tourist destinations."

The CEO & Managing Director of MACL, Mr. Gordon Andrew Stewart said, "This is truly an amazing day as we receive the 100,000th tourist to the Maldives. As a result of the Covid-19 Pandemic, for around 4 months we were without any commercial airlines to Velana International Airport. However, despite those difficult times, I am really impressed with how quickly the Maldives took fast and decisive action to combat the Covid-19 pandemic situation and maintain our sunny side of life, on the world stage. Velana International Airport was awarded the ACI Health Accreditation Certificate, the 2nd Airport from Asia Pacific to achieve this. The Maldives was awarded the Safe Travel Stamp from UNWTO and the title of World's Leading Destination by the World Travel Awards. Recognition of its premier destination status on the world stage. All this hard work has been rewarded with ever increasing numbers of passengers flying in every month since our borders reopened on the 15th July 2020. The future now looks brighter for the Maldives and I sincerely thank all stakeholders and contributors who have made Maldives such a truly great destination to holiday in."

During such a crucial time, such achievements contribute to the success of the Maldives tourism industry, and the rising tourist arrival numbers are an indication that Maldives is one of the safest destinations to travel to right now. It is anticipated that the 500,000th tourist of 2020 will arrive by late December, and that the country will reach peak arrival rates during the year of 2021.

For further information, please contact

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