

The Minister of Tourism inaugurates Maldives Border Miles

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

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The year 2019 was a remarkable one in the history of Maldives' tourism, with a ground-breaking record of 1.7 million tourist arrivals to the country. 2020 started off with more diversified and aggressive marketing activities with a target of reaching 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. As the tourism industry accounts for the majority of foreign exchange earnings, it was majorly hit due to the stringent measures taken to curb the spread of COVID-19.

After almost four months since the suspension of on-arrival tourist visas, the tourism industry reopened on 15th July 2020, with enhanced precautionary measures against COVID-19. A safe tourism guideline was issued by the Ministry of Tourism, along with a certification program to ensure the safety and hygiene standards of all tourism facilities. Resorts and liveboards on uninhabited islands have resumed operations whereas guest houses on inhabited islands will resume operations on 10th October 2020.

In light of these events, during a special virtual ceremony held to mark World Tourism Day 2020, the Minister of Tourism Honorable Abdulla Mausoom has inaugurated the "Maldives Border Miles" program, aimed to boost tourism in Maldives. This is the first of its kind loyalty program developed in the entire world.

The Minister of Tourism Honorable Dr. Abdulla Mausoom stated, "The Maldives Border Miles" program which was launched today is a program which will increase the popularity of Maldives as a tourist destination and provide a path for more marketing and advertising opportunities. In addition, I think that this will further enhance the popularity gained in the key markets of Maldives tourism."

Maldives Border Miles is a tourism promotion program initiated by Maldives Immigration, and developed with joint stakeholders, who also joined the ceremony; Ministry of Tourism, Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) and Maldives Airports Company Limited (MACL). This program will be officially implemented on 1st December 2020 and is believed to take the tourism sector of Maldives to peak in the foreseeable future.

This program is a three-tiered loyalty program for tourists. Tourists who enroll in this program will earn points based on the number of visits and duration of stay. Additional points will be awarded for visits to celebrate special occasions. There are three categories in this program; Aida (bronze tier), Antara (silver tier) and Abaarana (gold

tier). Each tier will be defined by a set variety of rewards, services or benefits, which increase in value as members progress.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Controller General of Immigration, Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Hussain, mentioned how the Maldives is ready to welcome tourists and provide them with an experience like never before. “The hotel reception is not where the tourists begin their holiday. Their awaited journey begins from the welcoming smile of the immigration officer at the border, which indeed narrates the initial chapter of a memorable vacation. And with the introduction of Maldives Border Miles, we are prepared to welcome them with privileges and facilitate an experience like never before.”

Following the launch of the program, The Managing Director of Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC), Mr. Thoyyib Mohamed, highlighted the importance of marketing this program to tourists all over the world. “Our sincere hope is that this program aids in increasing the destination presence and produces a beneficial impact on the tourism industry, as well as increase the tourist arrival rate in the future. We look forward to its successful implementation in the approaching days.”

The Chief Executive Officer and Managing Director of Maldives Airports Company Limited, Mr. Gordon Andrew Stewart also touched upon the importance of the program and safe tourism. “Maldives Border Miles program is an innovative way to attract global travelers to the Maldives. To support this, we are focused on our passengers and staff’s health. We have taken a number of steps to assure that Velana International Airport is a safe airport, for all our travelers. We recently attained the Airport Industry Association; ACI International Health Accreditation certification. This certificate recognizes the steps we have implemented to ensure we have all the required health and safety measures in our airport to assure passengers of their safety, while travelling through the airport.”

With the introduction of the Maldives Border Miles program, it is expected that tourism will boost considerably as it is an added advantage in promoting Maldives. Furthermore, it is also a golden opportunity for returning visitors to rediscover the best of Maldives and get the most out of their visit to the sunny side of life.

For the most recent updates of the program, visit imuga.immigration.gov.mv/mbm