

- ANANTARA EXPERTS -

# SKY GURU

On a private island in the Indian Ocean, Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas unveils an astronomer's paradise. Situated in the Baa Atoll, a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve, Anantara Kihavah stands as one of the best places on earth to enjoy stargazing. With minimal light pollution and its proximity to the equator, the region offers breathtaking views of both the southern and northern skies. At SKY, the finest overwater stargazing observatory paired with a luxurious cosmic-themed bar, guests can indulge in champagne while gazing at the stars alongside a resident storytelling SKY Guru. Equipped with the most powerful telescope in the region, this experience offers a captivating window into the universe.

Resident SKY Gurus, Zunnoon Ahmed, known as Zunnu, and Ali Arushal, who goes by the name of Shalli, harness their local knowledge of the Maldivian sky to reveal the intriguing stories behind the countless stars that make up the distant constellations. Both Zunnu and Shalli, natives of Baa Atoll, are not only captivating storytellers, but they also each have their own story to tell.



**ANANTARA**  
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VILLAS

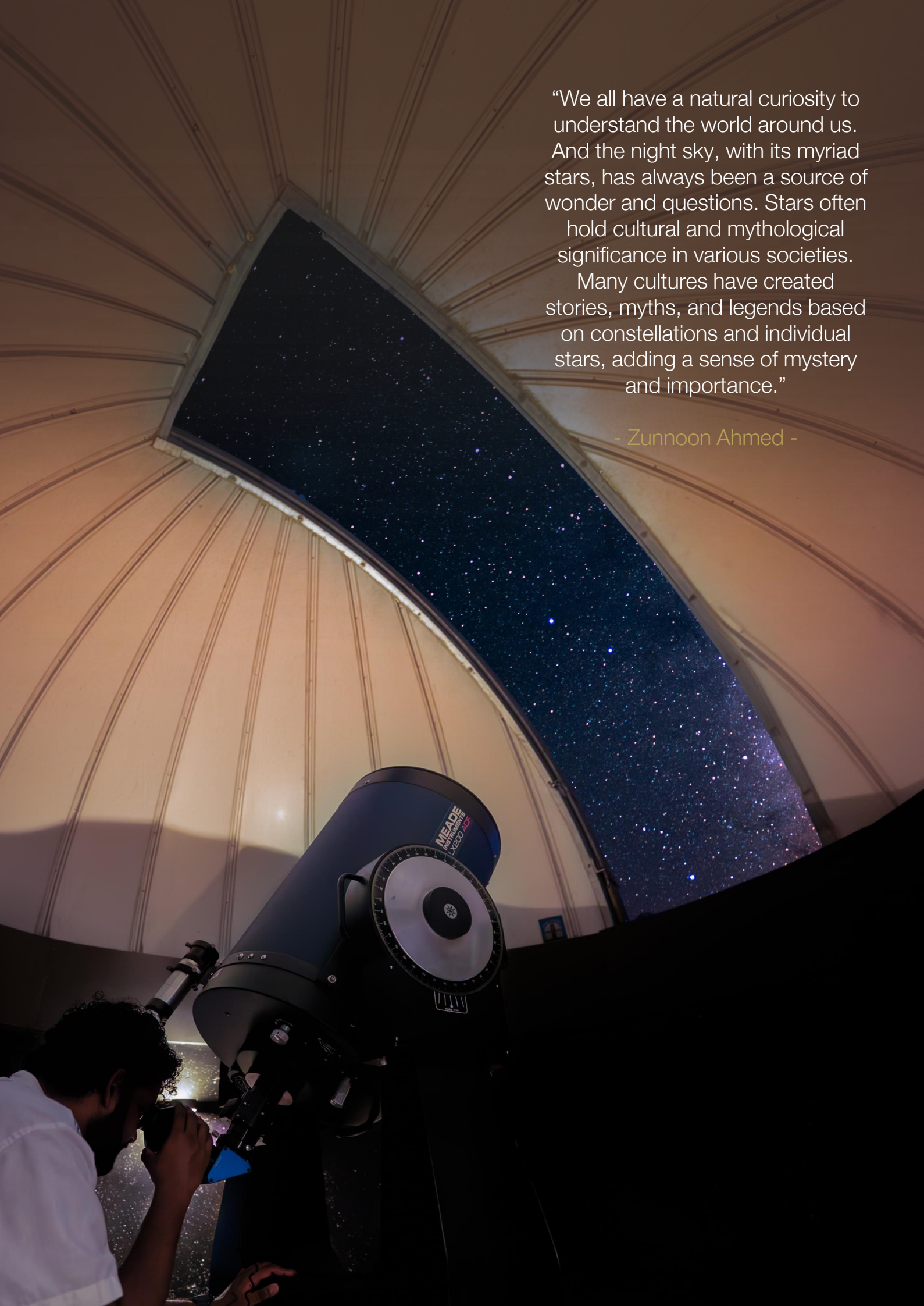
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# ZUNNOON AHMED

Zunnoon Ahmed, also known as Zunnu, grew up on the small island of Kudarikilu in Baa Atoll, where his fascination with the night sky began. At 16, he delved into astrophotography, igniting his passion for astronomy. Despite his career in IT, serving as Assistant IT Manager by day and a storytelling SKY Guru by night, Zunnu's love for stargazing remained strong. He collaborates with online telescope operators, engages in astrophotography, and constantly seeks to expand his knowledge through online forums. Joining Anantara Kihavah in 2017, Zunnu volunteered to study stargazing under the resort's first SKY Guru, Ali Shameem.

Over five years, he underwent extensive training, finding the journey of understanding the cosmos both rewarding and enlightening. Recalling his first stargazing session, Zunnu cherishes the positive reactions from guests, making sharing his passion a fulfilling experience. He believes the night sky, with its myriad stars, sparks curiosity and holds cultural significance. Zunnu enjoys sharing various celestial events with guests at Anantara Kihavah, such as solar and lunar eclipses, enchanting planetary conjunctions and meteor showers. Zunnu's personal favourite star is Aldebaran.



A photograph taken from inside an observatory dome. In the foreground, a person with dark hair and a beard, wearing a white shirt, is looking through a large blue Meade telescope. The telescope is mounted on a black base and has a circular scale on its side. The dome's interior is made of light-colored, curved panels. Through the open top of the dome, a dark night sky filled with numerous stars is visible. The lighting is dim, with the primary light source being the stars and some ambient light from the dome's interior.

“We all have a natural curiosity to understand the world around us. And the night sky, with its myriad stars, has always been a source of wonder and questions. Stars often hold cultural and mythological significance in various societies. Many cultures have created stories, myths, and legends based on constellations and individual stars, adding a sense of mystery and importance.”

- Zunnoon Ahmed -

- SKY GURU -

# ALI ARUSHAL

Shalli, a native of Baa Atoll, was born and raised on the island of Kendhoo. While his childhood there was happy and enjoyable, his interest in the stars began early on. However, it wasn't until he joined Anantara Kihavah that he fully immersed himself in the field of astronomy. Joining Anantara Kihavah's transport department in 2021, Shalli is part of the resort's launch crew, responsible for ensuring smooth transport operations. Despite his primary responsibilities, his fascination with the Maldivian night sky led him to volunteer as the resort's next SKY Guru. Over one and a half years of training under the resort's first SKY Guru, Shalli underwent intensive learning, including theory tests, reading assignments, and stargazing demonstrations.

He eagerly supplements his training by seeking additional information online. Shalli describes his first stargazing session with guests as stunning, quickly embracing his role as a SKY Guru.

He enjoys sharing his passion and revealing unknown knowledge about the stars. While Antares star holds a special place in his heart, Shalli finds joy in showing guests distant constellations or witnessing celestial events such as lunar eclipses, solar eclipses, or meteor showers with them.



“Stargazing isn't just about observing stars;  
it's about connecting with the cosmos.  
Beneath our Maldivian skies, every twinkle  
tells a story, and every moment spent gazing  
upward is a journey into the endless  
wonders of the universe. To the naked eye, it  
may seem blurry, but through our telescope,  
it's stunning: thousands of stars sparkle like  
diamonds, each one over 17,000 light years  
away.”

- Ali Arushal -



Our SKY Gurus lead guests on a cosmic journey across both hemisphere's stars and planets, clarifying what can be seen in the sky with the naked eye and using a green laser, they point out different constellations and explains light years and different types of galaxies. Guests are then able to view the sky from the observatory telescope which has a viewing capacity of 30 million light years away.

The locale gives guests an opportunity to see lunar eclipses, stars and planets invisible from Europe or America. Sometimes, depending on climate and time of the year, you can even catch a glimpse of Saturn with its pale-yellow rings, belts of Jupiter that vary in width, colour and intensity from year to year and the several hundred thousand of stars that make up Messier 13.

SKY is the finest over water observatory in the Maldives built with a 3.8 metre revolving Ash-dome and equipped with a research-grade Meade 16" LX200 telescope with a magnification of 400x mounted on a super-giant field tripod.

