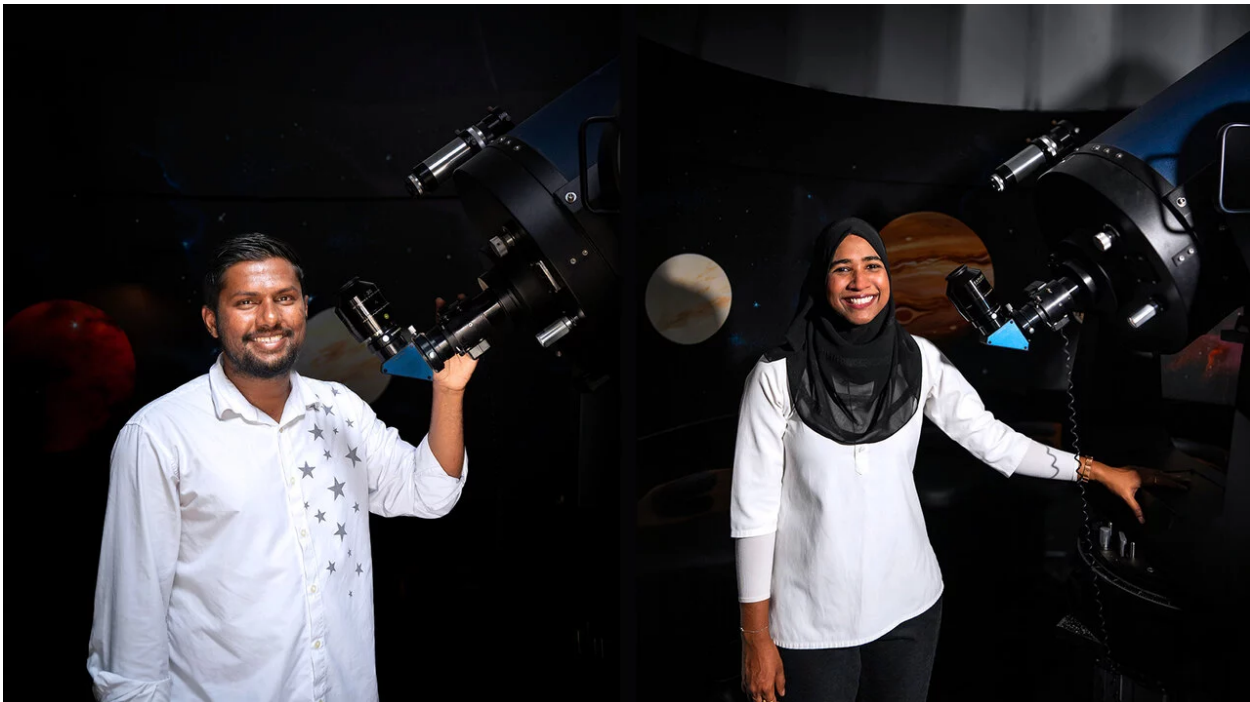


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Anantara Marks International Astronomy Day by Spotlighting the Guardians of the Maldivian Night

This next chapter of the brand's 'People Who Inspire' 25th anniversary series explores the world suspended between the sky and the ocean.



▲ Shalli (left) and Saji (right), SKY Edhurus of Anantara Kihivah Maldives Villas

In observance of International Astronomy Day on 19 September, Anantara Hotels & Resorts celebrates the preservation of our planet's dark skies by spotlighting the resident SKY Edhurus at Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas. As astronomers and storytellers, their mission to bring the universe within reach of guests aligns seamlessly with Anantara's role as a custodian of tomorrow's travel and its commitment to protecting the natural wonders that make exploration meaningful.

Ali Arushal, known as Shalli, and Sajidha, or Saji, serve as the resident SKY Edhurus at Anantara Kihavah Maldives Villas, pointing out Saturn's icy rings and globular clusters to awe-struck guests. Behind them, a cylindrical enclosure, not unlike a sea anemone, houses the most powerful telescope in the Maldives.

Living and working within a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve means they are blessed not only with underwater marvels but with skies unmarked by light pollution. Travellers who come for reef sharks, manta rays and coral fish often find themselves surprised to encounter a state-of-the-art observatory on a private island.

The placement is not accidental. Because the Maldives lies close to the equator, Anantara Kihavah offers a rare vantage point. Planets and constellations hidden from Europe or America rise clearly here, untroubled by horizon or season. With nature on their side, Shalli and Saji encourage guests to look up at the northern and southern skies with the same curiosity they bring to the sea.

In fact, Shalli's own path to the stars began on the water. A son of the atoll, he first worked with the transport and launch crew, ferrying guests across the lagoon. Astronomy arrived unexpectedly, a curiosity that deepened into devotion. He remembers the first object he saw through the telescope, Omega Centauri, a dense cluster of ancient stars. "It sparked something profound," he says, as though the memory still glows.

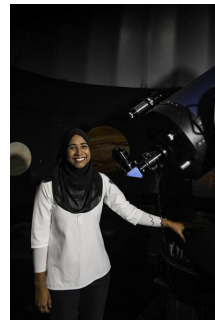
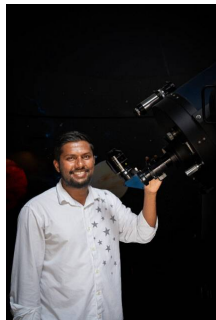
Saji, the resort's first female SKY Edhuru, also discovered the sky through feeling. A meteor shower over the lagoon caught her unawares, a brief rain of fire that spoke directly to her soul. During her stargazing sessions, she draws on the part of herself that was ignited that night, steadying guests when they feel overwhelmed by the scale and reminding them that awe and calm can sit side by side.

In Dhivehi, an *edhuru* is a teacher, a bearer of knowledge. But when the subject is the cosmos, 13.8 billion years old and infinite, translating those numbers into something more grounded takes more than book smarts. Skilful storytellers, Kihavah's SKY Edhurus take the vastness above and draw it close, turning distant light into something that can be held for a moment in the mind. With

time loosened, guests feel free of the anxieties that cling to daylight, letting the night arrange itself around them.

Just as the telescope turns a blur into a field of diamonds, every night Shalli and Saji step into their observatory suspended between two worlds to bring into focus the universe that surrounds them — above, around and beneath their feet, a vast, glorious whole that is our shared responsibility.

Learn more about Anantara's 25th anniversary celebrations on anantara.com.



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A luxury hospitality brand for modern travellers, Anantara Hotels & Resorts connects guests to genuine places, people and stories in some of the world's most extraordinary destinations. Each Anantara embraces the surroundings and culture of its destination, creating unforgettable memories for every guest since 2001. From city to sea and desert to jungle, Anantara delivers heartfelt, Thai-inspired hospitality at its over 50 hotels and resorts across Asia, Europe, Africa, the Middle East and the Indian Ocean.

Anantara Hotels & Resorts is a Minor Hotels brand and recognises its guests through one unified loyalty programme, Minor DISCOVERY, part of GHA DISCOVERY.

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