

# Newsletter

*Maldivian Democratic Party*

1 - 15 June 2004; Issue 13

## People's Special Majlis Elections

# Resounding Performance by MDP

With the die heavily cast against the party and, contrary to all government expectations, propaganda and rhetoric, many prominent members of MDP won the elections for the Special Majlis. This Majlis is being elected for the purpose of introducing constitutional amendments. Many party sympathisers are among the members declared by the Commissioner of Elections as winners.

In blatant contravention of the constitution, The Minister of Home Affairs on February 2004 had publicly announced all party activities as illegal. The National Security Services (NSS) continues their campaign of harassing party members and their families. The

best party hopefuls for elections remain uncertain of their future, due to unending NSS investigations focussed on them. Notwithstanding the fact that the party was unable to contest the elections as a political entity, in an exceptionally brilliant performance in the very first election that it faced, party members contesting as individual candidates were able to win. In a free and fair election MDP would have swept the elections.

Party members were able to win 55% of the total vote cast in the election, and still the government of Maldives remains unrelenting in their opposition to pluralistic democracy and are refusing to lift the ban on Party

activities in the Maldives. Even though the party and supporters of pluralistic democracy won a handsome majority, the composition of the Special Majlis prevents the party from having a working majority. The Special Majlis consists of 42 elected members, 8 members appointed by the President, the Presidents Cabinet and the Members of the People's Majlis.

The Maldivian Democratic Party calls upon the Government of the Maldives to accept the wishes of the people as expressed in the recent election for the Special Majlis. To do this the Maldivian Government must legitimise the party without further delays, failing which it must nullify the election results.

## *Male' City is a ticking Bomb*

Male', the capital island of the Maldives, is under night time curfew. More than a third of the Maldives population of over 300,000 live in Male'. In declaring this curfew on the 20<sup>th</sup> May 2004, the National Security Services (NSS) announced the reason for it being a recent wave of crime – robbery and assault, in particular, the NSS claimed. The NSS further claims that the majority of these crimes are committed by juvenile delinquents and as a direct result of the astronomical rise in brown sugar addiction.

In recent days there have been some violent crimes, deaths under suspicious circumstances and several attacks on NSS officials and gang warfare. Alleged burglars are being mobbed and beaten by the public taking the law into their own hands. On 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004, a man was caught trying to steal from a boat moored in Male' harbour. Eyewitness, with video evidence claims that the NSS stood by while the man was mobbed and deposited to the police station. What the pictures reveal is certainly alarming. NSS just stood by, while the angry youth fumed and agitated. This could have two explanations. Either the NSS is too scared to intervene or it is intentionally exacerbating the situation under some devious conspiracy.

### **NSS is running scared**

The belief that the NSS is losing control has much currency with many

observers. In recent months President Gayoom (who is also the Commander – in – Chief of the NSS and the Minister of Defence and National Security), has in one move, fired his Chief of Police and the Deputy, and have again reinstated them with promotions. Subsequent to the September 2003 uprising and its aftermath, many officers tendered their resignations. First among them was the Deputy Chief of Police Major Ibrahim Rasheed. He was followed by Colonel Ahamed Zahir and then the floodgates opened. During February 2004, more than 700 NSS personnel tendered their resignations. They seem to have lost all faith in their Commander in Chief.

On 13<sup>th</sup> February Gayoom clamped down hard and arrested more than 70 people including some from the NSS. He brought Chief of Police Adam Zahir back to his post and thought that he could revert to usual ways and methods. But the damage has been done. The young Turks in the NSS want to see a cleaner and a more professional outfit. There is open in-fighting in the Officer's Mess and this is most certainly having its toll on the effectiveness of the Police force, which is and has always been the core NSS. The young Turks have been calling to separate the Police force from the NSS for more than a decade. Such a move would involve moving The Chief of Police Brigadier General Adam Zahir to a civilian post

which he is believed to be resisting. Brigadier Zahir is not only refusing to be moved but also pitching in to acquire more controls of Mafushi Jail to his office. All this and many other petty matters have made the NSS an entire edifice of intrigue and deception. The NSS may very well be scared.

### **The conspiracy**

Another thread of reasoning for NSS inaction over the deteriorating law and order situation in Male' has been attributed to the designs of the Chief of Police and the former Executive Director of the Ministry of Defence to bring the jails under their control.

The upkeep and maintenance of the jails have always been within the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs. Nevertheless, these functions, up until recently, were hijacked by the Ministry of Defence and most specifically by Mr. Ibrahim Manik and Brigadier General Adam Zahir. After the September 2003 uprising, the Department of Corrections was renamed, with the appointment of a Mr. Ali Didi as the new Director. Also Mr. Ibrahim Manik was removed from his post in the Ministry of Defence. Mr. Didi, since his appointment, has been trying hard to formulate and run a decent

*Continued on page 2*



# Gayoom's "Perfect Constitution"

## Introduction

According to his biographer "Maumoon laughed to make light of the 17 years it had taken, from 1980 until 1997, to finalize the new constitution" [Royston Ellis, A Man for All Islands, p.151]. Gayoom goes on to explain "we want to have a perfect constitution". The biographer further quotes Gayoom: "I presented a model constitution in 1980 which, to my way of thinking contained all the elements of a real constitution... a large part of the model has been preserved, with some modifications". (p.153) The present constitution "with some modification" is very clearly Gayoom's handiwork. According to the biographer, Gayoom needed this constitution to "introduce the necessary constitutional and administrative reform to change the system of government from that of an autocracy to one of democracy". [p.151] Very high-minded, most noble of Gayoom, one may deduce.

Gayoom's terminology however, is very subjective. Perfection, for example, is a concept very much left to individual, subjective judgment. "Elements of a real constitution" would depend largely on what one expects to get out of what one considers a "real constitution". Political concepts such as democracy are inherently fuzzy and are prone to self-fulfilling interpretation. Gayoom's understanding of these concepts seems to be at variance with how they are more popularly understood. The constitution may be "perfect" from his parochial point of view. It may well "contain all the elements" he personally seeks from a "perfect constitution". Furthermore, Gayoom's constitution may well be perfectly compatible with his concept of - to use his and mentor Saddam Hussein's terminology - "a unique democracy".

Maldivian citizens, however, in whom the constitution vests the powers of the State of Maldives, (Article 4, Constitution of the Republic of Maldives) have little reason to be effusive about Gayoom's "perfect constitution". Even a cursory reading would reveal that, from the point of view of the people of Maldives, Gayoom's constitution is neither perfect nor democratic. It does not contain elements of a "real constitution" - not if a "real constitution" is a framework that asserts the supremacy of the people and ensures that their fundamental rights are protected, and not abused, by the Chief Executive.

Contrary to his public statements, Gayoom's constitution takes the country further away from democracy and ensures that autocratic rule is more deeply entrenched than it ever was before. Gayoom's constitution - designed and tailor-made to fit him perfectly - appropriates for the President, powers traditionally vested in, not only the executive, but also the judiciary and legislative branches of the State as well. Furthermore, under Gayoom's Ba'athist constitution, traditionally autonomous institutions such as the offices of the Commissioner of Elections and the Auditor-General too

*The constitution may be "perfect" from his parochial point of view. It may well "contain all the elements" he personally seeks from a "perfect constitution". Furthermore, Gayoom's constitution may well be perfectly compatible with his concept of - to use his and mentor Saddam Hussein's terminology - "a unique democracy".*

are mere extensions of the Chief Executive. The constitution gives the President pervasive, all embracing,

autocratic powers.

## The Executive Powers of the President

The President is the Head of State, Head of Government and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed forces as well as the Police. (Article 33) The constitution also gives the President discretionary powers to appoint and remove from office, among others, Ministers, the Attorney General, Atoll Chiefs, Commissioner of Elections and the Auditor-General [Article 42 (a)]. The Ministers and Attorney General shall be accountable to the President and to the President alone. [Articles 59 and 60 (2)] They, along with the Atoll Chiefs, have to take an oath before the President to bear true faith and allegiance to the Maldives and the President and to discharge their duties as decreed and assigned by the President. [Oaths of office] The power the President wields over the executive branch of the government is absolute total and unfettered.

## Executive Control of the Judiciary

Most mundane, less "unique" democracies would consider constitutional checks and balances - certainly the independence of the judiciary - as fundamental to ensure a functioning democracy. However, Gayoom in his unrelenting pursuit to change "the system of government from that of an autocracy to one of democracy" (p.151) and "to bring the Maldives in line with the rest of the free world," (p.150) deemed it necessary to appropriate for the President the highest authority for administration of justice in the

Maldives, (Article 39) Other articles that help the President control the judiciary include:

Article 112 which empowers the President to determine the number of Judges and the appointment of the Chief Justice and the Judges of the High Court.

Article 115 - (1). All appeals from the courts of the Maldives shall, in accordance with regulations promulgated by the President, be heard by the High Court.

Article 115 - (2). The High Court shall hear cases determined by the President to be filed with the High Court from among the proceedings instituted by the State.

Article 118 empowers the President to determine the number of courts, their location and appointment of judges to the courts.

Article 121 - A Minister assigned by the President shall have authority to issue directives and orders concerning the administration of the courts and the conduct of judges.

Gayoom's constitution, tailored to foster a "unique democracy", ensures the judiciary is well under the control of the President.

## Control of the Legislature

Control of the legislature by the President is as total, though less direct than control of the judiciary. Articles that help the President control the legislature include:

Article 64 gives the President power to appoint eight of the fifty members of the People's Majlis.

Article 68- (1) The Speaker of the Majlis shall be appointed to and removed from office by the President.

Article 69 gives the Speaker wide ranging power but he is directed by and answerable only to the President. The Speaker is required to submit to the President all matters passed by the People's Majlis.

Article 72- Through this article, an extraordinary sitting of the Majlis shall only be held when directed by the President.

According to Article 79 any Bill sent by the President to the Majlis for reconsideration and is not passed by a two-third majority of the People's Majlis, it shall become void.

Article 89 gives the President the authority to extend the duration of the Majlis for a period of one year.

Article 90-(1) If, at a time when the People's Majlis is not in session a matter arises, for which, in the opinion of the President, expedient legislation is required, the President shall have the power to decree and execute, without contravening the Constitution, such matter by a Special Order as a provisional law.

Continued on page 4

Continued from Page 3

**Article 91** gives the President the power to run the administration of the Majlis through a proxy Secretary-General and a secretariat established by the President.

The President also wields intrusive power over the People's Special Majlis that has the power to make and amend the Constitution of the Maldives.

**(Article 92)** According to **Article 93** the composition of the People's Special Majlis include eight members appointed by the President and members of the Cabinet of Ministers. Other powers the President wields over the Special Majlis include:

**Article 94** - Gives the President power to direct the People's Special Majlis to be constituted. *The People's Special Majlis shall convene at a time appointed by the President and upon conclusion of the business of the Agenda the said Majlis shall be dissolved by writing under the hand of the President addressed to the said Majlis.*

Under **Article 102 - (2)** Any Bill sent to the People's Special Majlis for reconsideration by the President shall become void unless it is passed by two-thirds majority of the Majlis.

#### Additional Powers of the President

##### Other

unilateral, discretionary powers of the President include:

**Article 141** which gives, the President authority to give, sell, lease and mortgage any property or assets of the state, if such transaction is needed for the State.

**Article 142** - The State may borrow in accordance with law such sums of money and for such periods as the President may determine. And the government may guarantee repayment of sums so borrowed within such periods as may be determined by the President.

**Article 144** gives the President the right to issue a Proclamation of Emergency while **Article 145** gives the President discretionary power to take and order all measures expedient to protect national security and public order. Such measures may include the suspension from time to time of fundamental rights as deemed appropriate by the President and suspension of laws which in the opinion of the President impede the maintenance of national security and public order.

**Article 38** The President shall be the supreme authority to propagate the tenets of Islam in the Maldives. In a 100% Muslim nation, this article confers on the President potentially greater power than even his overriding authority over the judiciary and the legislature.

#### A Political Culture to Implement the "Perfect Constitution"

Under Gayoom's "perfect constitution", the President is endowed with awesome autocratic power. However, their effective implementation

is only possible because of the prevailing political culture in the Maldives. Feudal Maldives, ruled by despots - benign or otherwise - never had a strong tradition of the rule of law. Written constitutions - the first of which was implemented in 1932 under pressure from the British - did not change significantly the culture of governance based on the whims and fancies of autocratic despots.

Protestation about citizens' rights, democracy and the need to align Maldivian political culture with the free world notwithstanding, Gayoom continues to shun the rule of law while he develops and nurtures the feudal, despotic political culture he inherited. During his quarter century of repression, Gayoom has systematically and consciously used combinations of financial corruption, nepotism, media monopoly, crony capitalism, widespread state-sponsored terrorism, perversion of cultural norms and - above all else - abuse of Islam - as the main tools to thwart democracy and to

*Gayoom has systematically and consciously used combinations of financial corruption, nepotism, media monopoly, crony capitalism, widespread state-sponsored terrorism, perversion of cultural norms and - above all else - abuse of Islam - as the main tools to thwart democracy and to entrench the very autocracy he promised he would replace through such instruments as a liberal, democratic constitution.*

entrench the very autocracy he promised he would replace through such instruments as a liberal, democratic constitution.

What Gayoom has in fact done, in twenty five years of despotic rule, is to nurture and fine-tune the political culture of whimsical, illiberal undemocratic totalitarian rule - thereby laying the groundwork to implement his "perfect constitution"

#### Violation of the Constitution.

Gayoom has the "perfect constitution" of his choice and has created an ideal climate of repression to implement it. Yet he consistently and blatantly violates the constitution he authored. He has no choice. Gayoom, who likes to portray the image of a modern, liberal democrat, has included impressive fundamental rights in the constitution which, if followed, would dilute the powers he has appropriated for himself.

If, for example, he followed the constitution and permitted implementation of freedom of association (**Article 27**) the resultant political pluralism would ensure - if there is a free and fair election - he would be out of job. If he permitted freedom of expression (**Article 25**) he, his family and cronies would have difficulties in perpetuating their repressive kleptocracy with such impunity. One cannot expect Maumoon to honor the citizens' rights to be treated in accordance with the law and the

rights not to be oppressed because that would undermine the powers of the police state he has so carefully nurtured. Gayoom never meant the fundamental rights "element" of the constitution be taken seriously. One, therefore, need not be surprised that citizens' rights are casually and routinely violated under Gayoom's police state. In fact the constitution itself is merely a trophy, a showpiece to give his oppressive rule a fig leaf of respectability and legitimacy. Gayoom is aware that, *It shall be the duty of every Maldivian citizen to protect and uphold the Maldivian Constitution and the laws of the Maldives and to honor freedoms and rights of others.* (**Article 30**) He routinely commits high treason by abrogating and undermining the constitution [**Article 12-(1)**] He is also aware that he has taken an oath to "rule in accordance with the constitution." Despots of Gayoom's ilk are never bound by abstract concepts such as freedom, rights and duties and the rule of law.

#### CONCLUSION.

Within a mere six years of adoption, Gayoom is getting ready to discard his "perfect constitution". He and his spin-doctors would have the world believe that he is driven by noble motives of creating a culture of democracy in the Maldives. Given Gayoom's track record, given his ongoing violation of the constitution, only an exceptionally gullible person would believe in his sincerity.

A more likely motive would be to ensure regime continuity. With an increasing number of Maldivians willing to assert their rights even at risk to their lives and with the international community taking more serious note of his autocratic rule, Gayoom is under pressure to mend his ways. Cosmetic commissions, hysterical noise about reform, liberal use of catch-phrases such as democracy and promises of improvement on an already "perfect constitution" will, Gayoom hopes, keep his citizenry and - more importantly - the international community at bay. Talks of constitutional change is merely a ruse, a fig leaf to cover Gayoom's naked oppression, a straw to clutch at a time when his legitimacy is fast eroding and is being questioned by even the international community.

For a dictator whose primary concern in life is to hold on to power, a constitution is no more than a tool to perpetuate his despotic rule. A more honest, a more "uniquely democratic" constitution for Gayoom would be: *Gayoom shall be the State of Maldives. His Word shall be the Constitution.* Such a constitution would take less than seventeen years to adopt and would far more accurately describe the political realities of Gayoom's totalitarian rule of Maldives.

## Beyond Salvage

They were talking to a young man of 25 years, a close friend of them. They were addressing him as Partey, a Maldivian slang for Partner. They were all drug addicts, from the generation of young Maldivians that the Gayoom regime lured into drugs and destroyed. They are all part of a public safety problem and an embarrassment to the Gayoom regime. The society was not listening to their pleas and this time their friend and their partner was not listening either; because he was dead. They were all gathered there to pay their last respects to Mohamed Shiyam from Saamiyaana House in Gadhoo Island in Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll. His address in Male' was Faruma house in Henveiru ward of Male' but for almost a month he had been residing in Fariva Inn, a guest house in Henveiru, where he was found dead in his room 501, at about 11.45 pm on 18 May 2004. The next day a number of people gathered at the cemetery and most of them were watching the actions of the young drug addicts with surprise and amusement. Many of the addicts posed with the dead Shiyam for photos, as a last remembrance of a life lived on the edge. They were grief-stricken. As the burial ceremony was over one of the young people even suggested taking away the body of Shiyam. "Why don't we take Partey with us?" he asked. In fact, sources say the police stood guard at the cemetery on the night of 19 May because some of Shiyam's friends might raid the grave to take him away.

After the funeral, the police stood in uniform watching as the group made their way out of the cemetery after the burial. There were many senior police



*Civil unrest ripens*

investigators in plainclothes, including Fayaz (FA) and Faseeh, indicating that the investigation was not over. As the group made their way, a taxi driver called out to them and asked if it was their God who was dead. The provocation led to the taxi being attacked. When Haveeru asked why a post mortem was not being done to find out the reason of the death, Latheef said it was not possible to do it in the country. At IGMH, the police had investigated the links between the two young women and man who brought Shiyam to the hospital. Latheef said the

police were still investigating about the relationship and when asked if the three young people had taken drugs, Latheef said the investigations were not over yet. Many of Shiyam's friends who were at his funeral thought he did not die of an overdose but was killed by a rival group. They said they had passed on the names of the suspects to the police. Their story may not be true as many of them were high even when they attended the funeral. Yet one can feel an air of mystery concerning the death of Shiyam and wonder if it had any links to the events that occurred in Male' during the few days before his death.

During the past few days there has been an escalation of violence, robbery and mugging in Male'. Street brawls were occurring between gangs of drug addicts. Some people say the violence and crime increased after a number of prisoners escaped. The police have also confirmed that some inmates have fled. On 6 May 2004, Police Headquarters told Haveeru that during the past five months more than 30 inmates had escaped. The police said the prisoners escaped after they were brought to Male' for various reasons by Department of Penitentiary and Rehabilitation. The police further said another seven people were on the loose, after being brought to Male' for medical treatment. The police told Haveeru that the escaped prisoners had crime records of theft, mugging and drug abuse. The police said they were searching for the prisoners but requested the public to tip off the police if any information was received concerning the escaped inmates.

Even on 18 May, there was an inter-gang fight near Janavaree Magu in Henveiru Ward of Male'. There was a large crowd watching this. The police release many drug addicts these days after arresting them. Even after the September 20th incident, many drug addicts were allowed to roam freely on Male's streets. One explanation given during that time was that the jail was being renovated and expanded and there was no place to keep them for the moment. Later, after Male's people expressed their horror because of the increasing crime rate, the police started a special operation to get drug addicts and dealers. Some level of stability had returned till the recent days when a fresh wave of crime and violence started.

Even after Shiyam's death, the fights, mugging and theft continued. In the night of 19 May the public handed over to police two people who tried to steal from a house in Maafannu and three people who tried to rob from a dhoni near Villingili-Male' ferry terminal. Two people were also arrested for a brawl on Majeedhee Magu. On 20 May the police also arrested two people who were threatening the public with knives on Janavaree Magu. The police said they also had four packets of heroin with them when arrested. Another notorious robbery in recent days involved a group of young people entering a garment shop in Maafannu Ward of Male' and

taking away some garments after threatening with knives and other weapons. Even the girl at the counter was forced to remove her clothes and give them.

Some people believe that this is a calculated move by the Gayoom regime to divert the attention of the public from other important issues. In the congested urban environment of Male', with high living costs, it is increasingly difficult to live. For drug addicts the only form of survival is getting money by illegal ways and resorting to crime. However, few people see this as a social problem. As the government fails to tackle the issue, many people are taking a hostile approach towards drug addicts. The case of the taxi driver who said an offensive remark at the boys returning from Shiyam's funeral is a typical example. The excuse of prison renovation and expansion may be the justification the highest ranking officers give to their juniors. However, that excuse is unacceptable for letting loose the terror that Male' is going through now.

Drug abuse is also a major problem in some of the islands. Monitoring is not done efficiently in such islands, and there are several young girls and boys who are using drugs. Reports say many addicts are also using the large space of the reclaimed island of Hulhumale' as a safe haven. The newly settled families there are afraid of what they may have to face in the sparsely populated island. Last year, Abdul Shukoor Abdulla, in charge of Narcotics Control Board (NCB), had said in a public statement that the Maldives has failed to achieve any significant progress in solving the problem of drug abuse. The NCB run Drug Rehabilitation Centre does not have enough capacity to treat all offenders who request for treatment. The private sector has also been invited to start drug rehabilitation services but so far no party has expressed interest. Even at NCB and DRC the counselors are very young people, often fresh school leavers, who are given very short training in neighboring countries such as Sri Lanka. They are not mentally capable to tackle the large problems that many drug addicts carry with them and offer solutions. The high relapse rate at DRC speaks for the failure of DRC in providing good rehabilitation.

The NCB and DRC are always citing shortage of funds and lack of capacity as reasons that hinder their activities. The people cannot understand why a government that receives considerable income through import tax and tourism, among several other sources, could not allocate enough money to address a problem that is tearing the society apart. This is especially true, as the very same government can afford to spend millions for military and defense budget and for the luxurious lifestyle of its rulers. Shiyam may be dead and buried but the social problems that led to his death at a young age are still very much alive and searching for other victims.



# Members of Friends raise concerns over Tourism's role in Maldivian politics.

Friends of Maldives has received concerns from members regarding the role that the tourist industry has played in the political stranglehold held by the President over his people. While the Maldives government extorts ever increasing taxes from the industry, he is also dependent on tourism for economic success - and this is perhaps his Achilles heal.

While Tourism Revenue was up last year, so was the tax applied to it, giving Gayyoom 359 million Rufiyaa. This was 40% of all tourism revenue - a significant share of the profits made from wealthy travelers. This is also over 30% of the GDP and so not something the country can afford to lose. Friends has decided that the most effective way to tackle the Human Rights issues in Maldives is therefore to threaten to cripple Gayyoom where he can least afford it - his wallet. The extent of the atrocities is clearly not enough of itself to persuade him to stop.

However we do not want to prevent tourists from visiting Maldives. We would like however to be allowed to monitor the



'trickle down' of monies from Tourism to the people of the islands - we would like to see direct investment in transport, education, and island development. Will the President give us evidence that this is where the money is being directed?

Tourists must be aware that they are traveling to a country in difficulty. They must demand that their holidays pay, through the resort taxes, for better teachers, more attractive foreign investment opportunities such as technological industry, better sanitation, awareness of the environment and an improved infrastructure. The disparity between islanders from remote atolls and the businessmen of the capital is too large. Dependency of foreign aid is too high. With 140,000 visitors from Italy in 2003 and 93,000 from the United Kingdom, pressure from these countries' Tourist Companies must have a hard-hitting effect on the 'trickle down'.

Friends has met with prominent pressure group Tourism Concern in London with the aim of starting a living and studying in the United Kingdom.



## Focus on Tourism

Celebrities and journalists will also form part of the group which will lobby for change and an open democratic system in Maldives.

### Facts and Figures

Tourism, Maldives' largest industry, accounts for 30% of GDP and more than 60% of the Maldives' foreign exchange receipts. Over 90% of government tax revenue comes from import duties and tourism-related taxes. Almost 563,000 tourists visited the islands in 2003. Fishing is a second leading sector. The Maldivian Government began an economic reform program in 1989 initially by lifting import quotas and opening some exports to the private sector. Subsequently, it has liberalized regulations to allow more foreign investment. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labor. Most staple foods must be imported. Industry, which consists mainly of garment production, boat building, and handicrafts, accounts for about 18% of GDP. Maldivian authorities worry about the impact of erosion and possible global warming on their low-lying country; 80% of the area is one meter or less above sea level.

### Corruption in the Tourism Industry

Corruption, bribery and 'Booze Parties' - This is the state of things in Maldives Tourism Ministry. Dhivehi Observer releases an editorial on corruption in the Maldives tourist industry.

On 20<sup>th</sup> May one of Dhivehi Observer's correspondents released an article which raises concerns about the extreme corruption, money grabbing, bribery and alcoholic binges that characterize the internal workings of the Maldivian Tourism Ministry. It highlights the power exuded by ministers and even inspectors over the mechanisms of the industry and the power struggles that go on within it. This is not because of any

altruistic desire to work for the good of the Maldivian people and protect their interests, nor to ensure that private investors adhere to any guidelines, but rather for private gain. The article published by Dhivehi Observer can be found at:

<http://www.e-maldives.com/articles/corruptionintourismindustry.html>

individuals are ever taken to account on their corruption, and mentions the unique case of Mr. Amir in 2002, jailed for taking money in the name of the Tourism Minister. Who knows how far up the chain this corruption went - but it is safe to presume that Mr. Amir is not the only man involved. Another area for concern is the process of selection of new islands for selection. This bidding process appears almost as democratic as the Presidential elections. The Deputy Director in charge of the process is known for his power abuses and reckless behaviour while on the Full Moon Beach Resort in 1997. This man is painted as a base figure intent on personal power and financial gain, with dubitable moral conduct, and his influence is linked in with his wife's position within the Presidential Office.

The article concludes with a directly proportional comparison of the corruption and career success of government employees - a shocking statement but one which, it seems, is proven time and time again.

The article published by Dhivehi Observer can be found at: <http://www.e-maldives.com/articles/corruptionintourismindustry.html>

**Friends members would like to extend their congratulations to all the independent candidates who won their seats in the recent elections and wish them the strength of character to stand up for what they believe in and act according to their conscience. May this be a step**

Any contributions, advice or queries regarding the FoM site can be directed through [secretariat@maldiviandemocraticparty.org](mailto:secretariat@maldiviandemocraticparty.org)

Send comments on this page to : [rcork@maldiviandemocraticparty.org](mailto:rcork@maldiviandemocraticparty.org)







