

# Newsletter

*Maldivian Democratic Party*

15 - 31 May 2004; Issue 12

## Islam: a tool for Gayoom

The Constitution of Maldives foisted on the people by President Gayoom through his rubber-stamps Special Majlis, concentrates judicial, legislative and executive power on the presidency. It also confers on the president the role of supreme authority on religious matters. Article 38 of the constitution states "The President shall be the supreme authority to propagate the tenets of Islam in the Maldives".

In a deeply religious - though not fundamentalist - nation of hundred percent Muslims, Gayoom systematically and unconscionably uses religion as the main tool to justify and legitimize his corrupt, oppressive rule. In a recent address to National Security Service (NSS) personnel, Commander-in-Chief Gayoom took the abuse of religion to a new and dangerous level. He stated that the present anti-government activities are acts against Islam, initiated by Christian missionaries who have manipulated the minds of Maldivians. He then went on to exhort the NSS to be united as one to protect the government and help root out the Maldivians involved in such activities. Gayoom views all forms of dissent as being 'anti-government'. More ominously, he equates any challenge to his oppression as being 'anti-Islam'. For Gayoom and his hardcore loyalists the distinction between the 3G's (Gayoom, Government and God) is blurred.

Earlier Gayoom's propagandists had termed "the present anti-government activities" as the work of Iranian backed Islamic fundamentalists. When that did not sell well dissidents were colored as secularists/atheists (Gayoom chooses not see a distinction between the two) bent on introducing alien Western concepts of liberal democracy. Concepts

that would permit homosexual marriages and opening of brothels across the country. Since that too failed to elicit the desired response, Gayoom is now hoping to cash-in on two concepts that has traditionally captured the imagination of Maldivians and galvanized them into action - forced

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conversion to Christianity and foreign dominance.

Stating that Christian missionaries were planning to take over the country, even if through proxy, is a serious allegation. By alerting his troops instead of his parliament, his cabinet, the rest of his government or civil society, Gayoom is implying that he is seeking a military solution to his problems. It has been a few centuries since the West exported Christianity packaged along with their troops and business interests. Missionaries are now known to be more subtle - and far less violent - in their activities. Certainly one does not hear much about armed Christian missionaries taking over an entire country. Calling on his troops to combat Christian missionaries - either real or imagined - seems a rather inappropriate course of action. The label is not important. Tomorrow Gayoom could very well declare that all who resist his tyranny are, agents of little green aliens from Mars bent on providing a base to propagate Martian culture and religion.

Absurd as the accusations are, one cannot, however, dismiss Gayoom's words as the ranting of a lunatic. One

needs to deal with the fact that, legitimate or not, Gayoom is the omnipotent dictator of Maldives. This latest exhortation by Commander-in-Chief Gayoom for holy Jihad, would put at risk the life and liberty of dissidents (and their families) who dare question Gayoom's abuse of power.

Already Gayoom and his functionaries are cracking down hard on all dissidents, including MDP supporters and their families. Violations include the blatant deprivation of fundamental rights of freedom of association, expression and assembly. MDP supporters and their families are subject to arbitrary detention and sham trials, rigged and manipulated by Gayoom and his minions in the NSS, the office of the Attorney General and the Ministry of Justice. Most Maldivians are aware that Gayoom not only condones NSS torture but often inspires and instigates cruel and inhuman treatment of political detainees and prisoners of conscience. According to Head Torturer Adam Zahir, Gayoom often gives very specific instructions on what form of torture to apply and how far to go. Adam Zahir claims that most of the torture of political prisoners he has overseen has been carried out on Gayoom's detailed instructions.

The danger is that Gayoom's call for jihad would aggravate the situation. The danger is that as the Chief Enforcer of Gayoom's Will, Head Torturer Adam Zahir is soon become the de facto Chief Executive of the country inspired by and reporting to Gayoom, of course. Maldives is poised to become an even more of a police state. With his latent exhortation, Gayoom has, in effect, primed his troops and given them a fig leaf to cover their conscience. Gayoom, of course, has proved time and time again that he himself is not burdened by a conscience.

### Nonviolent Resistance

Every person has an obligation to society. Some of these obligations are clearly defined in Islam and are known as "Kifaaya (in Dhivehi as Kifaayathu ge Farulu)". Moreover, every person can contribute to the benefit of the society. In democratic countries, the individual plays an important role, in shaping the future of their societies, to choose agendas of their importance. To declare, that politics is dirty, and shun away from active responsibility, and to let corrupt tyrants decide the future of the country, could only be the ideas of a near-sighted fool. Free

opinion of the public, plays an important role in politics. It contributes to a pool of ideas that show the mood and give insight in building a country that represents the culture of it's people. However, institutions of free opinion - like newspapers - are the first victims of any corrupt government, that hopes to protect it's prestige, rather than being beneficial to society. Such is the sad state in which our country resides. Our current military government does not respect the constitution, neither the will of the people. Further it uses vicious tools of propaganda, censorship and rumors to create doubt and indecisiveness. Gayoom has created a

police state of fear and humiliation for it's citizens. When any government breaks away from the constitution, and declares itself above the law, it should be the moral responsibility of the citizens of the country, to reveal the absurdity of the government and it's functions. Because, governments depend on the obedience of it's public, non-violent peaceful resistance to illegitimate laws are a meaningful way in which the public can reveal and expose the brutal nature of the military government. Non-violent peaceful resistance has been used in many countries around the world, in different forms to help defeat brutal dictators like Gayoom.

# Should MDP Re-Assess Strategy?

Gayoom's address to the NSS on 27 April, during an event to commemorate the 112<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NSS, should once and for all dispel any lingering doubts about his intention to use state terrorism to thwart any and all forms of dissent.

This time he referred to dissenters as agents of Christian missionaries fighting against Islam and the government. In Gayoom-speak "Islam" and "government" are both interchangeable with himself. Earlier Gayoom's official and unofficial propaganda machinery labeled dissenters as Iran-backed Islamic fundamentalists. When that failed dissenters were labeled as free-thinking atheists bent on legalizing homosexuality and establishing brothels. Gayoom is now reverting to the tools of oppression he feels most comfortable with - perversion of religion and NSS terrorism. Gayoom has now given the NSS an open license - in the name of protecting Islam and government from Christian infidels, to crackdown on anyone who expresses dissent. Changing from Wahabism to Iranian Shiite fundamentalism to atheism and now to Christian missionaries, in a few short months may, I accept, seem comically outrageous. Gayoom may even claim that all dissenters are agents of little green aliens from Mars bent on establishing a base in the Maldives to spread Martian religion across the Earth and, later, the whole universe.

However, my advice to MDP is not to take Gayoom's threats lightly. Already MDP sympathizers and their families are

blatantly targeted in defiance of even their fundamental constitutional rights - including the right to a fair trial and freedom from arbitrary arrest. MDP activists were forced out of Sri Lanka in fear of their lives. Any remaining would, after Gayoom's open license, face even greater imminent danger.

I appreciate MDP's unequivocal stance on the use of non-violent, peaceful means to achieve their objectives of saving the country from Gayoom's corrupt and cruel rule. However, MDP, in the face of these new threats, needs to evolve a more aggressive approach to combat Gayoom's cruelty. Given the ground realities, it is unrealistic to think that sympathy from the international media and airing of lukewarm concern by the

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western democracies (even if accompanied by support from human rights NGO's worldwide) would be sufficient to bring about sustained, meaningful change.

While I appreciate very much the enormous sacrifices and hardship being borne by the core MDP activists, both in Maldives and abroad, I feel the time has come to reassess the reform movement's strategy. One way, perhaps, would be to work harder on sanctions and - if necessary - on informing potential tourists about Gayoom's human rights abuse. A more effective approach may be to target just Gayoom and to dislodge him from power - one way or another. In the meantime I thank MDP for your brave and ethical stand against tyranny and oppression.

## Letters

### HRC of Maldives: A tarted Rouse.

The United Nations Development Programme funded Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, has been repeatedly used by the Government of Maldives as a show piece of its reform programme that it claims is bursting from it seams. The Commission was established with an edict from the President and lacked any meaningful legal definition.

In its effort to redress this uselessness of the Commission its members have tabled a bill in the parliament to give a clear status to the commission. The bill was tabled as a government bill. As in usual style of Mr. Gayoom's rule, government MP's has stalled the bill and thrown it to a Parliamentary Committee, where in the past most unwanted bills have been murdered in cold blood.

MDP understands that the intention of the Government is to amend the bill so that the Commission does not exist as a legal entity permitted to prosecute on behalf of individuals groups and the state.

It is most likely that the government will arm twist the MP's to vote to amend the Human Rights Commission Bill, such that all prosecutions falls solely on the Attorney General. When the Commission was formed Mr. Gayoom publicly announced that it is going to be formed on the Paris principals. If the

Commission has to depend on the Government to prosecute its findings it can hardly be defined as an independent commission based on the Paris Principals. It can then be nothing other than just a cosmetic commission, started up as a rouse for the International Community.

### Know your candidates! Use your Vote!

Elections in the Maldives are a ritual. Ever since the famous and the politically correct established their hub of Baa'ist experimentation in social engineering, Maldivians have been disenfranchised and forced to vote for Mr. Gayoom and his cohorts. Later this year, around September/October, Maldivians will be yet again asked to tread the ordained path and vote-in Gayoom's favs. Instead, the voting populations in all the scattered islands are believed (according to underground surveys) to be divided into the following categories:

- Pro-Gayoom: 3%
- Pro-Yamin: 7%
- Pro Ilyas: 10%
- Pro MDP: 72%
- Undecided: 8%

This may not be an exact reflection of voter's leanings. Yet, if and when a free and fair election is held, the results can indeed favor the MDP, according to the Law of Averages.

A very close friend of mine is contesting for the Special Majlis for the constituency of Male Atoll. He has been campaigning as according to rules. Recently he visited the island of Dhifushi and he was told by the island Katheeb that the "Minister of Atolls Administration Abdulaa Hameed has informed all the island Katheeb (Chiefs) that they should get every one on the island to vote for a another candidate, so I will get every one on this island to vote for the candidate that the Minister wants."

This is our worst fear. The government is going to pack the Majlis with their cronies and yet again get the Constitution will be a document tailored for the present ruling elite.

I am not an MDP supporter. But I want to say that MDP is not going to be effective in bringing what we hope for.

1. MDP does not believe in violence.
  2. Everyone one wants to be so politically correct that the real issues can never be addressed properly.
- In the aftermath of the CBS 60 Minutes I wish to reiterate that Mr. Gayoom's ghoulish desire to use the small community islanders as pigs for his experiment in social engineering has placed us in dire strait.

## VOTE FOR CHANGE JOIN MDP

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## White-washing the top brass

On 19<sup>th</sup> September 2003 Captain Adam Mohamed of the Maldives National Security Services (NSS) informed his unit in Maafushi Jail of Male Atoll, that "his superiors had instructed" the removal of certain inmates from Cell Block-C. Hassan Evan Naseem 19 years, from the island of Male was an inmate in Cell Block-C. At 8.00 pm that night a team with 12 pairs of handcuffs, and 50 riot batons were sent to Cell Block-C. The NSS brought 12 inmates with their hands cuffed. Among the 12 was Hassan Evan Naseem. As Evan walked out of his cell with his hands cuffed he told an assistant warden that "should I suffer any injury, [Department of] Corrections must take responsibility". Evan was pressed back against a wall with his arms raised behind his head and cuffed to a horizontal steel bar. In this position he was battered and beaten to death.

Subsequent to the disturbances in Maafushi Jail, the scene of the killing and the uprising in the capital island Male', the President of the Maldives Mr. Maumoon Abdul Gayoom called upon a Presidential Commission to investigate in the death of Evan. Mr. Gayoom is also the Commander-in-Chief of the NSS and the Minister of Defence and National Security. Mr. Gayoom has been in power for the last 27 years.

The Maldivian government's human rights record has been an issue of serious concern to many international NGOs including the Amnesty International, International Pen and Reporters sans frontiers. In the past years many Maldivians have been heavily tortured and custodial deaths are frequent. As in the past, even after unprecedented public outcry and disgust with the government on the killing of Evan Naseem, Mr. Gayoom has created a complex net of deception to cover himself and the top brass of the NSS from all wrong doings related to the killing of Evan Naseem and the subsequent events.

On 20<sup>th</sup> September 2003, the President established a commission to "investigate the findings on the death of Hassan Evan Naseem and two days later transferred his Chief of Police Brigadier Adam Zahir to a low level position in the Ministry of Information Arts and Culture. Police Chief Adam Zahir in being on the job for the last 27 years has captured the public imagination more than any single being, entity or institution as all that epitomize torture in the Maldives. Elderly Maldivians respectfully wrote to the President thanking him for having taken the far sighted decision.

Soon after redressing Brigadier Adam Zahir, he was asked to leave the Maldives. He came to the United Kingdom, where he own ill gained property. This completely stalled the work of the established Commission as he was one of the chief witnesses. Members of the commission publicly revolted. Amnesty International,

alluding to the incident stated that "...the President appears to be too closely involved in the inquiry, which could undermine its independence...".

Brigadier Zahir was asked by Mr. Gayoom to come any testify to the commission. He came back to the Maldives in October 2003 gave many testimonies to the commission. For a government who was buying for "time and space", all the commotion and delays gave them the valuable commodity. 2003 ended and the Commission could not report back to the President.

Brigadier Zahir agreed to testify to the commission on several conditions, and now with hindsight it is obvious that Mr. Gayoom succumbed to all his demands.

The Brigadier was not going to talk and in return he was to be installed yet again at the top brass of the regime. The pitch of Brigadier Zahir's testimonies set the general tone of all the other witnesses. Deputy Commissioner of Police, Major Ibrahim Latheef, was downright rude and extremely impolite even going to the extent of threatening the commission staff.

Even under such handicaps the Commission worked extremely hard and was finally able to submit their report to the President in late January 2004. The president instantly removed many sections of the report, alluding to the administrative nature and the living conditions of Mafushi Jail, the scene of the crime. (sections: 2.1.2 and 2.1.3 and parts of 2.1.4), detail institutionalized methods of torture. (section 3.22), two possible names of persons responsible for abetment of the crime. (section 4.3.1 (d) and (e).), and a section of evidence given by Lieutenant Mohamed Aswan, arguably the most cooperative of all NSS witnesses. (parts of section 4.5.2 (a))

On January 2004 the President submitted the censored version of the report to the parliament promising that the Attorney General has been given a full report. In Mr. Gayoom's scheme of things Parliament of course is a just a body that has few meetings a year and rubber stamps all his edicts, proclamations and laws. It would not even have occurred to him that submitting a censored report to the Parliament while claiming that a full report has been provided to the Attorney General, on the ground of National Security will in-fact be misleading the Parliament.

On that same day the Ministry of Defence also revoked all official functions of Major Ibrahim Latheef. He was asked not to call upon his position until further notice.

Up until the mid February 2004, Mr. Gayooms opposition to any notion reforming the endemic levels of torture and human rights abuse in the Maldives has been at the lower levels of stalling and delaying. On 12<sup>th</sup> February Mr. Gayoom

as promised, brought back Brigadier Adam Zahir as the Chief of Police and re installed Major Ibrahim Latheef in his previous position. The Attorney General was asked to read out the charge sheets of those accused in the torture and killing of Evan Naseem. The Attorney General not only omitted the names omitted in the report presented to the parliament but further dropped all the charges brought against Major Ibrahim Latheef by the Commission. The top brass is white washed and those charged were:

Although the charges of those charged are based on the facts found by the Commission, the intention of the Government is clear by the detail that it has only used the facts of the commission as it deems fit. The government has not charged several persons expressly implicated in the crime and have made no use of many other facts born out by the Commission report. Instead the government has re-installed the Chief and the deputy chief of police, Brigadier Adam Zahir and Major Ibrahim Latheef respectively.

When the President submitted the censored report to the Parliament another promise of the President was to try the accused in open court. On 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004, the Ministry of Justice announced that the hearings will be held in Dharubaaruge, one of the biggest conference centres in Male.

On 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004 more than 1000 people tried for seats in the gallery and only 129 people were allowed in. Most of the seats were taken in advance by NSS personal who came to the hearing in plain cloths. The first day of the hearings saw the State being represented by the Attorney General Dr. Hassan Saeed and his troop of State Attorneys. 16 people were charged in relation to the killing. 12 of whom for inflicting bodily injury, 2 for abetment in causing bodily injury and 2 for having responsibility as a result of the manner in which the duties of their office was discharged.

Although the Attorney General agrees with the Commission on the 12 people to be charged for inflicting bodily harm, he is in total disagreement in all the other charges. While the Attorney General has charged only two persons for abetment of the crime, the Commission in its findings found 6 such people with evidence of wrongdoings. The Commission found 6 more persons with evidence of assisting in the cause of bodily injury, while the Attorney General found none. The Commissions findings very clearly saw Major Latheef to be responsible as a result of the manner in which the duties of his office was discharged, but the Attorney General saw it fit to drop charges on Major Latheef.

From the hearings of 21<sup>st</sup> March 2004, it became clear the State's case against Captain Adam Mohamed was built around the claim that the defendant misinformed Major Latheef and hoaxed Major Latheef to gain permission to remove inmates from Cell Block-C. In his defence Captain Adam Mohamed stated that he was on leave in 19<sup>th</sup> September 2004



and only went back to Maafushi after he was instructed by Major Ibrahim Latheef to do so. The defendant also states as Major Latheef having further informed him saying that, the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Anbaree Abdul Sattar Adam and the Commissioner of Police Brigadier Adam Zahir had said that "matters would get settled when Captain Adam Mohamed went back to Maafushi" Captain Adam Mohamed claims that all his actions and omissions were as ordered by his superior officers. The Commission report clearly states that Captain Adam Mohamed removed the inmates from Cell Block-C with consent of Major Ibrahim Latheef. (section 3.8) and that Major Latheef gave his consent after briefing the Commissioner of Police Brigadier Adam Zahir and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Anbaree Abdul Sattar Adam, both of whom advised him to remove the inmates from Cell Block-C and to keep them handcuffed. (section 3.9)



Director of the Department of Corrections Mr. Muizze Adnan testified to the Commission stating that he objected to the removal of the inmates from Cell Block-C and informed of his objection to the Executive Director of the Ministry of Defence and National Security Mr. Ibrahim Mohamed Manik and Major Latheef.

The State Attorney claims that Captain Adam Mohamed misinformed Major Latheef, but the testimonies of Mr. Adnan (section 3.13) make it clear that Major Latheef would have known of the situation in Cell Block-C not only from Captain

Adam Mohamed but also from the Department of Corrections. Therefore Major Latheef's actions and omissions would not have been only based on the information received from Captain Adam Mohamed.

The Attorney General in his efforts to white wash the military top brass and Mr. Gayoom himself has purposely subverted the course of justice. Its implied assertion that Major Latheef has done no wrong in that his acts and omissions were based on misinformation can not hold water as Major Latheef was informed of the situation in Cell Block-C not only by Captain Adam Mohamed but also through the Department of Corrections. Furthermore, Major Latheef gave consent to remove the inmates from Cell Block-C not only in flagrant breach of establish procedure, but also against the will of the Director of Corrections Mr. Muizz Adnan.

Major Latheef briefed Brigadier Zahir and the Deputy Commander-in-Chief Anbaree Abdul Sattar, on the situation in Cell Block-C. They both gave their consent to remove the inmates in flagrant breach of established procedure. According to procedure if the inmates violate a rule or if a problem arises it is the Department of Corrections that will take action and it is them who will request for assistance when they deem it fit. (section 2.1.7) When Major Latheef briefed Brigadier Zahir and the Deputy Commander-in-chief Anbaree Abdul Sattar they had no business to respond at all as there was no request from the Department of Corrections. Nevertheless they did, the inmates were brought out and Evan was killed.

To add insult to injury Mr. Gayoom in April 2004 president Gayoom promoted Brigadier Adam Zahir to the rank of Brigadier General and Major Ibrahim Latheef to the rank of Lieutenant Colonel and just last week arrested Evan Naseem's mother for being unruly.

## Engaging with the Commonwealth

Legal consultations obtained by the Maldivian Democratic Party indicate that Mr. Gayoom's government continues to violate the articles of both the Harare Declaration and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Maldives, being a member of the Commonwealth is expected to adhere to declarations and statements made by the government on behalf of her people. In 1991, members of the Commonwealth signed the Harare Declaration and laid out the association's fundamental values. These include the protection and promotion of the fundamental political values of the Commonwealth. Democracy, Human Rights, Equality for

Women, Access to Education and other noble and achievable provisions were included in this Declaration. The Government of Maldives, from the inception in 1978 has carried on its relations with other nations, international organizations and civic bodies in the most secretive manner, where the parliament and the general public are always kept in the dark. Representations made by the President, the Foreign Minister or their minions at global forums are conducted more or less as corporate rituals whereby shareholders know little of the small print. The current political crisis in the Maldives reflects the hubris gathered over two decades of blatant disrespect for declarations, agreements, conventions and treaties signed by the government of Mr. Gayoom, representing the Maldives and her people.

The volatility of the socio-political situation in the Maldives came into focus when Amnesty International released its 2003 report on Maldives, and blasted the government of Maldives for gross violations of the UN Convention on Human Rights. This brought the world's attention to systematic abuse of human rights conducted by Mr. Gayoom's government.

Eavan's torture and killing on September 19, 2003 and the subsequent riots in Male, the capital on September 20, 2004 exposed to the international community the 'other side of paradise'. The events that unfolded also energized reform-minded individuals and groups and forced them to come in from the cold. One such group, the MDP declared their party in exile on November 10, 2003. Maldivians began earnestly to seek foreign assistance to help them achieve real

freedoms. In this context, recent representations made to the Commonwealth Secretariat by the MDP are noteworthy. MDP's International Secretariat based in Laondon, met with the Head of the Human Rights Unit, Mr. Hanif Vally on May 11<sup>th</sup>, 2004. On the following day, MDP met the Director of the Political Affairs Division Mr. Mathew Neuhaus and his colleagues. These meetings reflect the formal process of registration of the Maldives case with the Commonwealth Secretariat.

The Millbrook Commonwealth Action Programme (November, 1995) is the follow-up to the Harare Declaration (1991). This declaration also gives provision for advancing fundamental political values, promoting sustainable development and facilitating consensus.

The people of Maldives, remember the 90's as mirror-image of the "Thousand Flower Campaign" carried out by the former Chinese Chairman Mao Tsetung. During this period, Mr. Gayoom harassed, detained, tortured journalists, politicians, writers, historians, artists and any critics of his regime. Rights abuse and his campaign of moving away from democracy continued unabated. A Baathist regime shying away from pluralism!

Many of us remember the "Coolum Declaration on the Commonwealth in the 21<sup>st</sup> century: continuity and the renewal", in 2002. As the international media was in attendance in Australia, Mr. Gayoom flew to Singapore and skipped the entire summit. He kept the public in the dark. Contrary to the version of conventional thinking generated by the propaganda machine of the Gayoom regime, the government of Maldives have been moving away from political reform since 1978. Mr. Gayoom's track record of systematic rights abuse, exposed by Amnesty International have prompted civic governments and bodies, including the Commonwealth to review their relationships and affairs with the government of Maldives.

Mr. Gayoom's alleged criminal record, his total disrespect for international laws, conventions, and practices make it obligatory for the international community to take severe and swift action. Respect for basic human rights, adherence to the rule of law and respect for the right to seek happiness are fundamentals. Promises and declarations no longer hold the spark of hope for the long suffering islanders of the Maldives. They look towards forums such as the Commonwealth to bring about a quick and much needed halt to the secret dictatorship of Mr. Gayoom.

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## Friends of Maldives

### Historian Graduate from Durham University, currently studying Law, joins Friends of Maldives

David Cordery, who is currently studying a Law Conversion course in London, spent 13 months teaching in Maldives in 2002/3. In this time he learnt some Dhivehi and became an expert in Maldivian and Hindi dance, regaling students and staff alike with his routines. He became very much a member of the community and a respected member of staff, implementing a library loan system and raising the level of spoken English among students. However, as he was on a remote island, he was not exposed to the workings of the judicial system, an area which fascinates him.

He was therefore interested to learn on his return about the mixture

of Common Law and Sharia Law in Maldives and has decided to take up this topic for further research. This is an area about which there is not a great deal of knowledge in the United Kingdom, and he hopes to investigate the implementation of these systems in the day to day running of an Islamic country.

The increasingly cautious and xenophobic nature of Great Britain today is confused about cultural influences from Asia. On the one hand we welcome Bollywood musicals, advertising from Peugeot and Virgin borrowing from the increasingly popular bhangra rhythms and popular trends such as yoga. Randeep Ramesh, quoted from the Guardian on March 21<sup>st</sup> 2003, has this to say: "But a closer look

reveals not what has, but what has not, penetrated the mainstream. In fact there is a subtle, perhaps more unconscious than deliberate, sifting of cultural identities. In terms of history, the most significant addition that Asian migration has brought to society, Islam, is absent from the picture that British society paints of itself. This is troubling given the bombing of Iraq and the feelings of a religious community under siege from immigration officials and police."

Mr Cordery has decided to go one step further and edify himself in an area which is close to his studies. We look forward to receiving the results of his explorations after his imminent examinations.

### Statue of Liberty

Mariyam manike is hassan eevan's mother. All she wanted from Mr. Gayoom's government was justice for the torture and murder of her son. Now, she's being detained. She also told friends that her eldest son also is now under NSS detention.

Is Gayoom so ghoulish as to torture and kill Mariyam, Eevan's mother as well? Mariyam Manike is a Maldivian devoid of any hope for the future. She depends on those outside the government of Maldives to be at her side, when she needs help and assistance the most. MDP and FoM are with her all the way and wish to call for justice to be delivered.



### FoM website to be launched

Our new site is currently under construction and will be the initial point of reference of all members of Friends. It will attract new members, inform existing members about ways in which they can be of help, as well as being a forum for discussion. This will connect members and improve cooperation between member activities - such as writing letters and campaigning.

Other aspects of the site will be focused on the culture and history of the islands. Features on archaeology, literature and events both in Maldives and the UK will increase awareness of the country. The scope is endless



these two such diverse nations but with such a strong historical tie have much to learn from each other. The aim is to engage the increasing number of members of Friends of Maldives and make Maldives and its repression of free expression a more prominent issue in the UK.

One unique aspect of the website is that it is a coordination of efforts from three different countries, all conversing via the internet. This site has been created over the internet in a way which would not have been possible a few years ago. The skills of a variety of people over the globe have combined to make the site professional and, we hope, attractive and easy to use.

Friends of Maldives is therefore requesting members of MDP and others to contribute articles or information that will be used to edify the British public - for example, features on incidents of repression or torture, opinions about the tourist industry and educational system, the disparity between islands and Male', and stories about the beauty or difficulties of island life.

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





