

## 20 higher education

# Keeping his eyes on the goal

ASIA e University (AeU) celebrated its fifth convocation ceremony at the Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, on Sept 20. International graduates totalled 537 from 15 foreign countries, signifying AeU's increasing recognition in the international arena.

Among the PhD graduates was Dr Ashraf Abdul Raheem, a graduate in PhD (Business Administration) from the Maldives, whose ultimate goal was to acquire a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) certificate.

Until the age of 12, Dr Ashraf went to school in Kudafaree. In 1978, he moved to Pakistan to continue his studies. After eight years, he returned to Maldives with a good grasp of English and fluency in speaking and writing Urdu.

Dr Ashraf got a job as a teacher in a private school. To fulfil his ambition to become a qualified teacher, he enrolled in a certificate programme at the Maldives College of Higher Education. After graduating, he began teaching Dhivehi, the local language in a public school in Malé.

He then enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (Dhivehi Language) degree course at Maldives College of Higher Education – the first Dhivehi language programme in the world as the language was only used in his country.

Upon graduation, he was promoted to lead teacher in the Dhivehi Department of the Centre for Higher

Secondary Education. He later worked as a curriculum developer for the Educational Development Centre and wrote the current syllabus used from Grade 8 to 12.

Due to his insatiable desire to excel in teaching and gain more knowledge, Dr Ashraf pursued his education in Malaysia and was conferred a Masters in Management.

After the presidential elections of 2004, Dr Ashraf was appointed as the Attorney-General's Office of Maldives director in charge of the Legal Awareness Project.

He left this job for Sun Foundation as manager and was later also appointed general manager in charge of the legal affairs department.

In recognition of his progressive way to promote good governance and ethos in the country, the Maldives president appointed him Capital Market Development Authority chairman, a position he holds to date.

Dr Ashraf began his journey to his ultimate goal by getting admitted to the PhD programme in Business Administration at AeU.

His principal research interest is area of job motivation, quality of work life and work performance of local teachers. The primary focus was particularly derived from the many years he spent as a teacher.

His research has several practical and helpful solutions, which include building new norms of performance appraisal, and appreciating and

viewing the workload of teachers in completely new and challenging perspectives.

"I did the programme in Malé. With the e-library, it was very easy to find the journals and articles I needed. In the first year, I attended four workshops in AeU's campus in Malaysia. I can understand much e-mail needed to be replied to students all over the world, but they always responded to my request for study materials. It was good motivation, otherwise I would have given up," he said.

Now that Dr Ashraf has been conferred his PhD degree, the first of his three plans for the future is to advise the Sun Foundation chairman to establish an education institute affiliated with international universities through online or dual mode like AeU.

"If I fail, I will suggest to the chairman that I would like to join the government in a political post. The third plan is to leave the private sector and start my own small education institute.

"As AeU's programmes are designed and customised with working adults in mind and are accessible anywhere anytime, I am keen to collaborate with AeU in the near future" he said.

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Dr Ashraf Abdul Raheem is AeU's alumnus in PhD (Business Administration) from Maldives.