



theSun

postgradFocus

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Passion in education

> Maldivian Ashraf Abdul Raheem has just obtained his doctorate from Asia e University

BY YEE JIE MIN

DR Ashraf Abdul Raheem's ultimate goal was to attain the highest accolade one can achieve in education and that was to acquire a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) certificate.

His journey began in Kudafaree in Noonu Atoll, Maldives where he was born. Until the age of 12, Ashraf went to school in Kudafaree where the population was just about 700.

In 1978 he moved to Pakistan to continue his studies. After eight years there, he returned to Maldives and by then he had attained a good grasp of English and was fluent in speaking and writing Urdu.

Ashraf got a job as a teacher in a private school and 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 the capital of Malé.

He then enrolled in the Bachelor of Arts (Dhivehi Language) degree course at Maldives College of Higher Education. Ashraf said it was 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, the only secondary school in Malé.

He later worked as a Curriculum Developer for the Educational Development Centre. His job responsibilities included running workshops for teachers and preparing teaching material for Dhivehi teachers. He also wrote the current syllabus that is used from Grade 8 to 12.

Due to his insatiable desire to excel in teaching and quench his thirst for more knowledge, Ashraf

left for Malaysia to pursue his Masters. After two arduous but rewarding years, he was conferred Masters in Management from the International Islamic University of Malaysia.

After the presidential elections of 2004, Ashraf was appointed as Director at the Attorney General's Office of Maldives. He was in charge of the Legal Awareness Project, which conducted legal awareness programmes for secondary school students and teachers.

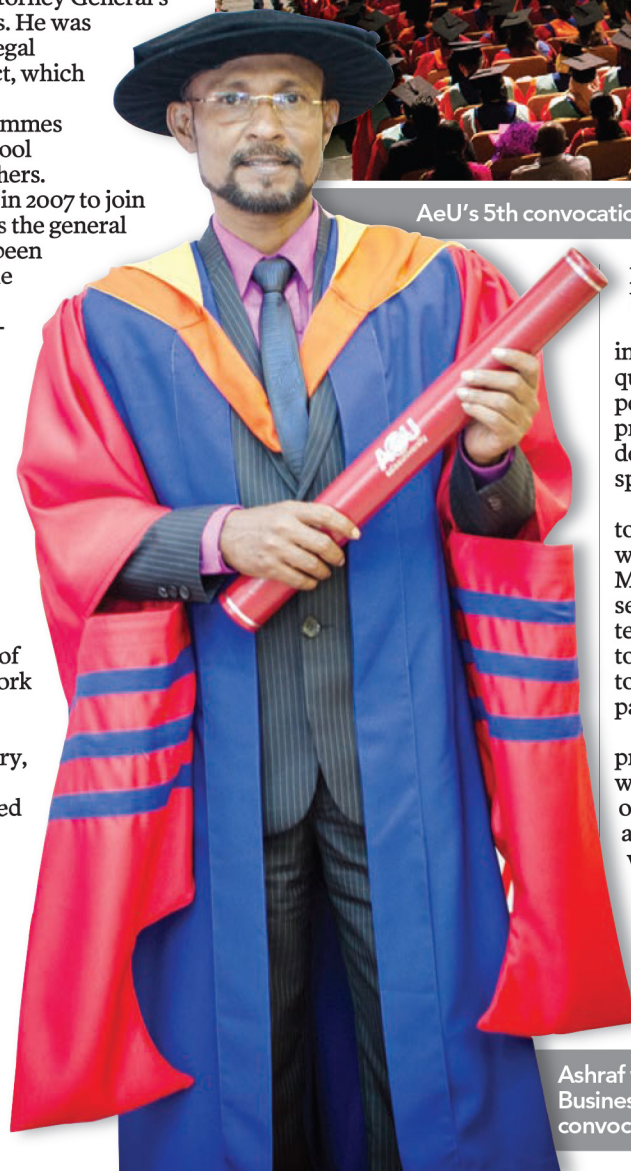
He left this job in 2007 to join Sun Foundation as the general manager. He has been largely responsible for making the foundation, a non-profit agency catering to the corporate social responsibilities of Sun Group of Companies. He was later also appointed general manager in charge of the legal affairs department.

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

Ashraf began his journey to his ultimate goal by getting admitted to the PhD programme in



AeU's 5th convocation ceremony was held at Putra World Trade Centre.



Ashraf was conferred his PhD in Business Administration at AeU's convocation last month.

Business Administration at Asia e University (AeU).

His principal research interest is in the 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.

The research expressed his love to improve the sector and work with the present government of Maldives. It is also based on many sensitive issues of concern to local teachers. The three years he spent to complete his research took him to complex junctures and various parts of the island's nation.

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 which gave me the opportunity to work and take care of my family while studying.

"With the e-library, it was very easy for me to find the journals and articles I needed; that was one of the best assistance I got. In the first year, I attended four workshops in AeU's campus in Malaysia.

"I can understand how many e-mails that need to be replied to students all over the world, but a single reply gave me the satisfaction that I have a relationship with the university. They always responded to my request for study materials. It was good motivation otherwise I would have given up," he said.

Ashraf was conferred his PhD at AeU's convocation recently. The first of his three plans for the future is to advise the chairman of the Sun Foundation to establish an education institute affiliated with international universities through online or dual mode like AeU.

"This will give more benefits to the country and is more cost efficient than sponsoring students overseas. If he agrees to it, I will be committed to it for the rest of my life. 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," he said.