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السرور



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اِسْمُكَ لَا تَمُرُّ بِكَ وَتَدْرُسُكَ قَرِيْبًا سَرِيْعًا رَهِِيْمًا، اِسْمُكَ لَا تَمُرُّ بِكَ وَتَدْرُسُكَ قَرِيْبًا سَرِيْعًا رَهِِيْمًا
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אנו מתחייבים להגן על הפרטיות של המידע שאתם מספקים לנו, ולהשתמש בו רק לצורכי העסק. אנו נשתמש במידע זה כדי להבין את צרכיכם, לשפר את השירותים שאנו מספקים, ולתקשר אתכם בנושאים הקשורים לעסק. אנו לא נמכור את המידע שלכם למטרה אחרת. אנו נשתמש במידע זה גם כדי לשמור על אמינות וביטחון של מערכתנו, ולזהר מפני ניסיונות להפר את פרטיותם של אנשים אחרים.

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למרות זאת, יש להבין כי המושג "התורה" אינו מוגדר באופן חד-משמעי, והוא יכול להתייחס למסורת, לחוקים, או לפרשנות. המושג "התורה" יכול להתייחס למסורת, לחוקים, או לפרשנות. המושג "התורה" יכול להתייחס למסורת, לחוקים, או לפרשנות. המושג "התורה" יכול להתייחס למסורת, לחוקים, או לפרשנות.

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سَرَوَسَ رَسْرُو هَدَّ رَوَقَسْرِبَا، رَاكُو كِرْتَاكِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا، كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا رَسْرُو كِرْتَا
دَسْرُو كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا كِرْتَا

مؤسسوں کی زندگی اور خدمات



مؤسسہ کی بنیاد رکھنے والے لوگوں کی زندگیوں کا جائزہ لے کر دیکھا جائے تو ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا نظر آتا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔

ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔

ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔

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1980ء میں ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔ 1988ء میں ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے جو کہ ان کی زندگیوں کا ایک ہی سہارا ہے۔

فَعَلَمَ اِيضًا اَنَّ مَدِينَةَ قُرْبَانَ فَتَحَهَا فِي سَنَةِ ١٠٢٠ هـ. وَبَنَى فِيهَا مَدِينَةً جَدِيدًا وَاسْمَهَا قُرْبَانَ. وَبَنَى فِيهَا مَدِينَةً جَدِيدًا وَاسْمَهَا قُرْبَانَ. وَبَنَى فِيهَا مَدِينَةً جَدِيدًا وَاسْمَهَا قُرْبَانَ.

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נא הוסיף להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו. וכן נא להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו. וכן נא להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו.

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וכן נא להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו. וכן נא להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו. וכן נא להוסיף את כל הדינים אשר נזכרים בו.

مفتی سیدہ بریسہ جتوئی



بریسہ جتوئی نے اپنی ابتدائی تعلیم جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے حاصل کی اور جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے ایم اے اسلامیات میں بی اے کیا۔
 ڈاکٹر بریسہ جتوئی نے اپنی پوسٹ گریجویٹ تعلیم جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے 2001ء میں حاصل کی۔

بریسہ جتوئی نے اپنی پوسٹ گریجویٹ تعلیم جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے 1968ء سے 1969ء تک مکمل کی اور جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے ایم اے اسلامیات میں بی اے کیا۔
 ڈاکٹر بریسہ جتوئی نے اپنی پوسٹ گریجویٹ تعلیم جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے 1969ء میں مکمل کی اور جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے ایم اے اسلامیات میں بی اے کیا۔
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بریسہ جتوئی نے اپنی پوسٹ گریجویٹ تعلیم جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے 2001ء میں مکمل کی اور جامعہ اسلامیہ لاہور سے ایم اے اسلامیات میں بی اے کیا۔
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داسره قرآنمانيه دسه نامه ماشي مانويو، سوهري و محرابي دسه نامه ماشي مانويو مانويو
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مؤتمروں کی فہرست



ڈیڑھ گھنٹہ کی فہرست میں شامل ہیں۔ ان میں سے کئی نے اپنے مقالوں کی تصانیف اور کتابوں کی تصانیف کی ہیں۔ ان میں سے کئی نے اپنے مقالوں کی تصانیف اور کتابوں کی تصانیف کی ہیں۔

1982ء میں سائنس اور ٹیکنالوجی کے شعبہ میں ایم اے کیا۔ 1982ء میں سائنس اور ٹیکنالوجی کے شعبہ میں ایم اے کیا۔ 1982ء میں سائنس اور ٹیکنالوجی کے شعبہ میں ایم اے کیا۔ 1982ء میں سائنس اور ٹیکنالوجی کے شعبہ میں ایم اے کیا۔

ان کے مقالوں کی فہرست میں شامل ہیں۔ ان میں سے کئی نے اپنے مقالوں کی تصانیف اور کتابوں کی تصانیف کی ہیں۔ ان میں سے کئی نے اپنے مقالوں کی تصانیف اور کتابوں کی تصانیف کی ہیں۔

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פועל זה נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל. הפועל ממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל. הפועל ממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל. הפועל ממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל.

אם כי יש להבחין בין הפועל הממשל והמשפט הממשל, הרי שיש להבחין גם בין הפועל הממשל והמשפט הממשל. הפועל הממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל. הפועל הממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל. הפועל הממשל נחשב כפעולת ממשל ומשפט זה נחשב כמשפט ממשל.

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אשר לא ידעו כי יבא אליו ויאמר לו הנה אני אומר לך
כעת יבא אליו ויאמר לו הנה אני אומר לך
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אתר למתן שירותים ופיקוח ציוד. באתר זה תוכלו למצוא מידע על שירותי הפיקוח והשכרה של ציוד חשמלי וציוד אחרים. אתר זה יאפשר לכם להזמין את הציוד הנדרש לפרויקט שלכם בצורה מהירה ויעילה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם להשוות מחירים ולמצוא את המציע הטוב ביותר. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על תנאי השכרה ושירותים נלווים. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על החברות המציעות שירותי הפיקוח והשכרה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על המגוון הרחב של הציוד הנמצא לרשותכם. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על תנאי השכרה ושירותים נלווים. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על החברות המציעות שירותי הפיקוח והשכרה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על המגוון הרחב של הציוד הנמצא לרשותכם.

2012 וסר אתר הפיקוח והשכרה החדש של חברת הפיקוח והשכרה הישראלית. אתר זה יאפשר לכם להזמין את הציוד הנדרש לפרויקט שלכם בצורה מהירה ויעילה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם להשוות מחירים ולמצוא את המציע הטוב ביותר. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על תנאי השכרה ושירותים נלווים. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על החברות המציעות שירותי הפיקוח והשכרה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על המגוון הרחב של הציוד הנמצא לרשותכם. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על תנאי השכרה ושירותים נלווים. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על החברות המציעות שירותי הפיקוח והשכרה. אתר זה יאפשר גם לכם לקבל מידע על המגוון הרחב של הציוד הנמצא לרשותכם.

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اگر چه که در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است و در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است
و در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است و در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است
و در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است و در این کتاب به بیان آن پرداخته شده است.

۴. اہل حق و حقیقت کی زندگی



میرا مقصد ہے کہ اہل حق کی زندگی دکھانے کے لیے ایک ایسی کتاب لکھوں اور اس میں
جو باتیں آپ کو زندگی میں سیکھنی چاہئیں ان باتوں پر روشنی ڈالوں اور
یہ سب، ۴. اہل حق و حقیقت کی زندگی۔

جو اہل حق اور اہل حقیقت ہیں وہ اپنے آپ کو سیکھ رہے ہیں، اہل حق و حقیقت کے پاس جو باتیں
رہتی ہیں ان باتوں پر ان کو روکنا ہوتا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہوتا ہے۔ اور ان کو سیکھنا
اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور
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ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور

اہل حق و حقیقت کی زندگی اہل حق کی زندگی ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور
ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور
ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور
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جو باتیں آپ کو زندگی میں سیکھنی چاہئیں ان باتوں پر روشنی ڈالوں اور
یہ سب، ۴. اہل حق و حقیقت کی زندگی۔ اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور ان کو سیکھنا ہے اور
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Fareeha notes that some of the biggest challenges that she encountered in achieving her goals include the lack of opportunities in the field of business consulting due to the small economy, and because it was a new field. She also had to address the additional challenges associated with being a woman in a male dominated field with a greater burden of proving her capability and competence in any given senior level position than that expected of her male colleagues. For example, the simple matter of being assertive in chairing a meeting could be negatively perceived as ‘being like a man’ while a male chair being flexible and accommodating would not be labeled as ‘being like a woman’.

In the face of these challenges, Fareeha feels blessed to have achieved many things she is proud of, including growing her company FJS as a successful and well recognized firm in the Maldives, and receiving several international engagements as an expert in her field, receiving full license of the Auditor General and of course, becoming the first female Chairperson of the Bank of Maldives, the national bank.

Fareeha notes that such achievements would not have been possible without a strong support network of family, friends and colleagues who believe in you and provide you with positive feedback. In addition, perseverance in the face of adversity is necessary to achieve any long term goal. There is a famous saying which Fareeha likes to quote “There is no shortcut to anywhere worth going”. Her advice to any woman with big dreams is to stick to your ambition and keep moving forward. “Let the chauvinists, skeptics, naysayers and gossipmongers talk while you act on your dreams. Only you yourself can set your limits.”

Fareeha, turned her great interest in problem solving for businesses into an enterprise; she started her own business FJS in Male' in the year 2007. The mission of this company was to give advice and provide solutions to clients with business and socioeconomic challenges. Speaking with pride about the company which she has established from scratch, Fareeha says that while FJS provides a range of services for businesses, as well as government and the nonprofit sector, the core focus is identifying problems and devising viable solutions.

Fareeha is well known in her circles as a person who is diligent and passionate about her work and is willing to make sacrifices to deliver on promises to her staff and clients and work along ethical guidelines. This became the foundation to best practices being implemented in the company. One of the main reasons why she resigned from the Ministry of Finance was to avoid any possibility of unfair advantages or conflict of interest that may arise from undertaking projects at both work stations.

It has certainly not been smooth sailing; Fareeha says that as the company started on a new concept other than what was common at the time, many people regarded it as naïve, perhaps foolish. Some were even scornful. Despite the naysayers, Ms. Shareef remained steadfast in her belief that this is a service essential for the Maldives.

While the consulting arm of FJS was being set up, Fareeha also decided to pursue another area of service where Maldivians and Maldivian firms were in dearth. As a forward thinking person, Fareeha set up the Audit Firm of FJS and the Consultancy Firm separately. While both firms come under the auspices of FJS, the firms have different partners. In taking these firms forward, Fareeha faced the challenging problem of potential clients who did not share her vision. Most expressed their skepticism that a Maldivian run Audit firm would ever flourish. Fareeha was quick to explain that this was not a personal difference of opinions between her clients and her, but purely their professional take on the matter and their honest advice which she considered carefully. Additionally many business owners and professionals in the field that she spoke with were of the opinion that even if a Maldivian firm did get a license in Maldives, it would be impossible to convince clients to do business with the firm. Fareeha admits that having to listen to such negativity over and over again was daunting and many a time she would come out of such meetings saddened by the lack of trust and solidarity.



Ms. Fareeha Shareef

Ms. Fareeha Shareef is **the first woman to hold the position of Chairperson of the Governing Board of Bank of Maldives**. She was appointed to the position in May 2015.

Fareeha chose to pursue science stream in secondary school, but due to her growing interest in business, she studied economics privately. She was influenced by her exposure at home to the business world as her father was a sole trader in the construction business and provided many chances for Fareeha to help out and learn the trade. This solidified her interest in the business industry and her initial interest in doing medicine was replaced by her ambition of becoming an expert in business and economics.

Following undergraduate studies, Fareeha started her career in the Ministry of Finance, as an accounts assistant in the Public Enterprise Unit (PEU). The unit was set up to improve governance and performance of state owned enterprises of the Maldives. Whilst working in the Ministry of Finance, she got the chance to pursue further studies in Finance and Accounting. As someone with a deep passion for business, she was extremely delighted to take up this opportunity and accepted it with gratitude. Her interest was in financial sustainability and business strategy. She realized her ambition through attaining a Masters in Management Studies, following her first degree in Commerce. She has since attained several professional qualifications in the field and membership of international bodies including Association of Chartered Certified Accountants - FCCA (UK), Certified Practicing Accountants of UK – FCPA (UK), Institute of Internal Auditors (USA) and Institute of Fraud Examiners (USA).

Despite the financial and social barriers facing young women entrepreneurs in the Maldives, upon her return from studies overseas in 2003, while employed at PEU, Fareeha started taking on part time work as a consultant to gain more experience. She also sought the opportunity to broaden her expertise and knowledge and while reading for her professional accounting qualification (ACCA) she worked as a junior advisor in KPMG, one of the big four auditing companies in the world, in order to gain the required experience and also to learn how to manage an audit firm upon her return to the Maldives.

southern most atoll of the country, she reflected on the trauma she was subjected to in deciding whether or not to take her young children to an island where she will have no family support and the children would have no close relatives. In her view, such a relocation would be the biggest challenge a working woman could face. Sudden and harsh decisions that are not in conformity with the original terms of employment, would effectively deter all employees in continuing their jobs, and in particular, working mothers, as sudden changes of that nature would have a direct impact on the immediate family.

During her interview, Azmiralda expressed great concern about her relocation as she was convinced that it would most likely prevent her from continuing her job for too long. Azmiralda hopes that collective efforts are made to overcome such hurdles and to create more gender friendly and empathetic working environments.



Dr. Azmiralda Zahir

Until 2011, no woman ever served on the bench of an appellate of the Maldives. Dr. Azmiralda Zahir of M.Seena attained the honor of **the first female judge to be on the bench of the High Court.**

Having aspired to become a lawyer, Azmiralda wanted to achieve the highest level in the field of law. With this enthusiasm and determination she completed her PhD in International Intellectual Property Law. She admits that her passion has tiptoed around her father and grandfather's passion in this field, wherein, her grandfather who also served as a judge.

Prior to her post as a judge, she worked in the Maldives National University as the Dean of the Faculty of Shari'ah and Law. When she applied for the position of a High Court judge, she did not have any high expectations of being selected, as there were many who had applied for that post from within the judiciary itself, as she believed that it was an added advantage to those applicants.

Azmiralda did not face any challenges in carrying out her duties in the judiciary. However, as a working mother she found it challenging to balance her work and family life. She believed, she should spend more time with her two very young children, and hence tried to put in her best efforts. She tried to spend all her time outside working hours with her children and made it a ritual to be there to tuck them into bed at night, before proceeding with her official duties.

In carrying out the dual responsibilities of a mother and a judge she had immense support from her family and especially her husband which she acknowledged with gratitude.

She believes it is a huge accomplishment to hold a senior position in the judiciary.

Azmiralda's advice to all women who want to pursue a career is to move forward with courage and confidence, and without giving credence to the stereotypes in society. She is firm in her belief that there is no hindrance to accomplishing something if one has the determination to do so.

As the judiciary is in the process of establishing regional branches of the High Court and that Azmiralda was appointed to the southern branch housed in the

Talking about the obstacles she faced in building a career in a male dominated field, she happily noted that many people encouraged her to go forward, especially the then CEO of the company, Mahdy Imad, current CEO Hussain Hilmy and DCO Hussain Naeem. According to Shimla, although she didn't face any specific challenge that she couldn't overcome just because she is a woman, it is not a smooth ride when you have male colleagues with the same qualifications. Some of the reasons for this being the prevalent view that a man can do such tasks better than a woman and that somehow women become less feminine when engaged in similar work. Furthermore, she notes the preferential treatment given to men when assigning different tasks. However, she proudly points out that she had proven to the MPL management that a woman can do the same job equally well. Her mother and her husband are the biggest sources of encouragement and help she gets.

Shimla revealed that a lot of women have expressed interest in this field and she helps them choose and develop the career path. She had helped many of them get scholarships in the field.

Her vision is to be at the helm of the company and run it to its full potential to prove that even women have the capacity to do so. She says that unless she achieves that goal, she would not claim to have achieved a lot in the field. It is her pleasure to have inspired so many women to enter the field. She gives preference to women when she selects her team for projects and she considers that a tremendous achievement.

She pays attention to complete work during office hours so that once she goes home she can spend time with her husband and give him the attention he deserves.

Her advice for women choosing a career is never to say 'no' to a job opportunity, not to assume that you will be able to build your career from the first job, and be willing to rotate jobs before selecting a specific career path; that job rotation has to be viewed as an opportunity rather than a challenge. She also advises to look upon "educational power" and "information power" as tools and work towards experiencing different types of work in one field rather than flitting from one another.



Ms. Aishath Shimla

Aishath Shimla is the current Head of the Marketing and Static Unit of Maldives Ports Limited. She is one of the two women working at executive level in MPL. She is also a member of the governing Board of Maldives Road Development Corporation. From 2012 to 2015, she served on the Board of Directors of State Electric Company (STELCO) and as the Chairperson of its Board Audit Committee. In 2015, she won the Best Young Professional Award from Women on Boards NGO in the Maldives. She was conferred honorary 'FRIM of fellow' of Royal Institute of Singapore in 2016.

When asked why she chose her field of work, Shimla says that back in 2001, youth didn't give much thought to a particular profession when seeking employment.

She first worked in the Ministry of Transport as a team member of the project to develop two regional ports in H.Dh Kulhudhuffushi and S. Hithadhoo. Once the ports were completed, Shimla was transferred to MPL as they were tasked with the operation of the two ports.

After completing Diploma in Business in the Maldives, she went to Malaysia for her Degree in Business Administration. Upon her return after graduation, she got the post of a Manager in MPL. Three years later, and after she obtained a Masters Degree in Port Management from World Maritime University (Sweden, Malmö) in 2012, she was promoted as Head of the Procurement Department of MPL the same year. Besides undertaking the responsibilities of her job, she is studying online for MBA from Business British School of Commerce in Sri Lanka. At the same time, she is also a lecturer at MPL port training centre. Though there are women in the Maldives who have studied in maritime fields, **Shimla is the only woman who has specialized in port management.**

Since there were only very few women working in MPL when Shimla joined, she wanted to perform exceptionally well and reach the top executive level of the company to prove that even a woman can achieve high. Although she is proud of what she has been able to achieve so far, Shimla wants to see herself as the C.E.O of the company.

According to Visam, one of the problems encountered by women is the sense of being made redundant following maternity leave. In this context, she believes the responsibility lies with both the employer and the employee. While the employee must make the extra effort to make amends to the employee's lost time, employer must take special precaution to not take maternity leave frequently. As the business sector is rapidly changing and if the results of all life decisions are reflected in the work environment, it may cause a lot of challenges. She states that a solution to this would be easy availability of mentoring and counselling services.

Visam's dream is to keep on serving both the public and private sector. She also wants to keep informing, educating and improving society with her technical expertise.

industry. She also believes that it allows her to fortify and boost the foreign investment element in the Maldives.

In addition to her official responsibilities, she gives lectures at the Maldives National University, as she takes interest in sharing her knowledge and experiences with other people. These lectures are mostly geared towards students pursuing Bachelors and Masters Degrees in Corporate Governance. As the concept of Gender Diversity is growing alongside businesses in developed countries such as the Scandinavian countries, she believes that it should be enforced in the Maldives as well. This is why this topic is especially highlighted in her lectures.

Although Visam does not maintain a significant difference between personal life and her career, she does find time for her friends and makes sure Friday is kept aside for her quality time with her mom. The ones who encourage and support her most in carrying out her responsibilities are her parents. She still remembers the question her late father used to ask: “What was the most useful thing you did today?” This question was what gave her the courage and confidence to rise to every challenge she faced. The same applied to her siblings too. She admits that the secret to her accomplishments is being able to live in such a supportive family environment and she is very thankful for it.

As the financial sector is developing at a fast pace, there are quite a number of women in dominant positions in this field now. Visam claims that over the last 10 years, the participation of women in the field has increased and it is as a result of the opportunities provided for women; the result of raising an educated generation. As the number of women going for higher studies is increasing, she thinks it’s important to see them work in various industries. She also believes that constantly putting effort into future generations is also necessary. Her message to women in the field is “Work hard in whatever you do with optimal effort. Without being financially self-sufficient, you cannot become strong and independent women.”

Although there are no specific challenges to her in the field, she admits that there are some rough edges which need to be smoothed out. Speaking about women in the work field, she says that most problems faced by women are due to not paying each other the respect they deserve. She thinks that one should accept a female colleague’s accomplishments as one’s own too.



Ms. Mariyam Visam

Mariyam Visam is the **first woman to be appointed as Registrar of Companies in the Maldives**. Although she studied in the science stream in her school days, helping her parents in their business work kindled her interest in the business industry. Therefore, she pursued higher studies in Investor Education, specializing in Financial Marketing. After completing her undergraduate studies, she first worked at Capital Market Development Authority (CMDA) as a Deputy Manager. This was because she wanted to serve in a position where she could do different and challenging work in the field.

For the next six years she worked diligently at CMDA until she went abroad for her Masters Degree, under a scholarship provided by CMDA. She obtained her Masters Degree in Business Economics, which included international monetary economics and international trade. After her Masters she returned to CMDA and got promoted to the position of Deputy CEO.

Some of her accomplishments at CMDA include the Market Operation work and the Pension System which was introduced in 2009. She remained in this post until she was appointed to the position of Registrar of Companies on 28th January 2014 by the Government. Amongst the duties of the Registrar of Companies, Visam has the responsibilities of registering businesses, issuing permits for foreign investments and strengthening the economic industry of Maldives. Looking at her work from a technical side, she has been a representative of the Securities Market Regulator for the Directors Board which was formulated under the law on Pension System. She was a Director of Public Sector Institution; therefore allowing her to be a member of the Directors Board at CMDA.

Expressing her views of the Maldivian business industry, Visam states that the door of finance opened through CMDA is proof that the field is changing accordingly along the new trends. However, if the necessary work is not done, the expected result cannot be achieved. If small businesses do not have a way to grow, they would not get the opportunity to get funds or do investments through Capital Market. Therefore, she thinks of her current position as an opportunity to spread and increase CMDA's work and reinforce the economic

Hiyam believes that her biggest achievement so far in the field of aviation is to become a seaplane captain, commanding a crew and aircraft. She feels that in order to generate more interest among women in the aviation field, it is critically important to create awareness among females starting in the primary school classroom itself, to show them that this is something girls can do as well.

At present, Hiyam has taken a break from flying and is working as a yoga instructor. Hiyam appreciates all the support she receives from both of her parents, husband, family and friends regarding her career. Hiyam plans to fly again soon; she hopes to fly jets internationally one day.



Ms. Hiyam Afeef

Hiyam Afeef, a woman who loves the sea, to dive and to swim, is **the first Maldivian woman seaplane pilot.**

After finishing her secondary education in 1999, Hiyam spent five years working at an architectural firm while studying for her tertiary education in her spare time. In the year 2005, she left the architectural job to pursue a Bachelor of Science (B.S) degree in Aeronautical Science at Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University in Arizona, United States of America. Her goal was to become a seaplane pilot. After completing her studies, earning a commercial pilot license and dispatcher license, Hiyam returned to the Maldives and worked as a first officer at Trans Maldivian Airways from 2009 to 2014. She pursued further training and earned her airline transport pilot license. In 2014, she became a captain at TMA seaplane fleet, a post she held until 2015.

According to Hiyam, being a pilot comes with many responsibilities. Every day prior to flying, Hiyam carefully checked the plane to ensure everything in the airplane was working well and checked the weather forecast for the day. On most of her flights she carried tourists to and from resorts. One of her main objectives was to provide them with a safe and satisfying trip to their destination.

Although there are not many females working in this field, Hiyam did not face much difficulty in her line of work. She attributes this to the support she received from her colleagues. Most of the rules and regulations in the field are gender-neutral, however, she did observe their application and interpretation could potentially impact women's equal participation in the field. Hiyam feels that some aspects of the job, such as crew members sharing rooms, can be difficult for female pilots. Additionally, there are very few women in the field and even fewer women in decision making roles. Increasing the presence of women in these roles has the potential to improve women's acceptance and inclusion in aviation. Often, in fields with few women, when there is a man and a woman with the same qualifications and training, people tend to follow and trust men more readily than women. Regardless of these hindrances, Hiyam strove to never back down and remained firm.

the Government and also supporting women candidates in parliament as well as at council level.

Dunya has spent her professional life in serving the country and she is firm in her determination that she would continue to do so, especially in her passion for the empowerment of women and national development.

seat in Geneva in March 2013. The Maldives has since won the seat for a second term and completed its tenure.

In November 2013 Dunya was appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs - the first woman to hold the esteemed title. As Foreign Minister, Dunya was committed to ensuring that the Maldives regain its respected position in the international community as a proud, sovereign nation which stands by its beliefs and principles as well as its proud Islamic heritage. She also advocated for the promotion and protection of human rights both internationally and domestically and campaigned globally to highlight the dangers of climate change. In 2015 Dunya led the Maldives delegation to the United Nations General Assembly and under her leadership the Maldives attained the chairmanship of the Alliance of Small Island States. During her tenure Dunya focused on delivering a principled foreign policy based on diplomatic norms, while highlighting the Islamic heritage of the Maldives, and the development of a strong, professional foreign service.

As the top diplomat of the country Dunya was frequently required to travel abroad and sometimes at a stretch. She describes balancing the demands of the job against time with her family as a “constant juggle”. She reiterates that her family continues to be her pillar of support and has in turn inculcated deep family values in her children. Dunya states that her parents, husband and children are her greatest supporters, and importantly names her mother, who worked in creating awareness in women’s health education in the Maldives, as her role model.

Dunya wishes for more women to hold decision making posts in all fields in society. She particularly wishes to see more women in the political field but recognizes the reasons behind their low representation. One main reason, according to Dunya, is that women are not attractive candidates for political jobs due to their entrenched roles in the household. Moreover, the demands of a life in politics is harder than the responsibilities of an office job, one that requires frequent travel and time away from families. Consequently, sponsors are hesitant to finance female candidates who in turn lack the economic resources to finance their own political campaigns.

Dunya’s advice to those women who wish to pursue a career in politics is to keep courageously steadfast and to find support from within your own families. With her passion for empowerment of women, Dunya is committed to ensuring the continued key role of women in PPM and at decision-making levels within



Ms. Dunya Maumoon

The Maldives is amongst the few countries in the world that has had a female Foreign Minister.

Dunya completed her Bachelors (Hons.) Degree in Archeology and Social Anthropology at the University of Cambridge. Given her strong interest in the role of women in Islam she went on to read for a MPhil Degree at the London School of Economics where the focus of her research was on “Gender Activism and the Revival of Islam”.

Upon her return back to the Maldives, Dunya worked at the United Nations Population Fund where she remained for eight years. During her time she worked closely with the Government and the civil society in advancing initiatives relating to population and development and women’s reproductive health.

Dunya’s political career began in 2007 when she accepted the position of Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs. As the Deputy Minister, Dunya was charged with leading the Maldives’ engagement in multilateral arena. As head of the Multilateral Department of the Ministry, Dunya successfully launched much of the international work on human rights with an emphasis on treaty reporting and implementation. With the change in government in 2008, Dunya focused her attention to the development of Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) and later became a founder member of Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM). She was also elected as the leader of the Women’s Wing of PPM; a role she continues in. Dunya was instrumental in the drafting and submission to Parliament of the landmark “Anti-Domestic Violence Bill” in 2010. She firmly believes that the Act is a historical step forward in the advancement of women’s rights in the Maldives and a milestone in preventing domestic violence. In 2012 Dunya was appointed to the post of State Minister for Foreign Affairs- a post she held until the Presidential election in 2013. Once again, she headed the multilateral department and oversaw the Public Information Unit. She led the Foreign Ministry team, in close coordination with Government colleagues, and successfully liaised with the international partners such as Commonwealth and the United Nations to elevate the image of the Maldives in the international arena. She also launched Maldives campaign for the Human Rights Council

working woman, or just a stay-at-home mother. I would be a complete person only when I am a working mother”.

Azeema’s advice to women, who want to pursue a career and to succeed in that, is to work with passion, dedication, and determination, and have a positive attitude. Her main priority now is to work for the realization of the key targets set for the MMA to achieve during her tenure.

Azeema still has new dreams, and sets new goals to achieve. For now, she is busy propelling MMA to realize the central bank’s strategic targets.

Governor, MMA has issued licenses for a new commercial bank and two insurance companies. Azeema also launched policy initiatives that resulted in the reduction of interest rates in the country.

One of the most tangible decisions that MMA has made during the last two and half years was the introduction of a new rufiyaa note series, known as “Randiha Faheh”. Azeema signed all six denominations of the new series, printed on polymer, becoming the first woman to sign Maldivian rufiyaa note in the country’s history. “The main objective of the new rufiyaa note series” Azeema stresses “is to provide a rufiyaa note series that has the highest security features and that enjoys the trust of the public. The successful launching and introduction of the rufiyaa notes is due to the hard work and the dedication of the staff of the MMA. There is not a single person at MMA who was not involved in this.”

Azeema takes pride in reaching the position that she occupies today, and she had always believed that the key to success is hard work and determination. “I have never been treated differently by my male colleagues, I did not face gender-based discrimination at MMA, and there was never a glass ceiling for women at MMA.” Azeema feels that in the financial sector, more women are becoming active. A more conducive work environment would draw still more women to work in the sector, which is financially more rewarding.

Azeema is proud of having introduced six-months paid maternity leave to the staff of MMA. As a mother, Azeema understood the importance of giving the opportunity for mothers to spend more time with their babies during the most crucial period of the new-born’s life.

Azeema notes that striking the right balance between work and family will always be a challenge, particularly for a mother. “The achievements I have reached in my career would not have been possible without the support of my husband and the understanding of our two children. My husband takes an equal responsibility in every aspect of looking after the children. There is no expectation that I, being the mother and wife, would do certain things.”

“A working mother cannot have everything. It might mean having to miss some school events. People might judge you about your parenting qualities, but what matters is that your kids understand why you were absent and that you will be there for them”, Azeema says. “I don’t think I would ever be happy to be just a



Dr. Azeema Adam

Azeema Adam was appointed as **the first woman Governor of MMA** on 20 April 2014. Azeema joined MMA in 1991, after completing higher secondary education. As she always had an interest in the field of economics and she applied for a job at MMA and was selected as Research Officer (trainee). After few years at the Economic Research Division of MMA, Azeema won a scholarship to study economics at the University of Canberra, Australia, which laid the foundation for her future academic and career achievements.

Azeema had a very steep career trajectory at MMA; from the level of an officer (trainee), she went on to become a member of the senior executive team of the central bank in a relatively short period of time. Her main contribution to MMA was building the organization's research and statistics capacity. She initiated and launched "Monthly Review" (in English and Dhivehi) of the Maldives economy, a statistical bulletin (published monthly), and most notably, the MMA Research Papers (the first publication of econometric and analytical papers on contemporary economic issues in the Maldives) which were all edited and managed by Azeema.

Azeema's career at MMA has always been driven and shaped by her interests in economic research. Macroeconomic policy, development economics, and exchange rate policy are some of the topics that captured her passion to continue with her research interests to learn more. Azeema took time off her work to complete a MSc in International Development Finance at Leicester University in UK, and PhD in Economics at the University of Canberra, Australia. Azeema's PhD thesis was on exchange rate issues in the Maldives.

"The type of exchange rate policy will always be one of the most crucial economic policy questions for a country like the Maldives. Any change in exchange rate will have a quick and direct impact on the economic activities and cost of living in the country", says Azeema.

While most are busy doing their shopping and conducting businesses, Azeema's day would normally be filled with key questions in maintaining a stable exchange rate, developing and regulating the financial sector and ensuring the smooth functioning of the payment system. During her tenure as

vice versa. Despite having to face such circumstances, Ngie always focused on delivering music that audience enjoys.

She happily says that what drives her to work tirelessly in this field, even under not the most favourable conditions, is solely because of her passion and her never ending love for music. She is grateful to the encouragement bestowed upon her by her family and friends.

Ngie states that aspiring female DJs are surfacing in the Maldives albeit at a slow rate. She acknowledges how some of the artists have worked up their courage to perform gigs on their own and her advice to the rising female DJs is, "if you want to accomplish something, go ahead and do it! Learn it, practice it and certainly be better at it, stay updated with the infinite new music and always maintain a learning phase."



Ms. Aminath Fazleena Abbas

The Maldivian music industry is one where quite a number of women are active. However, the same cannot be said for DJs among whom only a few women are seen. **The first Maldivian female DJ** to shine in the field is Aminath Fazleena Abbas, popularly known as Ngie.

Ngie's love for music began at a very young age. Her utmost drive for beats led her to explore music while studying abroad. Dancing close to the loud speakers made her conscious of her interest in DJs who made people sway to their rhythm and the gracious power to control the vibe of a mass audience. Although there weren't any opportunities to excel in this field in the Maldives, she was determined to gather theoretical knowledge about music by doing various trainings of her passion.

When she started out as a DJ in 2013, she faced numerous hurdles and obstacles in her path. However, fortuitously the tables have turned around good for her as she has acquired the respect and admiration of many. Ngie is an extremely flexible artist who does both contract and freelance work in the industry. Throughout the years, she has performed in many resorts in the Maldives. One of her most recent experience was the 6 month contract she completed as the resident DJ in Amilla Fushi Resort, an opportunity she appraises deeply.

Ngie dedicates most of her time to collect new music and keep up to date in this alternating world of music. She is extremely appeased with the collection of music in her own library. As most of her gigs are in resorts, traveling has become an undeniably essential element she learnt to embrace. She highlights, "the audience you cater needs to be thoroughly analyzed at all times. One has to keep an eye open to recognize the groove of the audience and act as a boomerang to their energy when necessary."

According to her, the greatest accomplishment for Ngie in her career was the opportunity to perform in Sri Lanka for an audience of over 2500 people. As it was the first time ever performing to a huge audience with her favorite genres to boot, she says that it is a memory she will never forget.

Talking about the challenges she faces, she specifically highlighted some people from the audience requesting for a male DJ instead of a female DJ and

for all kinds of people. It's not being a male or a female that makes a good Police Officer. Ability is”.

Izmia envisages a bright and hopeful future for women in policing. Policing is a challenging field for both men and women, especially when fighting crime, so the future will be quite a feat. However, she is very determined to do her part in fighting crime for a safer community for all of us.

the resistance she initially had to face. It was surprising to find out that they lacked the understanding that women condoning such behavior towards other women are indirectly harming themselves. However, after many years of working together, it's now much easier for her to work in the police compared to back then. She hopes that the same would now apply to public perception of women in the police force.

One of Izmia's greatest career achievements so far is getting more support from male colleagues for women in policing. Being the first woman police officer to have completed senior officer's training in MPS and remaining as the only commissioned female police officer out of about eighty male commissioned officers for over one and half years was also a big achievement. She was also the first woman division commander of MPS. Being the division commander of the division with the largest population was a huge task. To have come this far as a woman police officer is a great achievement.

Izmia believes that some innovative changes are required within the police force to bring more women into her field of work. A more woman friendly working environment needs to be created, by introducing practices such as more flexible options for working mothers, better retention policies and the establishment of a good support network for women in policing to attract more female police officers. Izmia admits keeping personal life and her career balanced is tough at times, however she tries to have at least one meal with her family even during the busiest of days and tries to catch up with friends weekly or as frequently as she possibly can.

For all women who are interested in a career in policing, she wants to give the following advice. "If you are a woman who wants to be exposed to a wide variety of experiences and who likes challenges; then come join the police and let this field make you tougher, stronger, and a better person. There isn't any field that is restricted for women in policing and in the Maldives Police Service you can experience different kinds of work while working in the same organization. You could be a teacher, trainer, lawyer, photographer, journalist, and work in forensic labs analyzing various things or even draft policies and regulations. You could even work in more practical fields where you can directly serve the community, help people or even conduct programs to build relationships. You could also become a detective or work in investigations solving mysterious puzzles of crime. So this is a field where there is good scope



Chief Inspector of Police Izmia Zahir

Izmia Zahir is an officer in the Maldives Police Service (MPS). She is notably **the very first woman appointed as a division commander in MPS**. According to her, she has always received full support from her parents, family members and friends for her chosen career path.

Surprisingly though, as young girl Izmia had never aspired or dreamt of becoming a police officer. Becoming one was therefore an unexpected turn of events in her life. Her initial goal was to conduct research on criminals in the Maldives using her psychology degree as a tool and hopefully discover enough to contribute in creating a low crime society for all of us. However the best possible way in obtaining such data and information on convicted criminals and doing crime research turned out to be by joining the police force then. So by default, in her enthusiasm for that research, she joined the Maldives Police Force. After her police training and getting an overview of the status of the Police Force, it struck her that the status of women in the police force has to be raised and more support and respect for women in policing both by colleagues and the general public had to improve. Thus, it became another priority goal for her to pursue. Since joining the service and despite some challenges she had to overcome initially, Izmia did not wish to change her field of work and continued in MPS.

“Working in a male dominated organization can be challenging at times for women”, Izmia says. Gender stereotyping by the society further adds on to this because for some unknown reason, many people, including some women, label women in policing as incompetent. Due to this, she has had to go the extra mile to show her competence.

Besides, being appointed as the first woman division commander of MPS in 2012, had its challenges due to such prejudices. Society is so used to seeing men in such jobs so seeing a woman work in the field makes them skeptical and they either label you as “incompetent” from the very first glance or treat you like a sexual object just because of your gender. This led Izmia, to have to deal with more obstacles in her path which none of her male colleagues had to endure. Unfavorable rumors and accusations are one such example. She was alarmed by the fact that her fellow female colleagues were also joining in with

contribution as a research presenter for her paper titled ‘Challenges faced by women leadership in the Maldives’ during the 6th Global Congress & Conferment Ceremony held in Manila; the ‘Outstanding Women Leadership Achievement Award’ at the World Women Leadership Congress in 2016, in Mumbai, India; ‘Young Women Achiever’ Award for Outstanding Contributions, Significant Achievements and Sustained Excellence in the field of Human Resource Management of the Women Awards - VIWA 2016 and ‘Golden Globe Tiger Outstanding Women Leadership Award’ at the Golden Globe Summit 2016 held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

She says that her happiness in this field is the satisfaction of being able to serve the people; to be remembered by people as a person who served in the interest of the people. She admits that women have to face many challenges in a male dominant field such as politics where some people outright deny any hope for women being able to do anything in this field. To fix this, Rafiyya believes that gender stereotyping should be minimized in education. She further states that in homes, girls should receive as much support and encouragement as boys do. She herself experienced instances where men were given respect due to their positions without any complaints, but to do so for women, people raise many objections. Women also need to be able to defend themselves from such injustice. In her political life, she rose to defend herself from such matters many times. Another gender biased problem is that being a man itself qualifies men for a higher position in politics while women have to be over qualified and need to further prove themselves to get the same acceptance.

To overcome all these challenges, having family support and assistance is of great importance, says Rafiyya. In her experience, her family and especially her brothers and husband have been very supportive. She also believes that having time for one’s family, no matter how busy one is, is quite crucial. She has a young kid but claims that this does not cause any extra complications or difficulties in keeping her job. This is due to the flexibility provided by Sun Siyam Group. She proudly highlighted that every company should be as gender sensitive and as supportive as her own.

Rafiyya’s hope and dream is to be able to serve in the higher ranks of the Maldivian politics and leave her mark as a well-respected person who has served the people of the Maldives and lived a meaningful life. She will also go forth with her iron will, overcoming any challenges she has to face as a woman and will continue to be a role model for other women.

elected female Deputy Leader of a political party in the Maldives. Though uncontested, she won 90% of votes in its formation session in 2012 and still remains the one-and-only female deputy leader of a political party. She collectively headed the task-forces assigned to gather the 3000 & 10000 memberships target for the formation of MDA. For her skills in administration & management, Rafiyya was tasked to organize the 1st Congress of MDA as Chairperson of the Organizing Committee. She originated the slogan “My share to my country” which became the official slogan of the party. MDA is the first political party which instituted a reserve seat system for women in the party leadership.

Rafiyya is actively involved as a volunteer at Sun Foundation which conducts trainings in the islands to empower women and youth through capacity building. She is also Co-founder and Business Development Director of Boch Institute of Maldives which conducts training and capacity development programs at outer islands since 2009. Today Boch Institute is rebranded to ‘Maldives Development Research Institute (MDRI)’ to be run as a Capacity Development Center of Regional Alliance for Fostering Youth (RAFY), which is a regional NGO founded to put into practice an ideology of a group of youthful leaders from Asian countries. Rafiyya was an Executive Board Member and the former Chief Operating Officer (COO) of Women on Boards (WoB) Maldives and played an active role in its establishment and rise. WoB NGO is an initiative to inspire and empower the next generation women of the Maldives by unleashing their economic power. Furthermore, Rafiyya is the Senior Executive Consultant of Blek Foundation, a Co-founder and Head of Blek Academy in the Maldives. She is also a visiting Lecturer at the Maldives Polytechnic under the Maldives National University.

Among social and empowerment activities, she established a brand new football team in 2009 among the female staff of Sun Group of Companies and coined the champions of the first ever women’s football tournament in the Maldives history organized by Football Association of Maldives (FAM) as “National Women’s Football Championship 2012”. Sun Women’s Football Team is the first private women’s football team in the Maldives and Rafiyya is the Manager of the team.

In recognition of her continuous efforts in women’s empowerment, Rafiyya has received a number of local & international recognition, such as ‘International Award of Distinction’ from Royal Institution Singapore for her valuable

As she grew up, her parents wanted her to become a medical doctor. However with the introduction of computer science, she completely let go of this idea and changed her career goal. Following her new goal, she acquired an International Diploma in Computer Studies (NCC, UK) and BSC (Hons) in Business Information Systems from University of East London. She also holds a Master of Business Administration in Human Resource Management, Graduate Diploma in Business. Besides, she also holds an Advance Diploma in Hair Dressing and Beauty from Roots Academy of Hair Dressing & Beauty, Sri Lanka. Ms. Rafiyya who is currently reading for her PhD in the area of ‘Women empowerment through Tourism’ says that the PhD is a special gift for her mother.

She started her career at the Bank of Maldives (BML), the national bank of the Maldives, at a very young age as the Secretary to the CEO, and later served at Credit, IT, Operations & DBC Planning Department after her graduation. Through BML she got the chance to move to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) and while serving at MFA, she also served at the High Commission of the Republic of Maldives in Bangladesh as Deputy Chief of Mission. She also served as the Charge d’ Affairs a.i. for a period of one year during her tenure in Bangladesh. At the time, her brother, incumbent MP for Maafannu Dhekunu constituency was actively engaged in politics, and people would call her and criticize her brother for interviews and speeches he makes on public television. This sparked her interest in politics.

Upon returning to the Maldives, she got the chance to join the Executive Council of the political party, People’s Alliance (P.A.), then headed by the current President of the Maldives, H.E. Yameen Abdul Gayoom, as President of the Women’s Wing and was an active member of the Think-Tank Technical Group (TTG). PA was then represented in Parliament by 8 members. During that time she gained a lot of knowledge in politics through the intellectual discussions of TTG led by the leader of PA. Rafiyya played an active role in People’s Alliance (PA) and was a member of the committee formed to meet visiting teams from the Commonwealth and European Union. She says she learned much while working in PA and that she was mentored by the party leader. When activities of PA slowed down and the leader moved to the Progressive Party of the Maldives (PPM), she too moved.

Rafiyya is a founding member of Maldives Development Alliance (MDA), the political party formed by Hon. MP Ahmed Siyam Mohamed. She is the first



Ms. Aishath Rafiyya

Aishath Rafiyya is the Deputy Leader and a founding member of the political party, Maldives Development Alliance (MDA), a pivotal member of Maldivian political arena. She is the **first woman appointed as a deputy leader of a political party in the Maldives**. She is an independent, non-executive member of the State Trading Organization (STO) Plc's Board of Directors appointed by the majority shareholder (Government), Chairperson of the Nomination and Remuneration Committee, member of Corporate Governance Committee and Risk Committee of STO Board. She is also the Manager of the Sun Women Football Team and the Head of Chairman's Bureau of the Sun Siyam Group. In addition to these roles, Rafiyya is an elected Member of Women's Development Committee (WDC) of Male' City representing Maafannu Dhekunu Constituency and is the Chairperson of Business and Finance Sub-Committee and Co-Chair of Media Sub-Committee of WDC. She founded the Regional Alliance for Fostering Youth (RAFY), which is the first international NGO that originated in the Maldives. She is also the first South Asian appointed as the Honorary President of Royal Institute of Public Administrators, under Royal Institutions Singapore and is also a selected Personal Mentor for the Queen's Young Leaders' Programme 2016 of University of Cambridge.

According to Rafiyya, her interest in leadership started at a very early stage in her home environment, thanks to her mother's teachings. She says that she is very grateful for the rewarding system her parents used to have, and the supportive environment at home, which according to her are the things which paved her path to her current position. Additionally she says that even from a young age, she knew she had different interests than most kids. Whilst most kids engage in fun and games when they come back from school, she would go to a neighbour's house to learn to sew and make embroidery. Her mother was also a tailor and many people would come to her with requests. Her mother's schedule was quite packed and sometimes she would not be able to do them for days despite which people would depend on her mother rather than asking someone else to do it for them. From this point on, Rafiyya realized that it wasn't good to be dependent on others for such small tasks and made up her mind to grow up as an independent person. These early events, she believed laid the foundation of her leadership.

In future, Suzy would like to work at the executive level through which she would continue serving the country, and her dream is to see more women in the executive ranks of the institution.

Suzy loves to do volunteer work and, she contested for the position of Chairperson of Police Family Association, in order to expand her working capacity and was successful. This association is responsible for strengthening the bond between the police officers and their families as well as conducting awareness programs concerning police and society for these families. This is her own way of proving to others that even women can perform well in such positions.

Suzy believes that if you undertake any task with the necessary commitment, interest and of course with the right attitude, you will be able to succeed it. As she proceeds with this mind-set, she receives great support from her family; especially her parents, husband and sisters. While appreciating the support she receives from her family in her efforts to move forward in her career, she also acknowledges the support of the senior officials of MPS who provide her with a lot of encouragement.

Suzy also believes that even a small accomplishment is a step forward for her. Some of these include, obtaining a Masters Degree and being able to sustain herself in the organization for a long period. She also believes being able to proceed as a commissioned officer is a great achievement for her.

This field of service requires one to spend a lot of time at work, and as such, balancing work and family responsibilities becomes very hard. Suzy's policy in balancing her career and personal life is completing all her work during the official working hours. She tries her best to make the most of the time she spends at home, however brief the time is, and also finds time during weekends for her family. She gives credit to her husband who helps and supports her in managing household chores which allows her to follow her career path.

The message Suzy would like to give to young women is, to pursue education. Even if it is a short course, complete it and become more aware and enlightened. In addition she advises women to raise their children to be useful citizens, and not forgetting women's role in society; to accept that every step in life has its own challenges and face them with conviction. Her message to women who want to work in MPS is that being able to work in MPS is a great exposure to explore talent in different fields under one roof which offers large number of opportunities to those who want to serve the country. That MPS is an organization where, if you work diligently and honestly whilst making use of opportunities available, one will be able to rise to greater heights.



Inspector of Police Aminath Suzy

Aminath Suzy, joined the then National Security Service (NSS) on 15 September 2003 right after completing her higher secondary education. She completed 44th basic training course from NSS and was given the opportunity to do field work at the Police Headquarters. She took great interest in the work she was assigned at Maldives Police Service (MPS) and hence she decided, she would spend her professional life serving the country.

From the time she was in school, she had taken great interest in chemistry, and she has always wanted to build a career in the field of chemistry. After joining MPS in 2005, Suzy began working in the forensic support unit, and she took the opportunity to work in the forensic laboratory of the Maldives Police Service. In 2011, Suzy attained a Masters Degree in Chemistry and Chemistry with Forensic Science and Toxicology from University of Hull in UK. After returning to the Maldives in 2011, she continued her service in MPS as the Head of Drug and Chemical Laboratory of Forensic Services. In 2016, she was appointed to the post of Deputy Head of Drug Enforcement Department of Crime Investigation. She was the **first ever woman to be appointed in those two posts.**

During her 13 years of service in the government, she worked as a crime scene officer, and forensic analyst as well. Before becoming the Deputy Head of the Drug Enforcement Department (D.E.D), she was in-charge of the drug and chemical laboratory during which time, her duties included training forensic analysts and ensure the management of the laboratory in line with international best practice. Her current duties as deputy head of D.E.D includes, the anti-drug policy and the Drug Act, while also developing the necessary human resource and formulating policies and regulations to prevent drug abuse.

Suzy states that although the MPS is a large organization, the number of women working in the senior ranks is comparatively low. She also noted that, currently there isn't even a single woman at the executive ranks in the Maldives Police Service. Therefore, her aim is to challenge the obstacles faced by women and break this 'glass ceiling,' to prove that even women can hold senior positions.

personal life and career. Muneeza is a Shariah Advisor, an Islamic Finance Consultant, a researcher, a presenter, a regulator, a speaker, a trainer, an Associate Professor, an attorney, who is actively involved in promoting Islamic finance. She also held the posts of Deputy Minister of Islamic Affairs and Finance. She had won gold and silver medals in international research exhibitions for research conducted on disciplines related to Islamic banking and finance. Her contribution to Islamic finance industry has been recognized internationally and she has been conferred several awards of recognition. She has received the prestigious “Rehendhi Award”, the highest award for women, conferred by the Government of Maldives for her contribution towards the development of Islamic finance industry.

Muneeza says that it is not hard for her to manage both work and family life at the same time. Despite being a busy working woman, she has managed to balance her responsibilities towards her family and her career. Muneeza believes she has achieved everything she wanted to achieve so far in her life with the grace of God Almighty and her dream now is to see the Maldives becoming the hub for Islamic Finance and halal industry in South Asia.

requirement to form a Capital Market Sharia Committee, she expressed her interest to become a member. She was appointed as the Chairperson of the first Capital Market Shariah Advisory Committee (now Council) and until today she remains as the Chairperson of the Council.

Muneeza was appointed as the Consultant for a sukuk market project conducted in the Maldives for Capital Market Development Authority by an Australian Company and she moved to the Maldives to complete the project. She successfully undertook the sukuk market project and joined CMDA as a Consultant to practically implement the findings of the report. Under her guidance and recommendation, Islamic Capital Market Development Section within CMDA was established and she drafted the legal and regulatory framework for an Islamic capital market in the Maldives. She also facilitated the debut of corporate sukuk in the Maldives where she was the Shariah Advisor to it. The concept of Maldives Hajj Corporation was also developed by her and she later took responsibility towards its implementation in an effort to create a suitable mutual fund concept for the Government of the Maldives.

Today the Maldives has a full-fledged Islamic finance industry and the number of people specializing in this field is increasing day by day. With a strong belief in the importance of developing human capital required for Islamic Finance in the Maldives, Muneeza has paved the way to introduce a Masters Degree course in Islamic finance in the Maldives that is globally recognized.

Since 2011, Muneeza has in some way contributed or assisted each and every company in the Maldives that has ventured into the Islamic finance arena. She is the first registered Shariah Advisor by Capital Market Development Authority of Maldives. She is also a registered Advisor for the non-ringgit product by Malaysian Securities Commission.

According to Muneeza, she has become a successful woman today because of the support she received from her parents, her uncle, siblings and, her beloved husband. Her family always supported her and never stopped her from doing anything she wanted to do. Apart from the support she received from her family, her hard work, determination, and commitment to work is the secret behind her accomplishments.

Doing things with determination and with passion to achieve targets is Muneeza's motto. She has faced obstacles and challenges in her career, but determination and passion led her to achieve her goals and dreams in both her



Dr. Aishath Muneeza

This is a narrative of Dr. Aishath Muneeza who believes that progress and civilization of a country should also be reflected in the life of citizens and not just in infrastructure development. **She is the driving force behind the creation of a full-fledged Islamic finance industry in the Maldives.**

Muneeza was one of the few students in her batch to complete secondary education and higher secondary education in the arts stream. She was an active and diligent student in school life who had keen interest in participating and enjoying extracurricular activities. Upon completion of her higher secondary education in 2004, and with the guidance and recommendation from her beloved father, she decided to pursue her studies in Shariah and law. She completed her Bachelors degree in Shariah and Law. Her interest in Islamic finance was discovered in the midst of her Masters Degree specializing in Banking Law.

While doing her Masters Degree, Muneeza won first place in an international essay writing competition held by Islamic Finance Forum, Kuala Lumpur. The international recognition she got for this award motivated and inspired her to do further research and seek additional knowledge in the field of Islamic finance.

Muneeza focused her attention to research work and started doing research in areas related to Islamic finance. Her research work has been published in numerous journals across the world. She authored two books on Islamic finance which are published in Dhivehi and four books published in English by an international publisher. She also wrote a few chapters in books published in the United Kingdom and the United States. She also has travelled to numerous countries which include India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, UAE, Australia, France, Bahrain, Tunisia, Singapore, Malaysia, Brunei, Indonesia, Turkey, Mauritius, Kenya and Nigeria to present her research work.

Muneeza wrote her PhD. thesis on “Obstacles facing Islamic Finance”. While reading for her PhD, she worked as a lecturer in several colleges and universities in Malaysia and also worked on some research projects. In 2011, when the Capital Market Development Authority (CMDA) announced its

equally supportive and accommodating then. As her children grew older and she moved out of the family home, they too were very understanding and chipped in to ease her domestic burdens.

Since women are still sorely under-represented in the upper echelons of the labour market, and markedly sore in public office, Aneesa believes that it is essential to create a more enabling environment to encourage young women to take up jobs and retain them. Affordable child care facilities, flexible working hours and online working arrangements must be made tangible realities instead of mere policies and political rhetoric.

Her message to aspiring young women is, make your choice and go for it with conviction. Don't quit. Stay strong. Also, make sure that the person you choose as a life partner respects you and your dreams for the future. There are no heights women cannot scale. The world has proven women can perform equally well even in outer space.

their participation in policy making. She travelled widely in the atolls and contributed as a facilitator in all the training workshops that were held nationwide by the Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Security from 1998-2002.

She acknowledges with appreciation the endless support and cooperation she garnered from her staff and colleagues at all stages of her public service.

Having retired from politics in 2009, Aneesa, together with two of her former colleagues, founded a non-governmental organization aimed at ending violence against women and girls, protecting women's rights and promoting gender equality. While occupied as a civil society actor, she also volunteers her service to the Government as the Chairperson of the Governing Board of Family Protection Authority since its establishment in 2012.

In recognition of her courageous and continued advocacy for women's rights and the prevention of violence against women, Aneesa was presented with the United States Secretary of State's International Women of Courage Award in 2012. In 2013, the President of the Maldives titled her with Nishaan Izzuddeen by conferring the second highest medal of honour in the country for her long and outstanding service to the nation.

Having followed a pretty non-stereotypical career path most of her public life, Aneesa says she too had to face some challenges at work like attempts to undermine her proficiency and intimidation by male colleagues, but never any sexual harassment. Amidst the political turmoil the country experienced just before hailing democracy, she was subjected to harassment and even physical violence by opposition elements.

Although raised by a single mother in a family environment where girls and boys alike were expected to become independent and self-reliant adults, Aneesa now believes it is always a juggle for women to balance the family and work outside the home especially in the absence of an adequate support system. Nonetheless, in her view it will not stop a woman from pursuing a successful career provided that she makes that extra effort to be a smart manager of her dual responsibilities though it entails some personal sacrifices like cutting down on socializing and time with friends.

Aneesa says she was blessed to have had the full support of her family when her children were small. She recalls with gratitude the unconditional love and care given to her children by her mother and elder sister. Her husband was

God-given learning opportunity for her in the field of international relations, and that she also made extensive use of the UN library during that period. She served in the area of foreign relations for 18 years, 17 of which she worked as head of the Foreign Relations Department at the President's Office.

She was transferred to the President's Office in March 1981. During her tenure at the President's Office, she won the Hubert H. Humphrey fellowship from the US and completed a one year post-graduate study program on Public Administration and International Relations at Pennsylvania State University. She moved from the President's Office in 1998 when she was appointed as the Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs and Social Security. From 2002 – 2008, she served as the Minister of Gender, Minister of Health and the Minister at the President's Office. She was the Minister of Health when the 2004 Tsunami struck the Maldives.

Aneesa was introduced to politics in 1979 as a Presidential nominee to the People's Special Majlis (Constituent Assembly convened for amending the Constitution). That was the year the Government of the Maldives embarked on special measures to uplift the status of women following the declaration of the UN Decade for Women. She recalled her total lack of interest in politics until early 1981. What sparked her interest was a debate in the Special Majlis in which some members expressed their belief that women cannot become Atoll Chiefs who are often required to travel by sea, as women are more prone to seasickness. She refuted that argument and became vocal on gender issues since.

Aneesa was appointed to the People's Majlis (Parliament) in 1997 as a Presidential nominee. Two years later, she contested elections and won one of the two seats for Meemu Atoll constituency. She served that constituency for two consecutive terms. When political parties were formed in 2005, Aneesa was elected as the leader of the parliamentary group of the then ruling party, Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (DRP) which held the majority in parliament and hence served on the Governing Council of the Party as well. In early 2007, she also led her team in the negotiations between the ruling party and opposition, Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP) in an attempt to expedite the process of amending the constitution for the Maldives to transition into a liberal democracy. Later, she also headed the DRP team in the all-party talks that was convened by the government when negotiations with MDP failed.

During her political life, Aneesa also contributed much in creating public awareness on the importance of women's presence in political institutions and



Ms. Aneesa Ahmed

Born as one of the 12 surviving children of Baa Eydhafushi Ahmed Ali and Holhige Fathimath Didi of Male', Aneesa Ahmed had served the country in various state institutions for over 34 years before taking an early retirement in 2009. She began her career as a nurse in 1973, moved into foreign service in 1980 and later entered politics. She retired from public service in 2009, after having served as the **first elected Deputy Speaker of the People's Majlis (Parliament) and the only woman to have presided over the Majlis** thus far, since the independence of the country.

Having finished high school in the Maldives, Aneesa chose to become a nurse contrary to the wish of her government which had teaching as the preferred choice of profession for her and her three batch mates who happened to be the first to graduate from high school following the introduction of English as the medium of instruction in the main schools of the country. She studied Nursing and Midwifery at the Holy Family Hospital in New Delhi, India under a WHO fellowship, took a special liking to nursing children which led her to do specialist training in paediatric nursing as WHO extended her fellowship for having topped all the nurses who graduated from the Holy Family Nursing School that year.

Upon her return from India, Aneesa joined the only hospital in the country (Government Hospital) as a staff nurse. She worked for four years and went to Australia for one year to do postgraduate training in nursing administration. By then she was married and had two little children. When she returned, she was appointed head of the nursing service in the hospital.

Aneesa switched from nursing to foreign service in July 1980 at the behest of the government. According to her, it was one of the most difficult decisions she had to take in life because of her passion for nursing. Although she declined the offer at first, subsequently she agreed to the transfer as the stated reason for the change was to have women represented at policy level in the Foreign Ministry. She was assigned mainly the tasks of a chief of protocol. Shortly thereafter she went to New York as part of the Maldives delegation to the UN General Assembly that year, and she became the first Maldivian woman to attend the General Assembly. Aneesa says the three months she spent at the UN was a

she fell ill seriously and had to be admitted to the ICU. She says she will always remember the thoughts that ran through her mind as she pondered about her daughter's circumstances. Those were truly the most difficult days for her life, but the outcome of which she is most proud of too.

Her greatest supporters who have been contributing to her success throughout her career are her parents and daughter. As a public servant, her family has had to face some political harassment, some of which even threatened their safety. She further mentions that her parents who are of old age had been deeply affected by this.

Azima believes that to make women more interested in being lawyers and related occupations, women need to be given more support and encouragement. Furthermore, the work environment needs to be harassment-free to attract more women. She personally thinks that her greatest accomplishment is surviving and continuing to grow in such a challenge-filled industry.

Azima hopes that in the future, women will get more support and would become free from the difficulties they currently face. Her advice to all women is to do whatever one does with discipline and commitment. This will surely result in success she says.



Ms. Aishath Azima Shakoor

Azima Shakoor began her career at the very young age of 17 years in 1986 as a secretary in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Later on, she got the opportunity to go for further education through a government scholarship which she accepted graciously. She knew such a chance was rare and may not happen again. This scholarship laid the foundation of her career. Her target was to be the most well established lawyer in the country, trusted and respected by others and to be an authority on law. To achieve this goal, she had worked extremely hard, putting a lot of time and effort into her work. She holds her First Degree with Honors from the University of London and her Masters Degree from the University of Western Australia.

Azima was the **first woman to be appointed as the Attorney General of the Maldives**. She was appointed to the position on 31st October 2007, when the country was experiencing unpredicted political and legal reform together with the volatilities and uncertainties following the introduction of multiple political parties for the first time. At that time, the People's Special Majlis was in the process of rewriting the national Constitution. In 2008, she had to even provide the legal advice necessary for the president to ratify the newly passed Constitution. In addition to her portfolio as Attorney General, she also served as a member of the People's Majlis and People's Special Majlis as a nominee of the President of the Republic. Following a change of government in November 2008, Azima established a law firm and began her private practice. Pretty soon she became one of the most successful litigants even in matters of large commercial transactions. Currently she is back in the Government as Minister of Legal Affairs in the President's Office. She has held the post of Attorney-General for two Governments and now is serving for the 3rd Government as a Minister.

As a practising woman lawyer, she claims that the most difficult aspect is balancing her career and personal life. Finding time for her role as a wife and a mother is especially demanding when she has to do her office work effectively. However, she maintains a good balance between them by scheduling her duties efficiently. She mentions that it was extremely difficult when she was studying for her Masters degree in Australia alone with her 3 years old daughter. Once

eldest son and says he was the reason she bit off more than she could chew over and over again - because she was determined to do better for his sake – and to prove that women with parental responsibilities could achieve, despite the challenges.

Shujune strongly believes in living by values and principles. She says, as difficult the decision was considering the very few numbers of women on the bench, she is a happier person for having resigned from judgeship as she would not want to be in a position where she would have to compromise her professional or moral ethics.

She says her greatest accomplishment is to have achieved her education despite the odds and to have broken a bit of the glass ceiling for women in the Maldives.



Ms. Aisha Shujune Muhammed

Aisha Shujune Muhammad is a human rights advocate known for her forthright opinions, steadfast determination and hard work. She was **one of the first two women to be appointed as judges in the Maldives.**

Shujune started her career in 1997 at Ministry of Women's Affairs and Social Welfare where she was identified as a proponent of women's rights. While working at the Ministry, she won a scholarship to read for an undergraduate degree in Law. Upon being awarded her Bachelor of Laws, she joined the Ministry of Justice, where she continued to push for equal opportunities for women, including the appointment of women into the judiciary.

In 2007, Shujune became one of the first women to be appointed as a judge in a Maldivian court of law. She recalls her appointment as humbling, and the decision to accept the appointment as driven by her determination to bring in more women into an all-male line of work. The appointment was not without difficulties and challenges; it was not only about breaking the barrier into a field which was strictly male, but also a domain which many contested was religiously reserved for men in a 100% Islamic country. This meant that there were attempts to undermine, sideline and even bully women judges. However, her strong character, deep rooted beliefs of equality, dedication and determination meant that she was soon accepted as an equal among her male peers and the public.

In addition, Shujune is one of the first two Asians ever elected to sit on the Subcommittee on the Prevention of Torture (SPT). SPT is a United Nations treaty body which works for the prevention of torture and other forms of cruelty, inhuman or degrading treatments and punishment. This gives Shujune the privilege to be the first ever Maldivian to be elected to a United Nations human rights treaty body.

Shujune is by nature, confident and determined in character, not only in her professional life but also her personal life. She pursued both her undergraduate and postgraduate studies abroad as a single parent, with her son at tow, taking on her parental responsibility while studying. She tributes her success to her

companies, empower women economically and to increase leadership and women's participation in the work force.

In Shafeega's view women are diligent, hard-working, and indefatigable in reaching the goals they aspire. However, she notes a number of obstacles for women in reaching their goals such as lack of proper child care services for women returning to their jobs after childbirth and absence of adequate maternity benefits.

Shafeega who had served more than 28 years in the government, proudly notes her parents, family members, her husband and children as a source of encouragement and comfort to persevere in her work. She considers the opportunity to establish capital market system and corporate governance in the Maldives as her greatest achievements to date.

Shafeega hopes to continue working to create and invent new ways to contribute to the development of the economy of the Maldives. For women seeking jobs in the field of economics and finance. Shafeega's advice is to embark without hesitation on any career they desire; not to lose their self-confidence even if they fail at first, and to face the challenge again at the earliest possible opportunity. She also urges employers to change some of the criteria they use, make them gender sensitive and appoint women if they meet the required qualifications.

Shafeega was awarded 'Rehendi Award' in 2016 by the government, as a recognition of her work to the country. She has also been recognised by many international organisations for her work in the field of economy. She currently works as the Chairperson of the Dhivehi Insurance Company, Chairperson of Maldives Islamic Bank audit committee, Senior Advisor of Ensis Fisheries and the President of Women on Boards.



Ms. Fathimath Shafeega

Fathimath Shafeega stands out as the **first woman to become the CEO of Capital Market Development Authority**, one of the most important financial institutions in the Maldives. Besides, she works actively to encourage women to enter and do well in the financial and business sector.

After finishing school in 1982, Shafeega got employed in the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA), or the Central Bank. While working in MMA, she spearheaded research into creating a capital market in the Maldives. Following this research, in 2006, the Maldives Securities Act came into being which led to the creation of the Capital Market Development Authority (CMDA). In 2006 Shafeega was appointed as the CEO by the then President of the Republic, Maumoon Abdul Gayoom.

Shafeega was serving as the Deputy Managing Director of the Capital Market Division of Maldives Monetary Authority when she was offered the position of CEO of CMDA. Though being a CEO was out of her comfort zone, she embarked on managing CMDA with extra diligence and perseverance and with the intention of establishing 'good governance' in the Maldives. In spite of facing numerous challenges at the initial stage as the CEO of CMDA due to lack of staff with technical expertise in the field, Shafeega was determined to bring important changes to the business sector of the Maldives. Hence, she played a pivotal role in creating companies that follow the rules of 'good governance' and paved the way for foreign investors to invest in the Maldives.

Shafeega has always supported women's empowerment and their endeavours to reach their highest potential. Shafeega's interest in introducing women to different fields of economics was renewed after the revision of the Cooperate Governance Code in 2013, which established a quota system of at least three women in each Corporate Board by the end of 2016, as being particularly reassuring to women entering the field of economics. Before resigning from her position as the CEO of Capital Market Development Authority in 2015, Shafeega founded an NGO named Women on Boards with the aim of increasing the number of women on boards of companies in the Maldives. Women on Boards works in collaboration with the government and other organisations working in the same field to prepare women to serve on boards of directors of

special measures for the underprivileged sections of the community be included in the constitution. Thus section 17, clause (b) of the constitution came into being, paving the way for special quotas.

While pursuing a career as well as being a politician, she did not in the slightest neglect her family obligations as a wife and a mother. May God grant her an everlasting place in the gardens of Paradise. Aameen.

NOTE: Due to difficulties in acquiring the necessary information on late Dr. Fathin Hameed, Hope for Women does not believe that the information given above is a complete account of her significant service to the country.



Late Dr. Faathin Hameed

The late Dr. Faathin Hameed was an extraordinary personality and served her country in various fields during her short life. In addition to being the **first Maldivian woman to return home to serve the country after earning a PhD, she was also the first woman to have chaired a governing Board of a major business company in the Maldives.**

Faathin completed her secondary education in Aminiya School and Science Education Centre. After finishing school she started working in the foreign affairs section of the President's Office.

She travelled to New Zealand for higher education on a scholarship, where she earned her Bachelors in Social Sciences from University of Waikato. She then continued studies up to Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD) from the same university. For her doctoral thesis, she chose "International Management of Common Property Fisheries Resources"; a topic most relevant to the fisheries industry, which is the backbone of the Maldives economy. Indeed, a field which not many people believe would be of interest to women.

In 1999, Faathin returned to the Maldives and started working in the Ministry of Fisheries and Agriculture, where she did extensive field work on the marine environment. Later, she served as the Deputy Minister of Fisheries and Agriculture as well. From 2004 August 18 onwards, she was the Chairperson of the Board of Directors of Maldives Transport and Contracting Company Plc (MTCC).

Late Dr. Faathin Hameed was active in politics too. She played a key role in the founding of the first political party to be created in the country since independence, long before the parliament approved the creation of political parties in 2005. Later that party was registered as the Maldivian Democratic Party. Faathin was also very active in the process of formulating the Constitution currently in use. She was then a Presidential nominee to the People's Special Majlis. She was very vocal in advocating for the rights of women and especially for increasing the role of women in politics. In fact, it was Faathin who first suggested that a special clause providing for temporary

Bisham attributes all her success to the endless assistance and support provided by her late father and mother and her siblings. She has close ties with her family and loves to spend time with them.

Although many women have the passion to work in the field of Shariah and Law, Bisham is concerned that most of them lack the drive and determination to reach the top. Her advice to women, who wish to build a career in this field, is to work with sincerity and commitment to the profession and to be willing to overcome all obstacles. She believes women can do equally well in this field.

Bisham is determined to make the best use of her current position to serve the country as best as she can and with sincerity. And she hopes to continue serving her country in whatever capacity she is able to contribute.



Ms. Aishath Bisham

Aishath Bisham is **the first woman to be appointed as the Prosecutor General of the Maldives**. Having studied law and having served as a State Attorney for the several years, Bisham also served as the Attorney General of the Maldives. Growing up, Bisham didn't aspire to be a lawyer, but during her high school days, having taken law as an extra subject, and believing legal field to be a good career choice, she decided to pursue studies in that direction despite the challenges, because she wanted to serve her country.

Upon obtaining her first degree she worked for some time at the private law firm, Premier Chambers before joining the Attorney General's Office as a State Attorney on 13th September 2004. During her many years of service in the Attorney General's Office and later in the Ministry of Legal Reform, Bisham, who always had a keen interest in following parliamentary proceedings, desired to contribute to formulating laws and legal reform. As such, in her 11 years of service as an attorney, Bisham played a significant role in formulating and drafting the laws on independent commissions that were introduced in the new Constitution of 2008. While working at the Legal Reform Ministry, she was also responsible for preparing the necessary documents when the Minister was required to attend the parliamentary question time, while at the same time providing professional support to the Minister for the same purpose.

Bisham notes that although the proportion of girls pursuing higher education in the field of Shariah and Law is quite high, not many are retained in the workforce and from among the few who remain, not many are seen in leadership roles, owing to the challenges women have to face working in this field.

Bisham believes that women have the capacity and the will to continue in the legal profession but she also emphasized the importance of diligence and determination to work in that field besides having the required education and training.

Although Bisham did not have to face any gender bias in the workplace, there were times when she had to experience difficulties due to personal grudges from among co-workers, which she took in her stride and decided to move on.

proved to be a challenge. Nevertheless, the support and efficient planning provided by her husband enabled her to manage all her duties effectively.

In Raashida's opinion, the widespread belief that women cannot work as effectively as men is an obstacle in the journey towards increasing their participation in the political sphere. In addition to this, she believes that, despite their ability to achieve high positions, women often find themselves developing self-doubt and a loss of self-confidence, as society raises doubts regarding their standards in comparison to men. Therefore, Raashida believes that changing the mindset of society, as well as women themselves, is essential in increasing the number of women working in this field, and notes that they can accomplish anything as long as they have a firm resolve and a strong belief in their own abilities.

Raashida's message for working women is, to carry on without paying heed to those who create obstacles to their empowerment. "We also cannot do everything at once. If we are to attend to household tasks full-time, we cannot work to produce our best. It is important that we seek assistance for these matters. I have also sought assistance for such tasks in the past, in order to be able to carry out my professional duties." Raashida notes that, unlike men, it is rare for women to focus solely on work whilst ignoring what needs to be done at home, and reiterates the importance of ensuring that women receive help and support in the home front in order to allow them to succeed professionally.

Raashida is currently a founding member of the NGO, 'Hope for Women', which works primarily towards eliminating violence against women and girls in the Maldives. Hope for Women also works towards increasing political participation of women.



Ms. Raashida Yoosuf

Best known for her long years of service in the field of education and social development, Raashida Yoosuf also holds the honor of being **the first female Ambassador of the Republic of Maldives accredited to a foreign country**. She achieved this distinction when she was appointed as the High Commissioner of the Republic of Maldives to the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka on 28 October 2002.

The daughter of the late Eydhafushi Yoosuf Kaleyfaanu, she was born in B. Eydhafushi and came to Male' at a young age in order to pursue an education. After completing grade 10 at Aminiya School, she worked at the Ministry of External Affairs before receiving a scholarship to pursue a teacher training course abroad. Upon her return, she worked in various schools in Male', rising through the ranks to become the head of Thaajuddeen School in 1989.

Her Masters Degree thesis secured the top grade offered by the University of Manchester (UK), and she was honored with the President of the Maldives Special Award in 1989. In 1993, she secured her first Cabinet post as the Minister of Youth, Women's Affairs and Sports. In addition to her role in the Cabinet, Raashida was a member of the People's Majlis and the People's Special Majlis, as a presidential nominee.

Though her appointment as High Commissioner was a significant change, viewing it as a means of serving the nation allowed Raashida to assume her new responsibilities with confidence. Her experience with working alongside other embassies during her Cabinet tenure ensured her ability to navigate her challenges with ease. Looking back on the experience as an opportunity where she gained new insight and experience, Raashida never felt that her sex was a barrier against fulfilling her duties as High Commissioner. She remains grateful for the support received from the staff of the Maldivian High Commission in Sri Lanka as well as the Government of the Maldives.

Women are often compelled to master a complex balancing act when it comes to succeeding professionally. For Raashida, the beginning of her Cabinet tenure coincided with the early days of her marriage, as well as the birth of her daughter, and juggling personal responsibilities alongside professional tasks

administrative divisions in the Maldives were clustered to provinces, she worked as the section head of the Upper North Province. Reminiscing her days working as the section head, she stated that when she started operating the office there was nothing there. She quickly organized the office by dividing into sections and took decisions necessary for running the office effectively.

Having worked always with the ambition of reaching the top in her career, Aminath Mohamed indicated the low percentage of women active in the political field. She wanted to see more women in politics and more women at the decision making level. Even if policies are in motion to achieve this goal, she believes that greater effort is needed to see positive results.

Today, Aminath Mohamed is working as the Deputy Director of the Ministry of Gender and Family, which she believes is the biggest advancement in her career. She mentions that her family and her husband were behind her success and that they were her greatest supporters in moving upwards in her career. She also expressed how grateful she is to her husband and to her family for supporting her and helping her in raising her two children during the days she worked as Island Chief.

She believes that anyone can become successful in the field of her choice, if she is determined and passionate about the work. She also believes that being a woman does not stop one from choosing to work in any field. In her career, she came across some people who have spoken ill of her. She believes that moving forward without reacting to those remarks is the best way. Her advice to all the women working in this field is to go ahead with courage.



Ms. Aminath Mohamed

In the early 1990s, the Government of the Maldives had placed high priority in mobilizing women into politics. According to the hierarchy of the government administration back then, the Island Chief was responsible for administering all government policies at the island level. Yet until the end of the nineties, no woman was ever appointed as Island Chief (katheeb). Aminath Mohamed was the **first ever woman to have been appointed as Island Chief.**

She was appointed as Katheeb of Male' Atoll Himmafushi in July 2002. According to her it was not too difficult for her to work on a strange island far away from her family, friends and acquaintances as it was a job in which she was highly interested. Aminath Mohamed, well known as Ainthu Katheeb, stated that the support and cooperation she got from the government departments during her days as Island Chief played a huge role in motivating her to do well. Most importantly she acknowledged the support and encouragement she got from the former Atolls Minister, Late Abdullah Hameed and the then Deputy Minister of Women's Affairs, Ms. Aneesa Ahmed and is very thankful to them.

Aminath Mohamed has remarkable leadership. Proof of this is the accomplishments she made in her term as Island Chief despite having had to work in an unfamiliar work environment with people she had not known before. The support and camaraderie she got from the citizens of Himmafushi facilitated her success. The trust that citizens of Himmafushi placed in her whilst standing by her in carrying out every development activity of the island is testimony to how much Himmafushi citizens supported her. Thus she believes that she had been able to serve the island in many ways. She also says that the huge support and encouragement she got highly motivated her to move forward in island administration.

Apart from working as Katheeb of Himmafushi she was also given the responsibility of temporarily managing some of the Atoll Offices. Notable among the Atoll Offices she managed were Alif Dhaal, Shaviyani and Noonu Atoll Offices. And the work she did in those atolls as a member and president of the Atoll Development Committee is something she notes with pride. Furthermore, after the Decentralization Act came into force and the



Ms. Haseena Moosa

Haseena Moosa, was **the first woman to be appointed as an atoll chief**. She was appointed Atoll Chief for Felidhu Atoll on 24 December 2001.

Haseena studied at Aminiya School in Male'. Upon leaving school she went on to pursue a career in nursing. She was trained as Nurses' Aide in Male' from 1968-1969. After completing the training, she started working as a Nurse Aide and served the people for a considerable period of time. She resigned from her post when she felt that her family needed more of her time and that she had to give up her career. However, after a while, her strong desire to serve the country led her to join a non-governmental organization and begin serving the people.

In 2001, Haseena took up a job in the public service for the second time. She worked tirelessly as an atoll chief until 10 November 2005.

NOTE: As Haseena lives abroad now and was not too keen to be interviewed, we could not get more details about her.

for women. She admits that by taking everything as a challenge it makes it easier for her to accomplish the requirements and tasks.

In her unit, the Defence Institute for Training and Education (DITE), she is incharge of the Arms Wing. She has two staff members working under her and the unit's responsibility is to monitor all issues related to firing. This specific wing is also responsible for information dissemination, tools on weapon handling and courses on weaponry.

Her interest and passion for the field of weaponry and training would not allow her to shift her course of work nor quit. She likes the perks of being able work with people with diverse backgrounds and being able to lead different courses in training.

The biggest achievement for Samha is being able to contribute to the institution by training men and women under her supervision and seeing her trainees serving the nation through MNDF. Her trainees have excelled in different ranks in the institution and she enjoys the satisfaction of seeing her trainees at senior posts. She also considers the 17 year service she has offered to the institution as a great achievement. Samha was conferred the Rehendhi Award in 2016 for her commendable work in a most non-traditional field of work.

Samha acknowledges and appreciates the help extended by her family, friends and co-workers at her unit in contributing to the success in her career. She specifically highlights the support of the superiors at MNDF in reaching the position she holds today, and providing such an opportunity for her. In spite of her busy schedule, she maintains close relation with her family through modern means of communication.

Samha's advice to women is to seek and make use of the innumerable opportunities available at MNDF, for she dreams of the day when women would hold the top ranks of the institution, and recommends educated women to confidently compete with their male counterparts. Moreover, to attract more women, she believes that awareness programs on the opportunities available at MNDF needs to be carried out more vigorously, in order to attract young and fresh graduates.



Sergeant First Class Samha Yoosuf

Samha Yoosuf is **the only woman who works as a weapons instructor in the Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF)**. She is the first and only woman in MNDF to complete NCO Cadre and holds the privilege of being the first female to graduate First Sergeant Course and Corporal Course at the NCO Academy.

Revealing her first experience in the then National Security Service (NSS), she said that the practice then was to pick new recruits to NSS from among high school graduates. It was through this process that Samha Yoosuf was recruited, the decision of which she openly defied. But following the initial training, she found out that she could easily compete with her male colleagues and decided that she was going to proceed with the training. The decision was much facilitated when the then Commander of her training unit (now the Chief of Defence Force), Major General, Ahmed Shiyam gave her the opportunity to mentor other young women in trainings. Since her interest was already focused on being a trainer, she willingly chose to accept and she now believes that this was what motivated her to go forward in the field.

To excel in her field she completed several training courses related to the field. Her first course was Special Task Force (STF) training, followed by NCO Cadre. Since her concentration was on weaponry, she completed weapons instructor course, gunnery course and instructor training course to master the field, in the year 2000. Her enthusiasm and keen interest has always led her to be among the top in the trainings she completed.

Today, she is a trusted instructor in MNDF. Although her field is weaponry, she does contribute to other trainings and drills held at the institution. She noted that some instructor training courses have been conducted under her supervision and that she had led the women's squad on several occasions.

Although there are no specific challenges for her to move forward, Samha highlights that when travelling abroad on duty matters, the issue of accommodation is a concern as separate accommodation for women is not always provided. About 10 years ago, she had to give up three opportunities for further training in the field of weaponry due to lack of suitable accommodation

said that she has travelled extensively to the islands, had many discussions with the communities for creating awareness of the importance of political participation by women.

She believes that her work throughout her career has been recognized at various stages. She was the first female lawyer in this country and she is one of the few female members of parliament the world over, who has succeeded in being a member of parliament for four consecutive terms. She is also the first and only woman so far to hold the chairmanship of a political party in the Maldives. She was awarded the International Women of Courage Award by the U.S Secretary of State, the first time that award was given in the U.S in recognition of her contribution to the plight of women and to democracy in the Maldives.

Mariya says she enjoys both work and family life, and as with any woman who works, it is always a juggle to balance both. She studies her children's school calendars and books time off. She has the support of her mother, husband and trusted nannies at home. Despite her full schedule, Mariya finds time to see her friends and is active in her class reunions and gatherings. In terms of her hobbies, she specified her love for sports – badminton, basketball, netball and she is a keen gym goer.

Her advice to women interested in pursuing a career is: “never give up; always persevere.” When asked about her views on the future, Mariya expressed her concern about the existing situation in the country together with her hopes for a brighter future.

friendships with a lot of her constituents – formed from a long time ago. According to her, this makes all the more great her conviction and responsibility to make sure their opinions, issues and ideas are heard and represented in parliament. She was also elected as Chairperson of the Maldivian Democratic Party in 2008. Under her Chairmanship, the party won the country's first ever multiparty election; membership of the party grew from around 19000 members to around 48000 members. Mariya noted that it was after she resigned from her post as Chairperson in 2011, MDP Government was ousted from power in 2012.

Mariya says that whilst on the one hand politics is a very male dominated arena, she does not think that she faces any challenges other than those encountered by other women who have to work to earn a livelihood. However, she points out one notable event that comes to her mind in this regard; the “coup”, in her view, which was brought about on 7th and 8th February 2012. She was very badly beaten by the security forces. However, despite the injuries, she was still there with the brave women of the Maldives, giving her best to oppose military/police rule and to restore power to the people.

She says she is blessed with children who dote on her and who understand that she needs to work in order to improve their future. She also said that they understand that she gives up her time and is away from them in order to improve and make better what she believes is a system of government which would make the lives and livelihood of the people of Maldives better.

“The greatest supporters in all that I do are my family. My husband, three children and I are terribly close. We share in each other's successes. We are there for each other in times of need and disappointment. My siblings, their children and I are also very close. My father, whom I love dearly, departed this world almost 30 years ago. Whilst he leaves behind a terrible void, I am very fortunate to have my mother in my care. She remains a rock and her love – unconditional. She is always there to listen, support and give advice which is drawn from the maturity and wisdom of age,” says Mariya.

Mariya believes there are a lot of factors which may help engage women in the work force. They include better child care arrangements, flexible working hours and being able to work from home if needed. She also thinks that working environment has still some way to go to make women feel safe. She went on to say, “Allegations of sexual harassment against senior civil servants and the current regime's handling of it, does not help further the cause of women in work.” In terms of her personal contribution to encourage women to work, she



Ms. Mariya Ahmed Didi

Mariya Ahmed Didi is the **first female lawyer and the first female chairperson of a political party in the Maldives.**

Mariya, serving her 4th consecutive term in the People's Majlis (Parliament) entered politics because she wanted to make a difference to the lives of ordinary people in the Maldives. She says that at the time she began her political career, "corruption was rife, the wealth of the country was concentrated in the hands of a few, police brutality was severe, the media was heavily censored, health care, travel and infrastructure were nonexistent and the quality of life for most citizens was poor. People were forbidden from expressing views which were not in line with that of the ruling regime. The punishments for such thoughts were harsh and unjust." She wanted to change this and she believed that democracy is what was needed to bring about this change.

Mariya has both a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Law. One of the first two Maldivians to be called to the English Bar, she is also a barrister in the United Kingdom having completed her professional qualifications as a member of the prestigious Gray's Inn and having done her pupillage at Albion Chambers. She believes that her studies laid the foundation to her belief that in order for a country to become a nation of laws and enjoy all the freedoms that come along with it, democracy had to be introduced, nurtured and allowed to flourish.

She started working in the Ministry of Trade in the early 1980s. In 1988, she left her post to study law in the United Kingdom. She worked in a barrister's chamber in Bristol after her studies. Later, she returned to the Maldives and worked as a lawyer in private practice as well as in public service as a prosecutor.

She entered politics as a Presidential nominee to the People's Majils. When that term was over, she contested elections and got elected as the member representing Male' Atoll. She was a member of the Constitutional Drafting Committee too. Following the adoption of the new constitution in 2008, she got elected to represent the people of Mahchangolhi Uthuru, the constituency in which she grew up. Her late and dear father was at one point a member of parliament of the same constituency. Therefore, she has very close bonds and

overcome these challenges and it increases the drive to move forward with much more vigor. Travelling to islands as part of her job, she gets to inform the public and raise awareness on electricity and its related issues. This is also another aspect of job satisfaction. She has even worked in islands setting engine up distribution systems and repairing generators, free of service. She specifically mentioned the sense of fulfilment and satisfaction she got from working at F.Magoodhoo and the positive public feedback and gratitude from the people of Magoodhoo.

She believes that the electricity situation in the Maldives hasn't been developed well enough and that working in this field isn't something women are unable to do, proof of which is the diligent work she has done for years. She did face some problems in her early days where people had difficulty accepting that a woman could be an engineer. This was mainly in the form of phone calls, both national and international, where the caller assumed that she was a man by greeting her as such. However, due to the hard work and commitment, along with the risks she has taken, she has achieved respect and trust.

Expecting and foreseeing challenges and obstacles is very important according to Faathina. When she visited islands on field work, she would take her young child along with her. She believed that having children is in no way an obstruction to one's work. Her greatest support in her endeavors is her family, husband and two children.

Faathina states that during her visits to the islands, she noticed that the chances for women engineers are getting slimmer. Many don't feel that it's important to educate girls and make them independent socially and financially. To avoid any possible loss of dignity or shame, most people want to marry off their daughters while young.

For women who want to go forth in their careers, Faathina's advice would be to develop self-confidence and commitment and to respect rules and regulations and observe punctuality. One should accept the fact that being a woman sometimes limits one's physical capabilities. She also recommends the importance of a hobby or part-time activity for self-enrichment and relaxation. She herself does sewing and embroidery which help to relax her mind.

Her dream is to bring about a great change to the country using renewable energy. She also has the hope of pursuing further education. However, her biggest dream is to work in the atolls, establishing energy systems.



Ms. Faathina Abdul Hakeem

Faathina Abdul Hakeem is **one of the very few women electrical engineers in the Maldives, who continues to work in the field** and even served as the Chief Engineer to Hilton Maldives. Although she cannot quite explain why she took an interest in engineering, she claims that she has always had an interest in anything technical. Her Physics teachers have also praised her on being exceptional in the subject even though she was not sure why. She also says that she always used to get good results in Physics and Mathematics and this led her to choose engineering as her field.

After obtaining her first Degree in electrical engineering, she aspired to get practical experience and get used to the nitty gritty of engineering. As engineering is a field where application is required, being able to use the knowledge acquired effectively is important. Therefore, instead of pursuing post graduate studies, she wanted to focus on practical experience. In this way, although she did not receive any certificates in the practical field, she managed to work with experienced engineers which helped her to learn a lot. Acquiring knowledge is not enough, working alongside professionals would help one learn much more than what would be taught in class.

Faathina first started working in the field of engineering in 1991 at Safari Tour Company, which was managing and running 5 resorts. Her responsibility was to travel to the resorts for maintenance and supervise their workshop in Male'. Then onwards, she managed to get further opportunities to work at different venues. She even got an assignment by the government for design and distribution. In 2003, when Crown Company was building Rangili Island into a resort, she was chosen as the chief engineer. Upon completion of this project, she was offered by Hilton to stay on the island to monitor and maintain the engines which she accepted with gratitude. This allowed her to be the only woman who was working for a well established hotel chain such as Hilton at that time. Presently she is working in a company in which she is a shareholder. The objective of this company is to work towards renewable energy in the engineering field in order to make Maldives a carbon-neutral country.

Faathina notes that engineering is an area where one meets with a lot of challenges. It gives a great sense of relief and satisfaction when one is able to

Being a very passionate worker who often drifts in and gets deeply involved in projects, work counts as her strength and weakness. Although this is handy for the projects, this proves to be an obstacle to balancing her career and personal life. She reminds herself that she needs to keep this balance and admits that she is not perfect by any account. Even with her demanding work, she tries to find time for her personal life as well. Her biggest self-indulgence has been her faith, health and social work which motivate her through difficult and pressing times.

Athifa is glad to see more women becoming civil engineers in the country, and the profession has become more open to women. This is shown by some of the Maldivian women who are performing on an equal platform as men after having pursued civil engineering and built environment specializations. However, she also agrees that creating an enabling work environment for women still has a long way to go. She would love to see more women in the executive and decision-making level in the Housing and Urban Development sector in the Maldives.

To all women interested in this field, she has two things to say. One is that you shouldn't undertake such a career unless you have a deep interest as it is highly technical and scientific in nature. The other is that given the nature of this work, good work ethics is paramount to success, especially for women.

Athifa learnt not to look forward, as setbacks are very painful, thus she does not dream much about the future but seeks opportunities as they emerge. Following her recent experiences in public service, she now would love to work abroad or work on international projects to broaden her horizon. She also shows interest in doing research specific to the Maldives so that knowledge can be made available for future generations. As of now, knowledge codification is scarce in her particular field in the Maldives.

Engineering, which is more on engineering aspects of urban infrastructure and urban planning.

Joining the profession in the early 90s, she has been able to deliver on a number of projects and papers for national development. This is inclusive of almost all infrastructure projects in Vilingili, the satellite town for Male', from its initial stage to full settlement. Her contribution to Hulhumale' Project from its inception to detailed planning stages and execution is something that swells her up with pride, until she left public service in August 2015. The various resettlement programs and coordination and sector contributions in the 2004 Tsunami recovery program, is worthy of special mention due to its importance and her great contribution.

Her contributions in the field also include institutional building and the transformation of the Housing Ministry, the various sectoral law reviews and reforms and the planning aspects of every project which brought many changes in the social aspects of life in Male' City. This, she believes, is a much greater accomplishment than it sounds as it reaches the segments in society which are most vulnerable and who hardly have a voice. She was also responsible for completing the Tsunami Housing Project at Thaa Madifushi, at the very beginning of 2015.

In public service, she had filled almost all the junior and technical posts of the Institution, rising up slowly, gaining experience and knowledge, and finally she was the Head of Planning Department. During her work she was exposed to various forums of UN Habitat, and thus contributed to its regional and national conferences. Athifa has vast knowledge and experience in the urban development sector and she was fully involved in formulating the Land law development planning and urban governance. She last served as the Minister of the State, for Housing and Infrastructure while she was also the Registrar of Lands at the Maldives Lands Authority.

As a woman, she faced countless challenges in her career path. In the male dominated profession of civil engineering and civil works management, women have to put in twice the effort and dedication to be recognized as a professional and to survive among all her male colleagues. Otherwise voices go unheard and their opinions disregarded. However, Athifa didn't let this deter her as she exerts herself to the maximum.



Ms. Aminath Athifa

Aminath Athifa is an exceptional urban engineer with a long list of accomplishments and academic achievements. She is **the first woman in the country who graduated in the field of civil engineering** and till date, one of the few women in this field, and took it to heart as a challenge. She is supported by her family, parents, husband and son; whom she describes as the backbone of her efforts to success.

The lack of women in the field of civil engineering and its requirement of years of dedicated higher education was the challenge which sparked her interest in the field. Due to the limitations arising from her socioeconomic background, for her, entering the field itself was breaking and overcoming the obstacles to show her talents. At the beginning of her career, she focused on two targets: to achieve a Masters Degree in Civil Engineering and to be an active practitioner who would be recognized for her excellence.

It was in Australia that she earned her undergraduate studies, along with various awards in civil engineering from Box Hill TAFE, Victoria, and later, she achieved a Masters Degree in Urban Engineering from Loughborough University, UK. She also has a Post Graduate Diploma from Institute for Housing and Urban Development Studies (IHS), Erasmus University, Rotterdam, besides many other short training courses in the field.

Even though she wanted to continue her career in civil engineering, upon her return from Australia she was transferred to the then, Male' Housing and Urban Development Board, where she started off with projects but later had to be more focused on physical planning and development areas, which was a pressing matter then, as there was limited to no expertise in the sector. Her belief in education being the best pathway to success reconciled with her aspirations in attaining an opportunity for a scholarship in civil engineering, the probabilities of which were slim in the Housing and Urban Development Board. While working there, it was difficult for her to pursue a Masters Degree in Civil Engineering, due to funding issues. Hence, she did her Masters in Urban Engineering, which is more on engineering aspects of urban infrastructure and urban planning.

The gist of what he said was "you are the children of the Maldives and children of Maldivian people".

Moomina says there is nothing women cannot do, and that sometimes women do even better than men. Thus, her advice to young women is to take with confidence a career path of personal choice and to go forward. Never say no to any good opportunity that comes your way; even if it is an offer to go to the moon.

When the Government Hospital, a 42 bed hospital built with the aid of British government was opened in 1967, Moomina was appointed as the matron and remained so until 1977 when she was appointed as the Minister of Health, the first woman to be appointed to the Cabinet. She was also a member of the parliament from 1975 onwards.

When asked why she stepped out of nursing after spending almost her entire life in the field, she says it happened when President Ibrahim Nasir suddenly decided to appoint her as the Minister of Health. Her passion for caring for others was so deeply ingrained that she even cried after being transferred from her position as matron of the Government Hospital. Though Moonima was reluctant to dwell further on why she was appointed as the Minister of Health, she did note that she had been helping out in various activities of the Ministry of Health at the behest of her uncle Ibrahim Rasheed who was the Minister of Health at the time. Of particular note is her service as the Minister of Health during the nationwide cholera outbreak of 1978. She deserves credit for her dedication and tireless efforts to bring that epidemic under control.

According to Moonima, she ran for the parliament in 1975 because a group of women from Male' urged her to do so. She was first elected to the parliament in a by-election and when the term ended shortly, she contested again for one of the two Male's seats and won for a new term, notably with the support of women.

Even with her busy schedule, Moomina did not lax in her duties as the mother of 4 children, though from time to time, other women in her family did step in. She happily notes that her husband never complained even though she had to work day and night and that it was through his support and encouragement that she was able to keep going. Responding to people who undermine women and say that women can't work during pregnancy and postpartum, Moonima pointed out that as the Minister of Health she travelled to Switzerland and represented the Maldives at the World Health Assembly just two months after her son was born.

Since Moomina grew up in a family where girls and boys were treated equally, it did not deter her from accepting positions that were otherwise held by men. As her father was rarely home due to his many duties, her mother took care of the household and was her role model when growing up. Moonima said she was motivated to serve her country after listening to a speech given by the first President of the Maldives, Mohamed Ameen to Maldivian students in Sri Lanka



Ms. Moomina Haleem

Moomina Haleem had served the Maldives in many ways holding various positions in public service including political portfolios. Besides having had the privilege of being **the first female minister in the country, she is also the first woman to have been directly elected to the People's Majlis (Parliament).**

Moomina completed her primary and secondary education at Holy Family Convent in Colombo, Sri Lanka. Upon completing high school, she was awarded a WHO fellowship to study nursing in Christian Medical College, Vellore, India.

When asked why she chose nursing as a career, Moomina recalled two incidents which she believes prompted her to become a nurse. One, she said, was an illustration in her English text book titled "Radiant Way" in which a girl sits next to an injured dog, gently stroking it. As she would later find out, that girl was none other than Florence Nightingale, the founder of professional nursing.

Some years later, when a member of her family was admitted in hospital diagnosed with hepatitis, Moonima spent a lot of time with her until she was discharged, only to be admitted again with a relapse, soon after which she died. On that day, Moomina saw tears streaming down the eyes of the attending nurse and was deeply moved by that. Moomina believes these two incidents got her interest drawn to caring for the sick and serving them.

After training for 4 years at Christian Medical College, she returned to the Maldives in 1963 as the first Maldivian nurse to have completed higher studies in nursing. At the time, there was just one medical facility operating in the entire country with a doctor deputed by WHO and group of young girls as nurses' assistants. As the facility only catered for the most basic medical needs and did not provide even midwifery services, Moonima had to do home visits and attend to women in child birth without the aid of any medical equipment designed for the purpose. Since she was the only nurse, she had to work almost 24 hours a day and it came as a huge relief when two more trained Maldivian nurses joined her a year later.

staff of Hope for Women for their toil in taking the interviews and compiling the profiles, as well as in final editing of the work. Here, I would like to make special mention of Ms. Fathimath Nazeefa, Hope for Women's former Advocacy Officer and Ms. Rifa Rasheed who is currently in that post.

Through the release and distribution of this book, Hope for Women aims to highlight the diversity of women's capabilities and show that they are fully able to succeed in any arena. The organization hopes that this will facilitate discussions in regards to women's participation in non-traditional sectors, expose the youth to the vast array of possibilities in regards to their professional futures and inspire them to make their own choices. In addition to this, there is also the greater aim of enabling an increase in the proportion of women actively engaged in the decision making processes.

May Allah guide us in our endeavours and grant us success. Aameen.

Aneesa Ahmed

Co-founder

Hope for Women



Foreword

To exclude women from the narrative of national development is a great disservice to them; there is not a single sector, in the Maldives that does not benefit from women's contributions. This book is a true reflection of that reality.

Even in today's rapidly developing world, there are many who hold fast to the belief that a woman's place remains in the home. This is an opinion shared and promoted by a vast majority of Maldivians as well, male and female alike. The most appropriate careers for women are seen to be in sectors that deal with care and nurturing; doctors, nurses, and teachers are considered some of the few potential career opportunities for women. Such traditional attitudes continue to influence the choices of young girls and women as they move towards higher education, and afterwards, into the job market. Despite such longstanding beliefs, Maldivian women have succeeded in attaining outstanding achievements in various fields, contributing to the country's progress.

This book focuses on the achievements of women who have served in non-traditional sectors. The profiles highlight their courage and determination, as well as drawing much needed attention to the immense challenges they have faced in their journeys. The individuals included in this book have all been the first women in their respective sectors to achieve their positions or specific accomplishments. Regrettably however, with due respect to their personal decisions, I would like to mention here that we have not been able to include everyone on our list as some of them did not wish to have their profiles published.

This book of profiles came into being with much work and contribution from several sources and I take great pleasures in acknowledging them. First of all the model women who shared their life stories with us for publication. Next, Ooredoo Maldives for their generous financial contribution to cover the printing cost of the book, Mr. Amir Ali who designed the cover of the book and Mr. Abdullah Naeem Ibrahim who reviewed and approved the content of the book as non-remunerative contributions to Hope for Women. Last, but not the least, I wish to express deep gratitude to the very few, but hard working and dedicated

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