

ANNUAL REPORT 1994/1995

9 Rosemont Avenue
London
N12 0BY
Tel: 0181 446 2781
www.msa-uk.org
email: info@msa-uk.org

MALDIVIAN STUDENTS' ASSOCIATION (UK)

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9 Rosemont Avenue
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Annual Report: 1994/1995 Session**

PREPARED BY: HASSAN SHAFEEU

Introduction

After a long and an eventful period, our term of office is about to end now. We are proud to show that the subscription-paid membership of this Association had increased to forty-seven. This is due to the hard effort put in by all the members of the Central Committee. I am extremely happy to have worked with the Central Committee over the past year, and the eagerness and enthusiasm that they have shown are reflected in the activities that we managed to hold during the period of office. Although a lot of effort was placed by the Central Committee in organizing numerous activities, we are sad to find that the interest shown by some members is poor. But this had not deterred those who are genuinely interested in making their stay in the UK a happy one and sharing them with others through the numerous activities of the MSA (UK). I am particularly moved by the efforts by those who were involved in the arduous activities of HEAP '95 that was held in the Maldives this summer. This was held in memory of our late departed Yasir Jameel (May Allah bless his soul).

The last AGM was held on the 19th December 1994 and the following Central Committee was selected.

CHAIRPERSON Hassan Shafeeu

VICE-CHAIRPERSON Amjad Abdulla

TREASURER Hassan Ugail

SECRETARY Abdulla Sodiq

STUDENT ADVISOR Abdulla Nashid

With the new Central Committee we immediately set out to achieve goals to serve the student community to the best of our ability. Given below is a brief summary of the activities that were organized held during this period of office.

Christmas Activities

After the AGM, there was no activity planned by the previous Central Committee. That gave the incoming Committee very little choice on the events that can be organized. However, as much as possible was made to hold a week of activities. An evening of light entertainment was held with the highlight being a match of gadufilla. Since the Judge that was observing fair play was unrepentant to bribery, more drastic action using voice recorders was called for by the losing team. Since this was discovered after the event, there was no rise in temperature. Nevertheless the match ended in a draw.

A TT tournament was organized on the 20th. The single's champion was Thaathu, while the Doubles Champions were Thaathu and Sappe. That evening there was a guided tour of the London's renowned Leciester Square. The following day a football match was organized and held.

Roadha Villun

After a period of dormancy, the first activity for 1995 was a 'Roadha Villun' held at 9 Rosemont Avenue on 11th February. This was held with the intention of increasing the religious awareness among the members. About twenty members attended the gathering and started off with the preparation for breaking the fast. Delicacies on the menu included kulhiboakiba, cutlass, paan-boakiba, havaadhuli-bis and fuh-jehi kawaabu. The main meal was after the evening prayers that was led by Ibrahim Asim. After the Isha and Vithr, a discussion circle was held to address any queries that members may have. Where possible, answers were provided, and for those where we did not have the expertise, the questions were forwarded to more knowledgeable scholars. This was seen as a good opportunity to voice any queries that had always bothered some, but never had a chance to put forward and find an adequate answer. To cool off after the discussions, a relaxing bowling match was organized at the Rowans Bowling alley. The gathering ended with the final meal of the day in the small hours before dawn.

Easter Gathering

An Extra-Ordinary General Meeting at Coventry was initially organized to be held on 8th April to coincide with the Easter break. However, due to the unfortunate sudden death of one of our beloved colleague, Yasir Jameel, the meeting was postponed. The EGM was finally held on May 1st at 204 Four Pounds Avenue, Coundon, Coventry. Sixteen new members joined MSA and participated in this gathering. At the meeting MSA (UK) was introduced to the new members. The decisions reached by Thaana Committee (see below) was also reported to the members present. The main discussion centered on a brainstorming session on HEAP '95 (see below). The ideas put forward in the meeting proved to be the basis for the activities of HEAP '95. A traditional Maldivian meal was provided courtesy of Fahir, Maanu, Sohee and Juway. This was followed by traditional Maldivian songs that was lead by Ali Haidar.

The highlight of the gathering was an organized trip to the Alton Towers on 2nd July, which was joined by twenty members. The initial ride on the Black Hole proved too much for some people, and vowed never to go on a ride again! This, however, did not deter the others from conquering the notorious Nemesis and the Thunder-Loop. This near-perfect day ended with an evening meal and light entertainment.

HEAP '95

This was the main highlight of this year's activity and was held in Male and Addu between 10th and 22nd August. This is an awareness program conducted in the Maldives to increase the general awareness of higher education and inform about the opportunities for Maldivian students to study abroad. The program provided information on higher education courses available in the UK to prospective students, academic bodies and the general public. It was anticipated that this will help the students in choosing a suitable career early on in their life, and make preparations to realise it. This event was also used to inform the participants of the activities that they would be involved in when they leave school and start their government service. The information was provided as seminars held in various schools and social centers in Male and in Addu, and was participated by several local organizations.

The main event of HEAP '95 was held on the 21st and 22nd August at the Conference room of the Social Education Center. Several prominent guests participated in this event, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Planning and Human Resources and the Minister of Youth and Women's affairs. It is estimated that a total of 800 students participated in the activities and several requests have been made to organise similar events in the following years. A more detailed report about the activities of HEAP had been compiled. This activity was helped by numerous people, and while I cannot name them all, I am extremely pleased to acknowledge the efforts by Nashid, Ugail, Sodiq, Andy, Simad, Zaha, Thoabe, Fareeda, Iku, Shuveka, Ali Shaheed, Paasha, Ahmed Naseer, Sarippe, Shaathir, Zahid, Nabeel and Ibrahim Naashid. I also acknowledge the generous donations especially by Gaasim and Naabe'.

Summer Get-together

A late summer gathering was organized in Brighton on 21-22 October mainly to introduced the new students to the activities of the MSA (UK) as early as possible. This meeting was not as successful as the previous activities and only seventeen members were present. The main reason was thought to be the long journey to Brighton, especially from the North. The organized activities were further disrupted by the late arrival of some members due to heavy traffic. However, we were pleased to welcome two new students who joined our membership. The main activities held include a trip to an amusement arcade and a tour of the Brighton Palace Pier. This provided the opportunity for some members to go on their first (and vowed to be the last!) roller-coaster ride. The highlight of this event is undoubtedly the performance of a certain member in her futile attempt to control a bumper car. By the time she did manage to get the grips, the ride was over and most of the spectators were either flat on the ground or bending and holding their stomachs in agony, but unable to control their laughter.

On the 22nd, a trip to the Sea Life Center was organized. Although the displays at this center did not meet the expectations of most of the members, it was nevertheless a fun half day.

Meeting the Minister of Education

A meeting was organized with the Minister of Education Dr. Mohammed Latheef in the conference room of the Sherlock Holmes Hotel on 11th November. This was following a request made by the Minister, and all members of MSA (UK) were invited. However, only sixteen members were present at the meeting. In the minister's introductory speech, he said that the main reason for the gathering was just to talk to the students and

find out about any problems that they may face. In addition, he stressed the importance of self discipline and said that we should be aware of all the dark forces that a free country like UK had to offer. The wide ranging discussions that followed include suggestions to move Rosemont to Coventry and introduce a more philosophical approach to policy making in Education. The meeting also gave the opportunity to formally release the long awaited third issue of MALAS, which was presented to the Minister by the Editor Ali Niyaz.

MALAS 3

The third issue of MALAS 3 was released on 11th November and was presented to the Minister of Education. This was the result of the laborious work by our editor Ali Niyaz. The quality of the magazine was far better than the two previous issues and the standard of the articles were good. While some of the criticisms of the Central Committee may be substantiated, I am disappointed that the Editor failed to appreciate the work done for HEAP '95 when he claimed that the summer was 'long and uneventful'. Perhaps continental Europe was less eventful than Male this summer.

Thaana Committee

At the last AGM, a three-member Thaana Committee (1994 Committee) was set up to investigate and select the best possible way of spending the money obtained at the event Thaana '94 for education. After much deliberation, it was decided to send a letter to all the islands inviting them to send a proposal. The proposal is to include among other things, how the money would be spent, their contribution and the effect of the project on the student community. The response for the invitation was poor with only thirteen replies for the 203 letters sent. These thirteen replies were scrutinized by the 1994 Committee. Most of the proposals were beyond the capability of the budget of Thaana Fund and hence were rejected. Two islands were selected to give the award this year. They include proposals by xx for MRF30,000 and another by Noon Kneed Kulhudo for MRF25,000. Both are proposals to set up a library in the community school with them providing the building while we contribute the books. A third proposal by Shaviyani Kondhoo for MRF19,350 was also short listed but due to insufficient funds it will not be awarded this year. The money will be given to the selected islands at a ceremony due to be held in Male late December.

Other Activities

In addition to the above activities MSA (UK) was involved in several other on-going operations. The e-mail network was improved and expanded. More contacts were made with other Maldivian students studying abroad, resulting in several intellectual discussions ranging from the effects of licensing fishing zones within Maldives to foreigners; effects of satellite TV showing indecent French films; the green campaign put forward by the students in Halifax; etc. Unfortunately, due to the misuse of some students in Australia, the world-wide network had to be suspended. It is hoped that after appropriate measures, the network would be up and running soon.

For the first time a home page for MSA (UK) was created on the World Wide Web. This allowed instant access to information about MSA (UK) from anywhere in the world. Current information available include an introduction of the MSA (UK), its constitution, the second edition of MALAS. The intention is to introduce and increase the awareness of MSA(UK) and its activities to the Maldivian students studying abroad. In addition, a letter of condolence was sent to the parents of late Mr. Yasir Jameel.

Conclusions

Although we did not manage to organise as many activities as we would have liked to, we are nevertheless satisfied with the work that we managed to do over the past year. This has been achieved by the dedication of the Central Committee to the cause of MSA (UK), but most of all by the support shown by the members, for which I am most grateful. I hope that the following year would be as eventful, if not more. Before I conclude, I would once again like to thank the members of MSA (UK) on behalf of the Central Committee for giving us the opportunity to serve you. It has been a pleasure which would last in our minds for a long time.

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