

Expanding Developmental Horizons through Education, Research & Innovation: An Island Nation's Perspective

Brig. General Zakriya Manzoor

Maldives Army

Brig. General Zakriya Manzoor of the Maldivian Army was the fourth speaker and he presented his paper on an Island Nation's Perspective. He highlighted how Maldives' tourist industry over the years fathomed through innovation, change and advancement and contributed to the national development of the country. Paying attention to the dramatic renewal and modernization of the island's tourism sector he illustrated how some landmark developments such as reaching the target of one million tourists in 2013 compared to 30 to 40 tourists in the early 1970s, updating the standards of accommodation, water sports, transportation and other infrastructure facilities and introducing the unique one resort for one island concept throughout the 1190 plus islands network. According to General Manzoor 80% of

Maldives' foreign exchange earnings comes from tourism. He also pointed out that Maldives has become one of the famous tourist destinations and hideaway attractions in the South Asian region. Not only the Europeans but also increasing numbers of regional tourists are being attracted to Maldives today. General Manzoor emphasized that the number of Chinese tourists has surpassed that of the Europeans during the last couple of years. Further he said that the secret for attracting these phenomenal numbers of tourists to the island was the prevailing stability, peace and security in the region. In conclusion General Manzoor insisted that the young cadets should learn more about the dynamics of development and be cognizant about the importance of education, innovation and research in achieving a country's prosperity.