

Maldives govt moves to calm outrage over scholarship cap

Government on Tuesday moved quickly to calm outrage over the decision to limit the number of president's scholarships awarded to A-Level examinations' National Top 10 with a top official saying that president Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom gave eminence to provide education opportunities to youth.

The constraint awards the scholarship to only 15 students of the A-Level National Top 10 toppers, whereas previously it was awarded to all first placers.

The decision sparked outrage by some students on social media.

In response to a question from Haveeru over the decision, government spokesperson Ibrahim Muaz Ali insisted that the president's responsibility was to come up with a policy which would be implemented by the line ministry.

According to the policy released by the education ministry two months prior, the fifteen recipients will be chosen based on the number of points all the applicants receive.

The point system awards 12 points to each "A" grade and 15 points to each "A+" grade.

The ministry's notice added that scholarship applicants will be interviewed by a special panel of judges.

However, shortly after the news broke on mainstream media, the announcement has since been removed.

When asked if the increasing cost had prompted the decision, Muaz deflected the question to the education ministry.

The new policy has also changed the previous principle of allowing all the scholarship recipients to pursue any field in any country of their choice.

The current change grants the choice of pursuing education in any country only to the top five students of the chosen fifteen. The remaining ten students are offered choices of developing or slightly developed countries.

However, choices are not offered to any slightly developed country should its education expenses equal that of a developed country.

In 2014, 23 students had topped the A-Level National Top 10.