



## Maldives President's Visit to India

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The President of the Republic of Maldives Ibrahim Mohamed Solih visited India on a state visit from 16-18 December 2018.

This is the first foreign visit by President of Maldives after assuming office in November 2018.

### Outcome of the visit

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- The two countries signed the following Agreements/MoUs/Joint Declaration of Intent during the visit:
  - Agreement on the facilitation of **visa arrangements**.
  - Memorandum of understanding on **cultural cooperation**, improve the ecosystem for **agribusiness**.
  - Cooperation in the field of **communications technology** and **electronics**.
  - Countries agreed to work together in the following areas, health, mutual legal assistance, investment promotion, human resource development, and tourism
- India announced **financial assistance of US\$ 1.4 billion** in the form of budgetary support, currency swap and concessional lines of credit to fulfill the socio-economic development programmes of the Maldives.
- The Maldives reaffirmed its **"India-First Policy"**, and commitment to working together closely with India.
- Both countries agreed on the importance of maintaining **peace and security in the Indian Ocean Region**.
- The two countries reaffirmed their commitment and support for increased cooperation in **combating terrorism**.

### India-Maldives Relation

- India and the Maldives share **deep historical, cultural, and economic ties**.

- India was among the first to **recognize the Maldives after its independence in 1965** and to establish diplomatic relations with the country. India established its embassy at Malé in 1972.
- India's bilateral and financial assistance to the Maldives has been reciprocated through an "India first" policy by the Maldives.

### **Importance of the Maldives for India**

- The Maldives is an important aspect of **India's 'Neighbourhood First' policy.**
- **Strategically located in the Indian Ocean**, Maldives archipelago comprising 1200 coral Islands lies next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan, and India. More than 97% of India's international trade by volume and 75% by value passes through the region.
- As the pre-eminent South Asian power and **a 'net security provider'** in the Indian Ocean region, **India needs to cooperate with the Maldives in the security and defense sectors.**
- India is also a preferred destination for Maldivians for education, medical treatment, recreation, and business.
- **Maldives is also a member of SAARC.** It is important for India to have the Maldives on board to maintain its leadership in the region.
- Since **China's naval expansion into the Indian Ocean** - Maldives significance has steadily grown and now it's at the heart of international geopolitics.
- There is significant **Indian diaspora in the Maldives.** Innumerable Indians work across the hospitality, education, and health-care sectors of the Maldives economy.