



Japan Signs Pact with Maldives

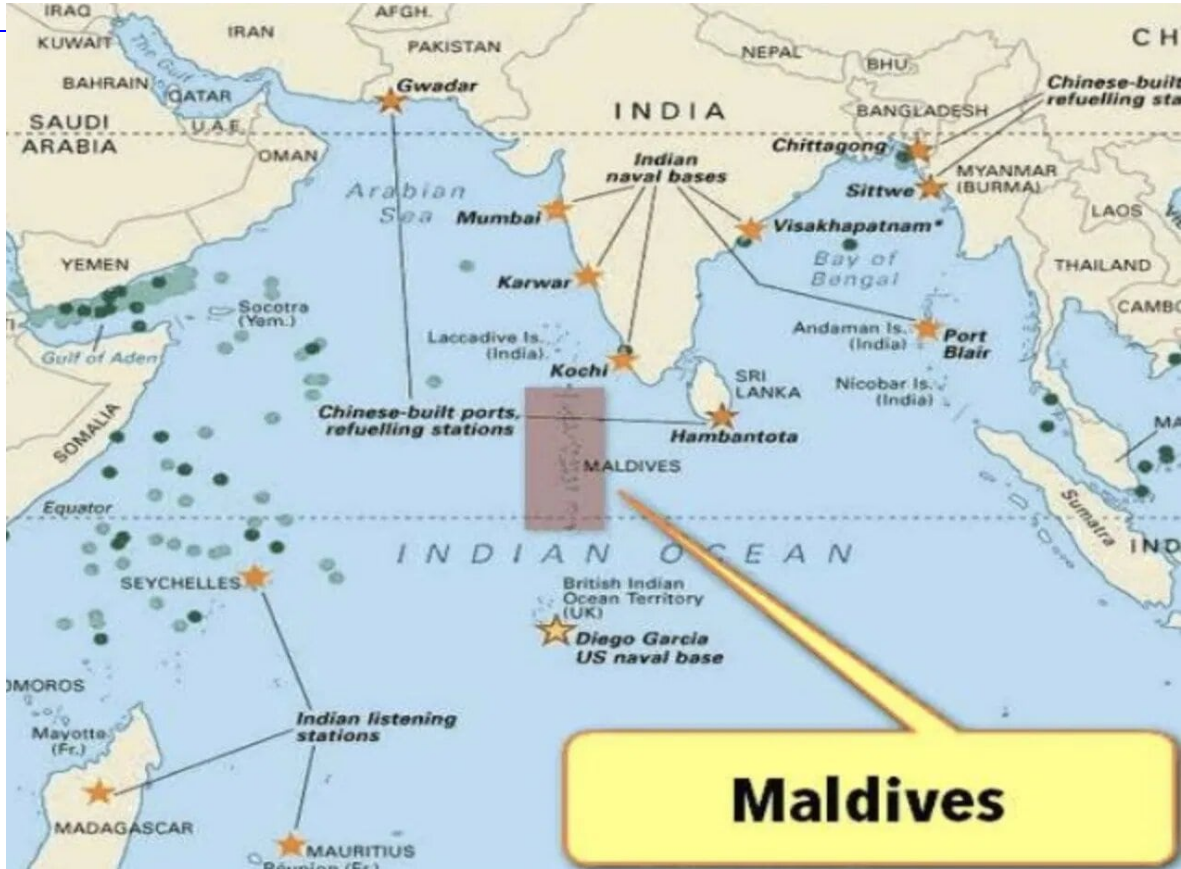
Why in News

[Japan, India's strategic partner](#) in the Indo-Pacific region, has recently signed a pact to strengthen Maldives security infrastructure that would contribute to stability in the Southern Indian Ocean.

Key Points

- The Maldives and Japan recently signed an agreement under the **Economic and Social Development Programme** of the Government of Japan.
 - Under it, a **grant aid of 800 million Japanese Yen** is to be extended to the Maldives Coast Guard and the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Center.
- The grant aid will be utilized to **further strengthen the capabilities** of the Maldives Coast Guard, the Maritime Rescue and Coordination Center, Sub-Regional Centers and Vessels.
 - This includes the provision of **communications equipment, professional search and rescue dive equipment** to be used by the Maldives Coast Guard during search and rescue operations.
- Previously in October 2019, Japan donated 21 paramedic ambulances to the Maldives health sector.
- **Benefits:**
 - Combating **Piracy,**
 - Countering **violent extremism** and **narco-trafficking.**
 - Ensuring **a free and open Indian Ocean** that would bring about peace and prosperity to the region.
 - The Indian Ocean archipelago, that is home to nearly **4 lakh people,** assumes geopolitical significance, owing to its strategic location.
- **Significance for India:**
 - **[Maldives, a Toll Gate in Indian Ocean:](#)**
 - Located at the southern and northern parts of this island chain lies the two important **sea lanes of communication (SLOCs).**
 - These SLOCs are critical for maritime trade flow between the **Gulf of Aden and Gulf of Hormuz in West Asia and the Strait of Malacca in Southeast Asia.**
 - The SLOCs are of vital importance for India since **nearly 50% of India's external trade and 80% of her energy imports transit these westward SLOCs in the Arabian Sea.**
 - **Pact with a Quad Member:** The “grant aid” is the Maldives’s **second major pact** with a member of the **‘Quad’**, an informal strategic grouping of the USA, Japan, Australia and India.
 - Previously, **[a framework related to defence and security was signed with the USA.](#)**

- Quad member countries **Foreign Ministers** met in **Tokyo** last month and held discussions, including on ways to **counter Chinese presence and influence in the region.**



[Source:TH](#)

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