



## Indian EAM's Visit to Maldives

**For Prelims:** [Maldives](#), [Indian Ocean Region](#), [High Impact Community Development Projects \(HICDPs\)](#), [5 Million Tree Project](#), [Greater Male Connectivity Project \(GMCP\)](#), [Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project](#), [Hydrology Agreement](#), [India Out Campaign](#), [Lakshadweep, Neighbourhood First Policy](#), [Vajrayana Buddhism](#), [Covid-19 Pandemic](#), [Operation Cactus](#), [Shipping Lanes](#), [National Centre of Good Governance \(NCGG\)](#).

**For Mains:** Significance of Maldives in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean region.

[Source: TH](#)

### Why in News?

India External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar concluded a crucial visit to the [Maldives](#).

- He asserted that the Maldives remains an important partner of India in maintaining peace, stability and prosperity in the [Indian Ocean region](#).

### What are the Key Outcomes of the Visit?

- **Water and Sewerage Network:** Mr Jaishankar and the Maldivian Foreign Minister jointly inaugurated India's [Line of Credit \(LoC\)](#) assisted project of water and **sewerage network** in 28 islands of Maldives.
- **Capacity Building:** A memorandum of Understanding on capacity building of additional **1,000 Maldivian civil servants** in India was signed.
- **Launch of UPI:** Both countries agreed to the introduction of [UPI](#) in Maldives.
- **Community Development Projects:** Six [High Impact Community Development Projects \(HICDPs\)](#) under grant assistance by India in the areas of mental health, special education, speech therapy and street lighting were jointly inaugurated.
- **'Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' Initiative:** Indian EAM planted a sapling at the Lonuziyaaraiy Park as part of Prime Minister Modi's ['Ek Ped Maa ke Naam' initiative](#) and President Muizzu's [5 Million Tree Project](#).
- **Greater Male Connectivity Project:** EAM visited the India-assisted [Greater Male Connectivity Project \(GMCP\)](#) site and announced India's commitment to the progress of this flagship development project.
  - It will connect Male with the adjoining islands of **Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi**.
- **Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project:** EAM inaugurated the [Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project](#) and Addu Detour Link Bridge Project.

### What is the Significance of EAM's Visit to Maldives?

- **Reaffirmation of Strategic Partnership:** The visit signifies a "**significant milestone**" in India-Maldives relations, especially with President Mohamed Muizzu, seen as **pro-China**.

- It reaffirms India's **commitment** to strengthening its strategic partnership with the Maldives despite **issues** like the Maldives' cancellation of the [hydrology agreement](#).
- It signals a **thaw** in bilateral relations after initial strains due to Muizzu's call for **Indian military withdrawal** and his perceived ties to China.
- **Easing of Bilateral Tensions:** The visit has eased bilateral tensions, especially after Maldivian President's [India-Out campaign](#) and **derogatory remarks made by Maldivian ministers about Indian interest**.
- **Economic and Social Ties:** Despite the political and military disagreements, economic and social ties between the two nations **remain strong**, with India being a **major source of tourists** to the Maldives.
  - This visit could further bolster these ties, ensuring continued cooperation in areas like trade, tourism, and cultural exchange.
- **Regional Stability:** As the Maldives faces economic challenges and potential debt crises like Sri Lanka, India's support can provide regional stability. This positions India as a reliable partner during **economic distress**, essential for maintaining stability in the region.
- **Infrastructure and Development Projects:** The handover of water supply and sewerage facilities on 28 islands in the Maldives, funded by India, demonstrates India's ongoing support for the country's development.
  - These projects enhance the local economy and highlight India's role in the **Maldives' prosperity**, marking key milestones in their bilateral relationship.
- **Diplomatic Signalling:** The visit signals the strength of India-Maldives relations, highlighting a **mutual commitment** to cooperation despite leadership changes and challenges. It reflects a shared vision for the future between the two nations.

## Training 1000 Maldivian Civil Service Officers

- India and Maldives renewed the **MoU** for the capacity building of **1000 Maldives civil services** officers during the period **2024-2029**.
  - An MoU was **signed on 8th June 2019**, between the [National Centre of Good Governance \(NCGG, India\)](#) and the **Maldives Civil Service Commission** for training 1,000 Maldivian civil servants.
- The program focused on capacity building in field administration, including training for the **Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC)** and Information Commission Office of Maldives (ICOM).
- Trainees included Permanent Secretaries, Secretary Generals, and high-level delegates from the Maldives.
- The renewed partnership aims to further enhance the capabilities of Maldivian civil servants in public policy, governance, and field administration.
- The [National Centre of Good Governance \(NCGG\)](#), under the Ministry of External Affairs, has conducted **capacity-building programs for civil servants** from multiple countries including Bangladesh, Tanzania, Gambia, Maldives, Sri Lanka, and Cambodia.
  - **NCGG is dedicated to fostering knowledge exchange and collaboration on public policy and governance globally.**

## How are Both India and Maldives Significant to Each Other?

- **Maldives' Significance for India:**
  - **Strategic Location:** Located south of India, the Maldives holds immense **strategic importance** in the Indian Ocean, acting as a **gateway to the Arabian Sea** and beyond.
    - This allows India to monitor maritime traffic and enhance regional security.
  - **Cultural Link:** India and Maldives share a deep cultural and historical connection dating back centuries. Until the first half of the 12th century, [Buddhism was the principal religion in the Maldivian islands](#).
    - There is an inscription of [Vajrayana Buddhism](#), that had existed in the Maldives in ancient times.
  - **Regional Stability:** A stable and **prosperous Maldives aligns with India's "Neighbourhood First" policy**, promoting peace and security in the Indian Ocean region.

## ▪ India's Significance for Maldives:

- **Essential Supplies:** India is a crucial **supplier of everyday essentials**, including rice, spices, fruits, vegetables, and medicines. India also aids in building Maldivian infrastructure by providing **materials like cement and rock boulders**.
- **Education:** India serves as the primary **education provider for Maldivian students** who pursue higher education in Indian institutions, including **scholarships** for deserving students.
- **Disaster Assistance:** India has been a consistent source of aid during crises, such as **tsunamis and drinking water shortages**.
  - The provision of essential items and support during the **Covid-19 pandemic** showcases **India's role as a reliable partner**.
- **Security Provider:** India has a history of providing security assistance, intervening during a coup attempt in **1988 through Operation Cactus** and conducting joint naval exercises for the protection of the Maldives.
  - Joint Exercises include **"Ekuverin", "Dosti" and "Ekatha"**.
- **India's Dominance in Maldives Tourism:** Indian tourists have become the leading source market for the Maldives since the **Covid-19 pandemic**.
  - In 2023, they accounted for a significant 11.2% of total tourist arrivals, amounting to **18.42 lakh visitors**.

## What are the Major Challenges Related to India Maldives Relations?

- **India-Out Campaign:** The campaign portrayed **India's presence in the Maldives as overbearing**, which created a perception of India interfering in **Maldivian sovereignty**.
  - India was forced to withdraw Indian military personnel manning three **aviation platforms** gifted by India to the Maldives.
- **Tourism Strain:** The Maldives tourism sector has come under scrutiny following a diplomatic dispute over **undiplomatic comments** about the Indian leaders and Indian territory (**Lakshadweep islands**).
  - This has sparked a **"boycott Maldives"** trend on social media due to public outrage.
- **China's Rising Influence in Maldives:** Chinese is becoming increasingly visible in the Maldives. The Maldives' proximity to key **shipping lanes** and India makes it strategically important for China, **potentially fueling its interest in deeper engagement**.
  - It has caused unease in India and could lead to a regional geopolitical contest.

## Conclusion

The evolving relationship between India and the Maldives underscores a strategic partnership rooted in mutual interests and shared goals. Despite challenges and shifts in leadership, both nations remain committed to enhancing cooperation in areas such as security, economic development, and regional stability. Together, both nations can foster a stronger alliance that not only benefits their bilateral ties but also contributes to a stable and prosperous Indian Ocean region.

Read More: [India Maldives Relations](#)

### Drishti Mains Question:

Q. Discuss the role of Maldives in the stable and prosperous Indian Ocean region. How can a healthy relationship between India and Maldives be mutually beneficial for each other?

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

### Mains

Q. What do you understand by 'The String of Pearls'? How does it impact India? Briefly outline the steps

taken by India to counter this. **(2013)**

**Q.** Discuss the political developments in the Maldives in the last two years. Should they be of any cause for concern to India? **(2013)**

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