

India-Maldives Bilateral Relations

India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links steeped in antiquity. India was among the first to recognize Maldives after its independence in 1965 and to establish diplomatic relations with the country in the same year. In 2025-26, India and Maldives are celebrating 60 years of establishment of formal diplomatic ties.

2. Maldives' proximity to the west coast of India (barely 70 nautical miles away from Minicoy and 300 nautical miles away from India's West coast), and its situation at the hub of commercial sea-lanes running through Indian Ocean (particularly the 8° N & 1 ½° N channels) imbues it with significant strategic importance to India.

3. Maldives occupies a special place under "Neighbourhood First" Foreign Policy of India, which aims to bring stability and prosperity in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Also, both the nations are key players in maintaining safety and security of the IOR, thus contributing to India-led Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security And Growth Across Regions (MAHASAGAR) vision.

4. India has always stood by the Maldives as the 'First Responder', and has always worked hand-in-hand with the Maldives. India's prompt assistance during the 1988 coup attempt, led to development of trust, as well as enduring and friendly bilateral relations with the Maldives. The immediate withdrawal of our troops when they were no longer required assuaged fears of any Indian dominance or territorial aspirations. India was also the first to assist Maldives during the 2004 Tsunami and the water crisis in Malé in Dec 2014. India also provided rapid and comprehensive assistance to the Maldives during COVID- 19 pandemic reinforcing India's credentials as the "first responder". In June 2026, a consignment of 20,000 doses of Measles-Rubella vaccine and 3 tonnes of medicines, consumables, diagnostic kits, PPE kits etc. delivered to Maldives.

High level exchanges

5. Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi was on State Visit to Maldives from 25-26 July 2025 on the invitation of H.E. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu. He was the Guest of Honour for the celebrations of 60th anniversary of Independence Day of Maldives and was the first HOS/HOG to visit Maldives in President Muizzu's government. PM Modi held Tête-à-tête and Delegation Level talks with President Muizzu and discussed various issues of mutual interest and explored areas of cooperation. Eight MoUs were signed viz. (i) Umbrella Line of Credit Agreement and signing of Individual Credit Agreements for LOC of INR 4850 crore (ii) First Amendatory Dollar Credit Line Agreement (iii) Terms of Reference For The Negotiations A Free Trade Agreement (iv) MoU on Pharmacopoeial Cooperation (v) MoU on Cooperation in the field of Fisheries and Aquaculture (vi) MoU in The Field Of Sharing Successful Digital Solutions Implemented at Population Scale for Digital Transformation (vii) Signing of a Network to Network Agreement on UPI roll out in the Maldives (viii) MoU on cooperation in meteorology, atmospheric sciences, climate sciences, and environmental monitoring. In a virtual inauguration ceremony, PM Modi handed over 72 vehicles to the Ministry of Defence of the Maldives, handed over 3300 housing units financed under the Government of India's Buyer's Credit facility, inaugurated Addu Roads Project and six High Impact Community Development Projects (Outdoor Gym at Addu Hithadhoo Rasgedhara, Addu Hithadhoo Beyrumathi, Gdh Vaidhoo, Youth Center at Ga. Gemanafushi, Volley Court at Sh. Kanditheem, Small scale Fish Processing Plant at S. Hithadhoo). The two leaders released the joint commemorative stamp on the occasion of 60th anniversary of establishment of diplomatic relations. PM Modi and President Muizzu

jointly inaugurated the MoD building built under the grant assistance from Govt. of India. PM Modi also handed over two state-of-the-art BHISHM Cubes to President Muizzu. Vice President Hussain Latheef, Majlis Speaker Abdul Raheem Abdulla, former President Mohamed Nasheed and all party delegation (including leaders of MDP, MNP, JP and MDA) paid courtesy call on the Prime Minister.

6. President of the Republic of Maldives H.E. Dr. Mohamed Muizzu paid a State visit to India from 6-10 October, 2024. During his visit, President Dr. Muizzu met Rashtrapati Ji and held discussions with Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi on bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest. President Dr Muizzu and Prime Minister Modi jointly adopted framework document “India Maldives: A Vision for Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership”; launched various development projects and witnessed exchange of several MoUs for bilateral cooperation.

7. President of Maldives H.E. Dr. Mohamed Muizzu visited India in June 2024 to participate in the swearing-in ceremony of Prime Minister Modi and the Council of Ministers. Following the swearing-in ceremony, Prime Minister Modi and President Dr Muizzu held a meeting. President Dr. Muizzu met Rashtrapati Smt Droupadi Murmu and also attended a Banquet hosted by Rashtrapati at Rashtrapati Bhavan. EAM Dr S. Jaishankar paid a courtesy call on H.E. President Dr. Muizzu.

8. President of Maldives H.E. Ibrahim Solih paid an Official Visit to India from 1-4 Aug 2022. He was accompanied by key Ministers and a business delegation. He also met with President of India, Smt. Droupadi Murmu. . H.E. President Solih had official talks with Prime Minister Modi. The leaders jointly launched 'first-pouring of concrete for the Greater Mae Connectivity Project (GMCP)'; reviewed progress on construction of 4000 Social Housing Units in Hulhumale' under Buyers' Credit and other ongoing bilateral projects. Several agreements were signed in areas of Cybersecurity, Disaster Management, fisheries, Capacity Building of Local Govt representatives. Key announcements made during the visit included **i)** Extension of USD 100 mn Line of Credit to finance infrastructure projects in Maldives **ii)** Facilitation of duty free tuna exports to India from Maldives **iii)** Gifting of replacement ship for the earlier provided ship-CGS Huravee -to MNDF **iv)** Supply of the second Landing Craft Assault (LCA) **v)** Gifting of 24 utility vehicles to MNDF. H.E. President Solih participated in India-Maldives Business forums held in Delhi and Mumbai. H.E. President Solih also visited Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (JNPT), Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) & Mumbai Film City.

9. PM Modi paid a State Visit to Maldives in June 2019. PM also addressed a session of the newly constituted People’s Majlis. Various MoUs were also signed in the field of Hydrography, Health, establishment of Passenger-cum-Cargo service by sea, cooperation in Customs’ capacity building, Civil Servants trainings and exchange of White Shipping Information between IN & Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF). Both the leaders jointly inaugurated MNDF’s Composite Training Centre (CTC) facility in Maafilefushi and Coastal Radar System (CRS) by remote links. Both sides agreed for resumption of the Colombo Security Conclave (CSC), a trilateral mechanism (India- Maldives-Sri Lanka) on marine security and constitution of a JWG on Counter Terrorism. PM also announced supporting restoration of Hukuru Miskiiy in Malé.

10. On his first overseas visit after assuming office, H.E. President Solih paid a State Visit to India in Dec 2018, during which India announced a financial assistance package of USD 1.4 bn which included USD 50 mn as budgetary support to GoM, subscription by SBI to the GoM’s T-bills of USD 150 mn, Currency Swap Agreement for USD 400 mn and 8 infra Projects under the USD 800 mn Line of Credit (LoC).

11. Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the inauguration ceremony of H.E. President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih on 17 Nov 2018 as the only Head of State / Head of Government. He also held bilateral discussions with H.E. President Solih just after his swearing-in ceremony, in which he conveyed India's desire to work closely for the realization of Maldives' developmental priorities, esp in areas of infrastructure, health care, connectivity and HRD.

Foreign Minister level interactions

12. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives Iruthisham Adam undertook her first official visit to India from 12–14 May 2026, marking her first overseas engagement since assuming office in April 2026. During the visit she met with EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar, and Minister of Commerce & Industry Shri Piyush Goyal. She also met Indian tour operators during the visit.

13. Minister of Foreign Affairs of Maldives H. E. Dr. Abdulla Khaleel paid an official visit to India from 25-27 May 2025 to attend the second meeting of High Level Core Group to oversee the progress towards implementation of the framework document "India Maldives: A Vision for Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership" signed during President Dr Muizzu visit to India in October 2024.

14. Foreign Minister Dr Abdulla Khaleel attended the 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) held in Muscat, Oman in February 2025 co-hosted by India. Foreign Minister Khaleel also participated in the 10th Raisina Dialogue held in New Delhi from 17-19 March 2025.

15. Foreign Minister Dr Abdulla Khaleel paid an Official visit to India from 02-04 January 2025. He held bilateral meeting with EAM Dr. S. Jaishankar and took stock of progress made on bilateral engagements and the understandings reached during the State Visit of President Dr. Muizzu to India in October 2024. During the visit, both sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding for implementation of High Impact Community Development Projects under Phase-III in Maldives, through grant assistance by the Government of India.

16. External Affairs Minister (EAM) Dr. S Jaishankar was on an official visit to Maldives from 09-11 August 2024. EAM called on President H.E. Dr. Mohamed Muizzu, and reaffirmed his commitment to deepen the India-Maldives relationship further. EAM held discussions with H.E. Moosa Zameer, former Foreign Minister and reviewed the entire gamut of bilateral relations and also had productive discussions with the Minister for Defence and reaffirmed the commitment to deepen the India-Maldives defence and security partnership. EAM also met the Ministers of Finance and Economic Development & Trade and the Governor of Maldives Monetary Authority and discussed ways to strengthen trade and economic ties between the two countries. MoUs on capacity building of additional 1000 Maldivian civil servants in India and on introduction of UPI in Maldives were exchanged. EAM inaugurated India's Line of Credit (LoC)-assisted project of water and sewerage network in 28 islands of Maldives, 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. EAM also visited Addu city on 11 August 2024 and inaugurated the Addu Reclamation and Shore Protection Project and Addu Detour Link Bridge Project

Other Ministerial exchanges

17. Hon'ble Minister of Civil Aviation of India (HMCA), Sh. Ram Mohan Naidu, visited the Maldives from November 9-10, 2025 for the joint inauguration of Hanimadhoo International Airport, a landmark project built under the Line of Credit (LOC) extended by India to the Maldives. This facility stands as a testament to the "Neighbourhood First" policy, aimed at

transforming the economy of the northern atolls of Maldives. In follow-up discussions between HMCA and the Maldivian Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation, H.E. Mohamed Ameen, specific collaborations were sought to fast-track bilateral agreements on search and rescue, establish DGCA protocols for relief flights, and integrate the Indian GAGAN navigation system. Furthermore, India has offered Air Traffic Control (ATC) training slots for Maldivian officials and proposed the exploration of Indian-operated helicopter services to enhance regional connectivity, while the Maldives is preparing proposals for Indian airlines to commence operations from the newly inaugurated Hanimadhoo hub.

18. Minister of Agriculture and Animal Welfare, Dr. Maryam Mariya, visited India to participate in the 4th edition of World Food India from 25-28 September 2025. Minister Mariya met Minister of Food Processing Industries Shri Chirag Paswan and discussed mutual areas of collaboration.

19. Minister of Health H.E. Abdulla Nazim Ibrahim was on an official visit to India from 21-23 February 2025 where he held meeting with Minister of Health & Family Welfare Shri Jagat Prakash Nadda and discussed on areas of support and collaboration in the health sector, including mental health and digital health.

20. Minister of Defence, Mohamed Ghassan Maumoon along with delegation visited India from 07-11 Jan 25 for first official visit. He held bilateral talks with Hon'ble RM Shri Rajnath Singh. Minister discussed on various aspects of bilateral defence and security cooperation.

Parliamentary Cooperation

21. Speaker of the People's Majlis of the Maldives, H.E. Abdul Raheem Abdulla, was on an Official visit to India from 13-18 January 2026 to participate in the 28th Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth (CSPOC) in New Delhi, India. During the Official visit, the Speaker also held bilateral discussions with India's Lok Sabha Speaker Shre Om Birla, focusing on strengthening parliamentary cooperation and exchanges between the two legislatures.

22. Speaker of People's Majlis H.E. Abdul Raheem Abdulla with a 16 member parliamentary delegation was on official visit to India from 10 – 14 February 2025. Speaker Om Birla and Majlis Speaker Abdul Raheem Abdulla held bilateral talks and discussed the opportunities for training and capacity building, including extending technical support to the People's Majlis of Maldives to digitalize its parliamentary resources. Speaker Abdulla also called on the then Chairman of Rajya Sabha and former Vice President Jagdeep Dhankhar.

23. Lok Sabha Speaker Shri Om Birla visited the Maldives from 1-4 September 2019. During the visit, he engaged with Maldivian parliamentary leaders and explored ways to institutionalise bodies, reflecting longstanding democratic cooperation.

Defence and Security Cooperation:

24. Since 1988, defence and security has been a major area of cooperation between India and Maldives. India has adopted a very flexible and accommodating approach in meeting Maldivian requirements of defence training and equipment. A comprehensive Action Plan for Defence was also signed in April 2016 to consolidate defence partnership.

25. **Capacity Building/Training.** India provides the largest number of training opportunities

for Maldivian National Defence Force (MNDF), meeting around 70% of their defence training requirements. India has trained over 1500 MNDF trainees over the past 10 years. MNDF officers have been trained in various defence institutions in India viz. NDA, IMA, OTA, INA, AFMC, DSSC, NDC etc. MNDF has also been participating in various joint activities with Indian Armed Forces such as joint EEZ patrols, joint exercises, anti-narco ops, SAR, sea-rider prog, HADR exercises, sailing regatta, etc. Indian Navy has also provided MNDF with air assets for air surveillance, MEDEVAC, SAR, Helo- borne vertical insertion capability. Around 630 MEDVACs, SAR operations and medical teams transfers have been conducted since 2019. Besides providing medical equipment, a team of Medical Specialists has been serving Maldivians at MNDF's Senahiya Hospital, Male' and are sharing expertise with MNDF doctors. Many MNDF doctors have / are being trained at AFMC, Pune.

26. India-Maldives Defence Cooperation also extends to the areas of Joint Exercises, Maritime Domain Awareness, gifting of hardware, provisioning of surface platforms, infrastructure development, etc. Key projects in the defence sector includes Composite Training Centre (CTC) for MNDF, Coastal Radar System (CRS), construction of new Ministry of Defence Headquarters and construction of "Ekatha" MNDF harbour. Chief of Defence Force of MNDF Major General Ibrahim Hilmy undertook official visit to India in September 2024. He also co-chaired 5th Defence Cooperation Dialogue (DCD) along with Defence Secretary from the Indian side. Maiden bilateral HADR exercise was held in May 2025.

27. **Institutional Mechanisms:** Annual Defence Cooperation Dialogue at level of Defence Secretary was initiated in July 2016 with 2nd edition held in Nov 2017. After a brief hiatus due to COVID19 pandemic, the 3rd edition of DCD was conducted at Male on 14 Feb 2022. 5th DCD was conducted in September 2024. 6th edition of DCD led by Defence Secretary from the Indian side was held in Maldives from 6-7 October 2025. Annual Joint Staff Talks were started in February 2016 and 8th edition was conducted in India in August 2025. MNDF continues to participate in various fora such as IONS, Goa Maritime Conclave and Goa Symposium. There are presently 4 major joint exercises – bilateral i.e. "Ekuverin" and "Ekatha", trilateral i.e. "Dosti" (including Srilanka) and Ex HADR. which are held regularly at dates decided in mutual consultations. Most recently, in Dec 2025, "Ekuverin" and "Ekatha" was held in India and Male' respectively. 17th edition of Exercise Dosti was conducted in Maldives from 16 to 19 January 2026. MNDF participated in multilateral Military exercise PRAGATI 2026, held in May 2026 at Umroi Military Station in Meghalaya.

28. **Disaster Management:** MNDF regularly participates in Humanitarian Assistance & Disaster Relief, Search & Rescue (SAR), Pollution Control, other exercises organised by India. India previously provided pollution dispersant to MNDF Coast Guard in 2016. India is also undertaking customized training for MNDF Fire and Rescue Service in India. Maldives NDMA delegation had visited India from 05 to 08 January 2026 for interaction with India's NDMA.

Development Cooperation:

29. India has been a traditional developmental partner of Maldives. In recent years, the India-Maldives development cooperation has expanded rapidly. Projects worth over USD 2 billion are under implementation/already implemented across the atolls of Maldives under GoI-sponsored Lines of Credit, Buyers Credit and grant assistance.

30. The major completed development assistance projects executed by India are:

- **Indira Gandhi Memorial Hospital.** The hospital was built with Indian Grant Assistance in 1995. Major renovation of IGMH funded by GoI was completed in June 2017 at a cost of INR 52 Cr. Late EAM Smt Sushma Swaraj dedicated the renovation of IGMH to the

people of Maldives during her visit to Malé on 17-18 March 2019.

- **Maldives Institute of Technical Education (now called the Maldives Polytechnic):** The MoU for setting up Maldives Institute for Technical Education (MITE) was signed in March 1992. MITE was completed at a cost of INR 12 Cr and handed over to GoM in Sept 1996.
- **India-Maldives Faculty of Hospitality & Tourism Studies:** The foundation stone for the Faculty was jointly laid by Late PM Vajpayee and President Gayoom during the former's visit to Maldives in Sept 2002. The Faculty, built with Indian grant assistance of INR 64.5 Crore, was officially handed over to GoM in Feb 2014.
- **Technology Adoption Programme in Education Sector in Maldives:** The USD 5.3 million project fully funded by GoI was launched in June 2011 to provide ICT training to Maldivian teachers and youth and for vocational training. The project concluded in Dec 2013.
- **National College for Police and Law Enforcement (NCPLE):** With GoI grant funding of INR 222.98 Crore, NCPLE is the single-largest grant project executed by India in the Maldives. The project was inaugurated by EAM Dr S. Jaishankar during his visit in March 2022.
- **Addu Reclamation Project:** Under Indian LoC of \$ 80 mn, 190 ha of land has been reclaimed in Addu city. This project was inaugurated on 11th August 2024 during the visit of EAM Dr S Jaishankar to Maldives.
- **MIFCO expansion at Genanafushi:** The expansion of facilities at Gemanafushi project has been completed and inaugurated on 27th February, 2025. The project scope includes a 50 tons/day ice plant on the island of Gemanafushi and a landing craft capable of transporting 8-10 shipping containers. This supports the fishers of southern Maldives.

31. **Community Development Projects under grant:** With a total grant of \$ 361 mn, there are 78 such projects out of which 32 have been completed and inaugurated and rest are ongoing. The projects relate to building of community / convention centres, youth centres, community outdoor gyms & children parks, coastal protection, street lighting, student ferry between islands, vehicles for city councils, police infrastructure, sports infrastructure, inclusive education units, school classrooms project, emergency health unit, etc across islands were taken up for implementation. In May 2025, 13 MoUs were signed for enhancing ferry services in Maldives with MVR 100 mn grant under phase-III of Community Development Projects.

Infrastructure & Connectivity Projects under Exim Bank Lines of Credit

32. **US\$ 800 million + USD 100 mn Lines of Credit:** USD 800 mn LoC agreement between Ministry of Finance, GoM and EXIM Bank of India was signed in March 2019. A USD 100 supplementary LoC was signed in Oct 2022. The following projects are being implemented under these LoCs:

33. **Water and Sanitation on 34 Islands:** The project seeks to improve water supply and sewerage facilities in 34 identified islands by installing proper water supply distribution network, ensuring protection of ground water aquifer and sustainable water source management. During visit of EAM to Maldives in August 2024, 28 islands have been handed over to Government of Maldives.

34. **Addu City Development Project (Roads & Drainage):** This is a key infrastructure project required for Addu to establish itself as the southern regional hub of Maldives. The scope includes roads, street lighting, storm water drainage, shore protection for the development of tourism infrastructure.

35. **Expansion of Maldives Industrial Fisheries Company Limited (MIFCO) facilities in Felivaru and Gemanafushi:** MIFCO has the capacity of adding value to 40% of the collection, while the rest is exported as frozen tuna, resulting in the export of frozen tuna becoming a loss-making operation, affecting the sustainability of the company. The expansion of facilities at Gemanafushi project has been completed and already inaugurated on 27th February, 2025. The project scope includes a 50 tons/day ice plant on the island of Gemanafushi and a landing craft capable of transporting 8-10 shipping containers. This supports the fishers of southern Maldives. Work is in progress in Felivaru.

36. **Airport Redevelopment Projects in Hanimaadhoo and Gan:** The EXIM Bank of India supports the redevelopment of airports in Hanimaadhoo and Gan. The Hanimaadhoo project has already been inaugurated and the Gan project is progressing well.

37. **Greater Male Connectivity Project:** The project aims to connect Male to Villingili, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi islands through a series of bridges, causeways and roads. The project is crucial for the proposed Gsulhifalhu Port, and will be a major catalyst for the Maldivian economy in the future through jobs and economic activity. It is funded through a separate USD 400 million LoC and USD 100 million grant from India. The project is progressing well and is monitored regularly by a Joint Project Monitoring Committee (JPMC).

Projects under EXIM Bank's Buyers Credit

38. **Social Housing projects in Hulhumale' Phase II :** On 23 Sept, 2021 EXIM Bank of India concluded two Agreements with Fahi Dhiriulhun Corporation Ltd (FDC) of Maldives to extend Buyers Credit of approx. USD 227 million for the construction of 4000 Social Housing Units (2800 units of 3 bedrooms and 1200 units of 2 bedrooms) in Hulhumale' Phase II. The construction is being undertaken by National Buildings Construction Company (NBCC) and JMC Projects (India) Ltd. The project is under implementation. During the visit of President of Maldives H.E. Dr. Mohamed Muizzu to India from 6-10 October, 2024, 700 social housing units were handed over by Hon'ble Prime Minister of India. 3300 Housing units were handed over to H.E. President Dr Muizzu by Hon'ble PM Shri Narendra Modi during his state visit to the Maldives in July 2025.

39. **Road projects:** Earlier, EXIM Bank had extended around \$53 million in Buyers' Credit to a Mohan Mutha- Ashoka Buildcon JV for development of roads in Hulhumale' Phase I & II. The project has been completed.

Bilateral Economic and Trade Relations

40. India and Maldives signed a trade agreement in 1981, which provides for export of essential commodities. In April 2025, under the same agreement, upon the request of the Government of Maldives, GoI has allowed for export of certain quantities of essential commodities for the year 2025-26, wherein, the quotas for each of these items have been revised upwards. The approved quantities are the highest since this arrangement came into effect in 1981.

41. Growing from modest beginnings, India-Maldives bilateral trade crossed the USD 300 million mark for the first time in 2021 which further crossed USD 500 million mark in 2022. The trade in 2023 stood at \$ 548 mn. Bilateral trade growth is a direct result of the launch of the cargo vessel service between the two countries in September 2020 and commencement of work of various Lines of Credit (LoC) projects since February 2021. Implementation of visa-free entry in Feb 2022 for Indians arriving in the Maldives for business purposes is a further recognition of

the growing commercial partnership.

42. Indian imports from the Maldives primarily comprise scrap metals while Indian exports to the Maldives include a variety of engineering and industrial products like drugs and pharmaceuticals, radar apparatus, rock boulders, aggregates, cement and agriculture produce like rice, spices, fruits, vegetables and poultry produce etc. Efforts are being made to tap the potential of seafood exports from Maldives to India. In Aug 2022, facilitation of duty free tuna exports to India from Maldives was announced.

Bilateral trade figures (Jan-Dec, in US\$ million)

Year	Total Exports to Maldives	Total Imports from Maldives	Total Trade
2013	154.00	12.30	166.30
2014	170.60	2.90	173.50
2015	225.82	3.00	228.82
2016	274.55	1.55	276.10
2017	282.04	4.12	286.16
2018	286.13	3.01	288.14
2019	290.27	3.42	293.69
2020	241.90	3.33	245.23
2021	317.35	5.94	323.29
2022	495.40	6.42	501.82
2023	543.83	5.14	548.97
2024	513.60	4.18	517.78
2025	553.30	4.58	557.88

(Source: Maldives Customs Service)

43. State Bank of India has been playing a vital role in the economic development of the Maldives since February, 1974 by providing loan assistance for promotion of island resorts, export of marine products and business enterprises. In November 2022, India in response to a request from the Government of Maldives, amid the economic challenges faced by the Maldives, handed over a financial assistance of US\$ 100 million. This financial support is through subscription in Maldives' Government Domestic T-bonds by SBI, Malé. India has provided a sovereign guarantee to SBI for this financial assistance. In May 2024 and September 2024, on the special request of Govt of Maldives seeking budgetary support, SBI Maldives has subscribed for one more year the USD 100 mn Govt T-bills, at zero-cost (interest free) under a unique G-to-G arrangement.

44. Recently India and Maldives signed an agreement to cooperate in the area of digital technology. In August 2024, during visit of EAM to Maldives NIPL (India) and Ministry of Economic Development & Trade signed an agreement to adopt UPI in the Maldives. In 2025, during the visit of Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi, agreement was signed between India's Network-to-Network NPCI International Payment Limited (NIPL) and Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) on UPI in Maldives.

45. In December 2022, the RBI signed a Currency Swap Agreement with the Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) under the SAARC Currency Swap Framework, thus, enabling MMA to make drawls in multiple tranches up to a maximum of USD 200 million from the RBI.

In Oct 2024, Govt. of India offered another USD 400 mn currency swap facility and the agreement was signed between the two sides.

Tourism

46. The Maldivian economy is dependent on its tourism sector, which is the major source of foreign exchange earnings and government revenue. Tourism directly accounts for about quarter of GDP of Maldives and indirectly for a much larger proportion of GDP. In terms of direct employment, tourism accounts for > 1/3rd of job opportunities for Maldivians and if the allied sectors are included, the contribution of tourism sector in total employment (direct and indirect) would rise up to nearly 70%.

47. In 2025, India was 6th largest source of tourist arrivals in Maldives with 1,31,625 tourist arrivals. However, In 2024, India ranked 3rd largest source market for Maldives, holding a market share of 7.6%. In 2023, India was the largest source market for Maldives tourism with over 209,193 Indian tourists arrival, contributing over 11% of market share. From 2021 to 2023, India continued as the top tourists market with over 2.91 Lakh, 2.41 Lakh & 2.09 Lakh Indian tourist arrivals and a 23%, 14.4% & 11.1% market share, respectively. In a pandemic-hit 2020, India was the largest source market for the Maldives with nearly 63,000 Indians visited the Maldives. In March 2022, India & Maldives agreed for an open skies arrangement which further enhanced air connectivity between two countries.

Education & Capacity Building

48. India has been a traditional partner for the Maldives in human resource development across sectors for decades. Several Maldivian youths acquire their higher education in India Universities every year. Indian teachers are popular at Maldivian schools across islands for decades. India has traditionally offered a substantial number of ICCR scholarships to Maldivian youth including 34+ for 2023-24. Since 2012-13, more than 170 Maldivian students have benefited from ICCR scholarship. Maldives has been a partner of the ITEC programme for several years. In 2019-20, the in-person ITEC slots were increased to 200. In 2022-23 & 2023-24, 174 & 200+ ITEC in- person slots have been utilised, respectively. For the year 2024-25, ITEC in-person training slots for Maldives have been increased from 200 to 300. In the ongoing year (2025-26), so far over 150 Maldivian have already been trained under the ITEC Courses.

49. India is seeking to initiate/strengthen institutional linkages and in the past around 5 years, institutional linkages between counterpart organizations on both sides have increased adding heft to capacity building and training initiatives. Various MoUs have been signed focusing on capacity building of Human resources includes (i) Civil Services between Civil Services Commission (CSC) and National Centre for Good Governance (NCGG), (ii) Cooperation in Customs Capacity Building between Maldives Customs Service (MCS) and CBIC India, (iii) Parliamentary Cooperation between Lok Sabha and Majlis, (iv) Judicial Services Commission (JSC) of Maldives and the National Judicial Academy of India (Njai), (v) Election Commission of India and the Elections Commission of Maldives, (vi) Public Service Media (PSM) and Prasar Bharati, (vii) Auditor General's Office (AGO) in the Maldives and the CAG, (viii) Aligarh Muslim University (AMU) and Islamic University of Maldives (IUM), (ix) Peering agreement between High Education Network of Maldives (HENM) and National Knowledge Network of India (NKN), (x) Maldives Police Service (MPS) and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy (SVNPA), Hyderabad for Capacity Building & Areas of Cooperation, (xi) Sports and Youth Affairs, (xii) Capacity Building & Training of Members of Local Councils & Women Development Committee of Maldives between NIRDPR, India and Local Government

Authority, Maldives, (xii) Collaboration in potential fishing zone forecast capacity building and data sharing and marine scientific research between INCOIS, India and Ministry of Fisheries, Maldives, (xii) Cooperation in the field of disaster mgt between NDMA, India and NDMA, Maldives, (xiii) Cooperation in the area of Cyber Security between CERT-India and NCIT, Maldives, (xiv) Judicial Cooperation between Maldives' Judicial Services Commission (JSC) and Ministry of Law & Justice, India, (xv) Immigration Cooperation, (xvi) Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) and the Institute of Chartered Accountants of the Maldives (CA Maldives), etc.

50. Since 2019, over 4200 Maldivians visited India for various in-person training programmes. Similarly, more than 1700 virtual training slots have been utilised by Maldivians.

Consular Matters

51. The Indian expatriate community in the Maldives has an approximate strength of 60,000. They have a strong presence in the health and education sectors. Majority of expatriate teachers in the Maldives are Indian nationals, spread across various atolls / islands. Similarly, a large number of doctors, nurses, paramedics and pharmacists in Maldives are Indian nationals, mostly at middle and senior levels. Indian teachers and medical professionals are well respected in the society. Several Indian nationals are also engaged as technicians, engineers, managers, accountants and in the hospitality & tourism sectors, working in various islands / resorts. Further, Indian unskilled workers are mostly engaged in the construction sector. In addition to this, some Indian businesspersons have been running successful enterprises since long. The Indian community in Maldives lives and co-exists peacefully with Maldivians and other expatriates, with no major issues being faced by them.

52. Indian expatriates and local Maldivians often organize social and cultural events in association with the Indian Cultural Centre (ICC) Male'. Mission actively engages with the Indian community through programs/events held in its premises and outside. Mission also regularly conducts consular camps and visits other islands/atoll as an outreach program to engage with and provide services to Indian nationals. Mission occasionally receives isolated complaints from Indian workers (primarily labourers) with grievances regarding pending salary, request for repatriation etc, which are promptly taken up with the concerned authorities.

53. A bilateral agreement on facilitation of visa arrangements between India and Maldives was signed in Dec 2018 and came into effect on March 11, 2019. This grants visa-free entry for tourism, medical and business purposes bilaterally, for a period not exceeding 90 days in preceding six months. Further, 'Bilateral Agreement on Exemption from Visa requirement for holders of Diplomatic and Official Passports,' signed in March, 2019, came into effect from Aug 05, 2019. An agreement for transfer of prisoners under 'Transfer of Sentenced Persons (ToSP)' has been active since November 12, 2011 and the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty (MLAT) between the two countries came into effect from September 03, 2019.

53. Maldives Immigration has notified that only electronic visas (e-visas) would be considered valid for all foreign nationals residing in the Maldives with effect from 23.11.2025. Valid work visas on their passport, issued before 23.11.2025, would cease to be valid any longer. These visas would be automatically converted to e-visas within the system from that date with validity based on the validity of the expatriate's work permit. After 23.11.2025, permission to enter the Maldives on a work visa or exit would only be granted to those who hold valid e-visas. Foreigners arriving in the Maldives with new work permits would be granted entry only if they hold a valid "Entry Pass" issued by the Ministry of Homeland Security and Technology. Similarly, foreigners residing in the Maldives on other visas (excluding work visa, meeting visa & tourist visa) would be issued e-visas with effect from 23.11.2025.

Applications for all visas (excluding work visa, meeting visa & tourist visa) must be submitted online via www.immigration.gov.mv.

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