



# IAS PARLIAMENT

*Information is Empowering*  
A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative

## Maldivian Crisis

### What is the issue?

\n\n

Increasing foreign presence in the tiny island nation of Maldives in the Indian Ocean is of significance to India.

\n\n

### What is the Political background of Maldives?

\n\n

\n

- The Maldives was ruled by 'Maumoon Abdul Gayoom' for 30 years and was a single-party state until 2008, with the executive being in charge of the civil service, the security forces and the judiciary.

\n

- This was challenged by Nasheed, who contested the 2008 presidential elections and won it.

\n

- A new constitution was formulated, but after four years, in 2012 Nasheed was overthrown in a coup & eventually exiled.

\n

- In 2013, fresh presidential elections were held and former president Gayoom's brother, Abdulla Yameen, became president through what Nasheed supporters say was a rigged election.

\n

- Nasheed was tried and found guilty of terrorism and given a 13-year jail sentence, effectively barring him a return anytime soon.

\n

\n\n

### What are the foreign influences in Maldives lately?

\n\n

\n

- While Naseed sought Indian support, Yameen too became very active on the foreign policy front, hoping to secure his position.

\n

- **China** - Chinese President Xi Jinping visited Maldives in 2014 and mooted the idea of a Maritime Silk Road (MSR) connectivity.

\n

- Maldives even amended its laws that barred foreigners from buying land for China's comfort.

\n

- Chinese tourists too are increasingly flocking to the Maldives.

\n

- Further, an airport project allocated by the Naseed regime to the Indian promoter GMR was cancelled & given to a Chinese firm, although an international arbitration eventually favoured GMR.

\n

- **Saudi Arabia** - Maldives is a 100% sunni Islamic republic, which naturally led Yameen to think of an Arab alliance.

\n

- Saudi has drawn up plans for a massive integrated development project in the Maldives.

\n

- The risk of this increased visible presence of Saudi Arabia is that it could have a radicalising effect on the younger Maldivians, which could have consequences for India.

\n

- Radicalisation is already being noticed as hundreds of young Maldivians have been found to have joined the IS.

\n

\n\n

## **How has India reacted to these developments?**

\n\n

\n

- Initially India had almost openly sided with the Naseed administration and even lobbied within the Commonwealth to impose sanctions on Maldives for unceremoniously ousting him.

\n

- Eventually, geo-political pressures forced India to rectify its equations with Yameen, which was apparent in his 2016 visit to India that also saw the signing of a defence agreement.

\n

- Continuous vigilance on the political developments in Maldives is of primacy due its strategic location & proximity to India.

\n\n

\n\n

**Source: Business Standard**

\n



**IAS PARLIAMENT**

*Information is Empowering*

A Shankar IAS Academy Initiative