

Set Back For India As China Backed Muhammed Muizzu Elected Maldives President

Why In The News?

- India Suffered A Setback In The Neighbouring Maldives As A Candidate **Backed By China, Mohamed Muizzu**, Defeated **Pro-India President Ibrahim Solih** In The Presidential Runoff.
- The Face Off Between Muizzu And Solih Followed The Polls On September 9 In Which **No Candidate Could Get 50 Percent Plus 1 Vote** Required To Be Elected President.



Narendra Modi
@narendramodi

Congratulations and greetings to @MMuizzu on being elected as President of the Maldives. India remains committed to strengthening the time-tested India-Maldives bilateral relationship and enhancing our overall cooperation in the Indian Ocean Region.

What Do We Know?

- **Muizzu, Who Is The Mayor Of Male**, Was Backed By Former President Abdulla Yameen, Widely Acknowledged As A China Lackey In The Indian Ocean Country And The Chief Architect Of The Indian Out Campaign That Seemed To Have Fired Up The Opposition.
- Muizzu Had Accused Solih Of Undermining The Maldives' Independence And Sovereignty By Seeking **India's Endorsement For Every Decision** He Took. Soon After Solih Took Oath In 2018, India Had Announced **Assistance Worth \$ 1.4 Billion** For The Maldives And Is Currently Being Implemented.

Why Maldives Is Important For India?

- Strategically Located In The Indian Ocean, Maldives Archipelago Comprising 1,200 Coral Islands Lies Next To Key Shipping Lanes **Which Ensure Uninterrupted Energy Supplies** To Countries Like China, Japan And India.
- Since **China Started To Send Naval Ships To Indian Ocean** Roughly 10 Years Ago And Right Up To Gulf Of Aden In The Name Of Antipiracy Operations Maldives' Significance Has Steadily Grown And Now It's At The Heart Of International Geopolitics.
- As The Pre-Eminent South Asian Power And A 'Net Security Provider' In The Indian Ocean Region, **India Needs To Cooperate With Maldives In Security And Defence Sectors.**
- China's Massive Economic Presence In Maldives Is A Major Concern For India. With The **Country Now Said To Owe 70% Of Its External Aid To China**, Many Believe That Yameen Has Done To Maldives What Rajapaksa Did To Sri Lanka.
- **Maldives Is Also A Member Of SAARC.** It Is Important For India To Have Maldives On Board To Maintain Its Leadership In The Region.



- India And Maldives Share **Ethnic, Linguistic, Cultural, Religious And Commercial Links.** India Was Among The First To Recognise Maldives After Its Independence In 1965 And Later Established Its Mission At Male In 1972.
- There Are **25,000 Indian Nationals Living In Maldives** (Second Largest Expatriate Community). Indian Tourists Also Account For Close To **6% Of Tourists Maldives** Receives Every Year.
- India Is Also A Preferred Destination For Maldivians For **Education, Medical Treatment, Recreation And Business.** According To MEA, More And More Maldivians Are Seeking **Long Term Visa** For Pursuing Higher Studies/Medical Treatment In India.