Maldives To Ban Israelis From Entering Country

Why In News

- **Maldives has banned the entry of visitors** with Israeli passports amid growing public anger over its ongoing war in Gaza. "**President Dr Mohamed Muizzu,** following a recommendation from the Cabinet, has resolved to impose a ban on Israeli passports," read a statement from his office. However, no official details were provided.

- On Sunday, the president's office further said that the Cabinet decided to **amend necessary laws to prevent Israeli passport** holders from entering the country and further establish a subcommittee to oversee these efforts.
- Muizzu has also announced a national fundraising campaign in support of Palestinians and to conduct a nationwide rally -- **"Maldivians in Solidarity with Palestine".**

Why The Maldives Banned Israeli Citizens

- The decision -- a sign of protest against **Israel's ongoing war in Gaza** -- to ban Israeli passport holders comes amid growing pressure on President Muizzu from Opposition parties as well as his allies in the government.

- The ban came days after Mr Muizzu condemned the Israeli airstrike that triggered a fire that killed 45 people in a tent camp in Rafah over a week ago. This region was earlier deemed a **"safe zone" for civilians.**
- "Strongly condemn the deadly attack by Israeli forces on the tent camp in Rafah, where displaced Palestinians were taking shelter. Israel must abide by the ICJ rulings. No country is exempt from international law.
- **Together with the Government and people** of Maldives, I call for an immediate ceasefire, an end to violence and unhindered humanitarian access," he wrote on social media site X.

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Israel's Advisory

- Soon after the ban, the Israeli foreign ministry **recommended its citizens** avoid travelling to Maldives. The recommendation also included Israelis holding dual citizenship.
- For Israeli citizens already in the country, it is recommended to consider leaving, because if they **find themselves in distress for any reason**, it will be difficult for us to assist," the statement from the ministry said.

Maldives will ban Israelis from entering the country over the war in Gaza

- The Maldives earlier lifted a previous ban on tourists from **Israel during the early 1990s** and further moved towards restoring relations in 2010. The normalisation attempts, however, saw roadblocks after the ouster of former president **Mohamed Nasheed in February 2012**.
- As per the official data provided by the Maldives government, a total of 528 Israeli nationals visited the country in the first four months of 2024. This is a significant drop from 4,644 during the same period last year.

What Other Countries Have Done

- **Maldives is not the only country** where Israeli passport holders are not allowed. Earlier this year, the official X handle of the State of Israel reacted to a viral post that listed countries that deny entry to Israeli citizens.

- A page, named **'World Of Statistics'**, shared the list of countries that don't allow Israeli passport holders on their land.
- **Among the nations mentioned** were Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Yemen. Israeli law has designated Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Yemen and Iran as enemy nations.
- The **country's citizens need a special permit** from the Ministry of the Interior to visit such nations.