

# Maldives President Muizzu Visit To India

## Why In News

- Maldives President Mohamed Muizzu, on his **first bilateral visit** to India, reassured that his country's 'Maldives First' policy will not impinge on its longstanding relationship with India, particularly in terms of security interests.
- **"We are confident that our engagements with other nations will not undermine India's security interests,"** Muizzu said.



## India & Maldives

- **Ties were strained after Muizzu** asked India to remove its soldiers from the island nation as he called New Delhi's influence a threat to the country's sovereignty.
- **Leading up to the 2023 elections**, Muizzu's Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) had promised to expel Indian soldiers deployed in the island nation to help in humanitarian and medical evacuations.
- **Muizzu travelled to Turkey and China** on state visits seen as a snub to New Delhi. This was a break from the past tradition of Maldivian presidents making India their first port of call.



## What Is The Agenda

- Muizzu, who is known for his **pro-China stance**, said the Maldives will continue to pursue strong and strategic relations with India as it is a "valued partner and friend" and their relationship is "**built on mutual respect and shared interests.**" He reiterated that the Maldives will continue to work together with India to ensure regional stability and security, even **as New Delhi looks askance** at Malé's deepening ties with Beijing, be it in defence or trade and investment.
- Asked about his **decision to remove Indian troops** from the island nation, the Maldives President claimed his actions were in line with the sentiments of most Maldivians.



- "What I did is what the people of **Maldives asked from me.** The recent changes reflect our efforts to address domestic priorities. Our review of past agreements is aimed at ensuring they align with our national interests and contribute positively to regional stability," he explained.



- Muizzu stated that Maldives and India now have a better understanding of each other's priorities and concerns, and that bilateral ties will only grow broader and deeper going forth. Ahead of the visit, Muizzu said that his key goal was to ease the fiscal burden of Maldives.
- "India is fully cognizant of our fiscal situation, and as one of our biggest development partners, will always be ready to ease our burden, find better alternatives and solutions to the challenges we face,".
- Maldivian president is expected to request a **currency swap arrangement** and debt support during bilateral talks with the Indian PM.



- India has **offered financial aid worth \$1.4 billion** to Male for infrastructure projects. The island nation is looking at a debt default since its foreign exchange reserves **have dropped to \$440 million**, enough for a month and a half of exports, reports The Indian Express.
- Modi and Muizzu will also discuss bilateral, regional, and international issues of mutual interest.



- The MEA said in a statement that the Maldives is India's "key maritime neighbour in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) and holds a special place in the **Prime Minister's vision of 'SAGAR'** (Security and Growth for All in the Region) and India's '**Neighbourhood First Policy**'".
- India helped the Maldives avoid the risk of defaulting on **Islamic bond payments** in September by extending the State Bank of India's (SBI) subscription to **government treasury bills worth \$50 million.**

