

## General Studies-2; Topic: India and its neighbourhood- relations

### Crisis in Maldives

#### 1) Introduction

- The political crisis in the Maldives reached a flashpoint, as President Abdulla Yameen declared a 15-day state of Emergency in the country.
- Suspending many citizens' rights, and giving the security forces sweeping powers to arrest and detain protesters and dissidents.
- The chief justice and other top judges were also arrested.

#### 2) How did the current crisis begin?

- The Maldives Supreme Court ordered the release of political prisoners including former President Mohamed Nasheed and former Vice-President Ahmed Adeb.
- The court said the previous proceedings had violated the constitution and international law.
- It also reinstated 12 Members of Parliament who had earlier been stripped of their seats.
- This gives the opposition coalition a majority, and makes President Abdulla Yameen vulnerable to impeachment.
- The court annulled all proceedings against the jailed political prisoners.

#### 3) Standoff between Government and Supreme Court

- Supreme Court had ordered the release of political prisoners and reinstate 12 Opposition MPs in parliament — a directive that the President has refused to follow.
- Yameen asked the judges to reverse their decision citing that the court had carried out an “infringement of national security and public interest”.
- He said, releasing the incarcerated politicians would “raise concerns over national security”.

#### 4) Impact

- The crisis could affect the tourism in Maldives, the lifeblood of the country's economy.
- China, which has boosted its investments in the Maldives may slow down the deals, given concerns about political stability.
- The Maldives will descend into instability, constitutional crisis and lead to a national security crisis.

#### 5) International Reactions

- Indian government continues to “carefully monitor” the situation in Maldives.
- India said that the Maldivian government must respect the Supreme Court verdict and release the political prisoners, citing “the spirit of democracy and rule of law”.
- This will pave the way for genuinely inclusive, free and fair elections with full international monitoring.
- India said it was "disturbed" on the declaration of the emergency by the government and expressed "concern" over the arrests of the chief justice and political figures.
- India is hoping to work together with countries like US and Saudi Arabia, to bring pressure on the Yameen government.
- China called for “resolving differences through dialogue and negotiation”.
- Western governments, including the US, Canada and Britain, have all expressed dismay at the deterioration of the political situation.

- UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres urged the Yameen government to lift the state of Emergency and guarantee safety for its citizens, “including members of the judiciary”.

### 6) Yameen's Reaction

- When the Commonwealth pressed Yameen to uphold the rule of law, his government voted for the Maldives to quit the Commonwealth.
- He has also disregarded all international calls to solve the political crisis through dialogue.

### 7) Operation Cactus: When India Helped

In 1988, the then PM Rajiv Gandhi had sent special forces to safeguard President MA Gayoom from an attempted coup

Operation Cactus was a major success in India's foreign policy without signalling any interference in domestic affairs of a sovereign country

India had then intervened following an appeal from MA Gayoom

INSIGHTSIAS  
SIMPLIFYING  
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### 8) Way Forward

- The international community must persuade Yameen to steer the Maldives out of this crisis amicably without coercion.
- Fresh elections, with the opposition free to contest with an equal playing field, are the best option for the Maldives
- Being largest neighbouring nation and SAARC member, India also has a moral responsibility to facilitate “inclusive, free and fair elections in the Maldives” in 2018.