



South Asia :: Maldives

Introduction :: Maldives

Background:

A sultanate since the 12th century, the Maldives became a British protectorate in 1887. It became a republic in 1968, three years after independence. President Maumoon Abdul GAYOOM dominated the islands' political scene for 30 years, elected to six successive terms by single-party referendums. Following political demonstrations in the capital Male in August 2003, the president and his government pledged to embark upon democratic reforms including a more representative political system and expanded political freedoms. Progress was sluggish, however, and many promised reforms were slow to be realized. Nonetheless, political parties were legalized in 2005. In June 2008, a constituent assembly - termed the "Special Majlis" - finalized a new constitution, which was ratified by the president in August. The first-ever presidential elections under a multi-candidate, multi-party system were held in October 2008. GAYOOM was defeated in a runoff poll by Mohamed NASHEED, a political activist who had been jailed several years earlier by the former regime. President NASHEED faced a number of challenges including strengthening democracy and combating poverty and drug abuse. In early February 2012, after several weeks of street protests following his sacking of a top judge, NASHEED resigned the presidency and handed over power to Vice President Mohammed WAHEED Hassan Maniku. In mid-2012, the Commission of National Inquiry was set by the Government to probe events leading to the regime change. Though no evidence of a coup was found, the report recommended the need to strengthen the country's democratic institutions to avert similar events in the future, and to further investigate alleged police misconduct during the crisis. Maldives officials have played a prominent role in international climate change discussions (due to the islands' low elevation and the threat from sea-level rise) on the United Nations Human Rights Council, and in encouraging regional cooperation, especially between India and Pakistan.

Geography :: Maldives

Location:

Southern Asia, group of atolls in the Indian Ocean, south-southwest of India

Geographic coordinates:

3 15 N, 73 00 E

Map references:

Asia

Area:

total: 298 sq km

country comparison to the world: 210

land: 298 sq km

water: 0 sq km

Area - comparative:

about 1.7 times the size of Washington, DC

Land boundaries:

0 km

Coastline:

644 km

Maritime claims:

measured from claimed archipelagic straight baselines

territorial sea: 12 nm

contiguous zone: 24 nm

exclusive economic zone: 200 nm

Climate:

tropical; hot, humid; dry, northeast monsoon (November to March); rainy, southwest monsoon (June to August)

Terrain:

flat, with white sandy beaches

Elevation extremes:

lowest point: Indian Ocean 0 m

highest point: unnamed location on Viligili in the Addu Atholhu 2.4 m

Natural resources:

fish

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 10%

other: 80% (2011)

Irrigated land:

0 sq km NA (2003)

Total renewable water resources:

0.03 cu km (2011)

Freshwater withdrawal (domestic/industrial/agricultural):

total: 0.01 cu km/yr (95%/5%/0%)

per capita: 18.44 cu m/yr (2008)

Natural hazards:

tsunamis; low elevation of islands makes them sensitive to sea level rise

Environment - current issues:

depletion of freshwater aquifers threatens water supplies; global warming and sea level rise; coral reef bleaching

Environment - international agreements:

party to: Biodiversity, Climate Change, Climate Change-Kyoto Protocol, Desertification, Hazardous Wastes, Law of the Sea, Ozone Layer Protection, Ship Pollution

signed, but not ratified: none of the selected agreements

Geography - note:

1,190 coral islands grouped into 26 atolls (200 inhabited islands, plus 80 islands with tourist resorts); archipelago with strategic location astride and along major sea lanes in Indian Ocean

People and Society :: Maldives

Nationality:

noun: Maldivian(s)

adjective: Maldivian

Ethnic groups:

South Indians, Sinhalese, Arabs

Languages:

Dhivehi (official, dialect of Sinhala, script derived from Arabic), English (spoken by most government officials)

Religions:

Sunni Muslim (official)

Population:

393,988 (July 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Age structure:

0-14 years: 21.1% (male 42,352/female 40,686)

15-24 years: 24.2% (male 56,016/female 39,443)

25-54 years: 46% (male 108,025/female 73,074)

55-64 years: 4.5% (male 9,379/female 8,431)

65 years and over: 4.2% (male 7,961/female 8,621) (2013 est.)

Dependency ratios:

total dependency ratio: 50.8 %

youth dependency ratio: 43.3 %

elderly dependency ratio: 7.4 %

potential support ratio: 13.4 (2013)

Median age:

total: 26.7 years

male: 27 years

female: 26.2 years (2013 est.)

Population growth rate:

-0.11% (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 208

Birth rate:

15.38 births/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 132

Death rate:

3.8 deaths/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 211

Net migration rate:

-12.65 migrant(s)/1,000 population (2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 215

Urbanization:

urban population: 41.2% of total population (2011)

rate of urbanization: 3.91% annual rate of change (2010-15 est.)

Major urban areas - population:

MALE (capital) 120,000 (2009)

Sex ratio:

at birth: 1.05 male(s)/female

0-14 years: 1.04 male(s)/female

15-24 years: 1.44 male(s)/female

25-54 years: 1.53 male(s)/female

55-64 years: 1.17 male(s)/female

65 years and over: 0.94 male(s)/female

total population: 1.34 male(s)/female (2013 est.)

Mother's mean age at first birth:

23.9

note: Median age at first birth among women 25-29 (2009 est.)

Maternal mortality rate:

60 deaths/100,000 live births (2010)

country comparison to the world: 101

Infant mortality rate:

total: 25.5 deaths/1,000 live births
country comparison to the world: 74
male: 27.95 deaths/1,000 live births
female: 22.93 deaths/1,000 live births (2013 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 74.92 years
country comparison to the world: 102
male: 72.65 years
female: 77.31 years (2013 est.)

Total fertility rate:

1.78 children born/woman (2013 est.)
country comparison to the world: 156

Contraceptive prevalence rate:

34.7% (2009)

Health expenditures:

8.5% of GDP (2011)
country comparison to the world: 53

Physicians density:

1.6 physicians/1,000 population (2007)

Hospital bed density:

4.3 beds/1,000 population (2009)

Drinking water source:

improved:

urban: 100% of population
rural: 97% of population
total: 98% of population

unimproved:

urban: 0% of population
rural: 3% of population
total: 2% of population (2010 est.)

Sanitation facility access:

improved:

urban: 98% of population
rural: 97% of population
total: 97% of population

unimproved:

urban: 2% of population
rural: 3% of population
total: 3% of population (2010 est.)

HIV/AIDS - adult prevalence rate:

less than 0.1% (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 147

HIV/AIDS - people living with HIV/AIDS:

fewer than 100 (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 162

HIV/AIDS - deaths:

fewer than 100 (2009 est.)
country comparison to the world: 133

Obesity - adult prevalence rate:

12.9% (2008)
country comparison to the world: 126

Children under the age of 5 years underweight:

17.8% (2009)

country comparison to the world: 41

Education expenditures:

7.2% of GDP (2011)

country comparison to the world: 23

Literacy:

definition: age 15 and over can read and write

total population: 98.4%

male: 98.4%

female: 98.4% (2006 est.)

School life expectancy (primary to tertiary education):

total: 13 years

male: 12 years

female: 13 years (2003)

Unemployment, youth ages 15-24:

total: 22.2%

country comparison to the world: 49

male: 15.5%

female: 30.5% (2006)

Government :: Maldives

Country name:

conventional long form: Republic of Maldives

conventional short form: Maldives

local long form: Dhivehi Raajjeyge Jumhooriyyaa

local short form: Dhivehi Raajje

Government type:

republic

Capital:

name: Male

geographic coordinates: 4 10 N, 73 30 E

time difference: UTC+5 (10 hours ahead of Washington, DC during Standard Time)

Administrative divisions:

7 provinces and 1 municipality*; Dhekunu (South), Maale*, Mathi Dhekunu (Upper South), Mathi Uthuru (Upper North), Medhu (Central), Medhu Dhekunu (South Central), Medhu Uthuru (North Central), Uthuru (North)

Independence:

26 July 1965 (from the UK)

National holiday:

Independence Day, 26 July (1965)

Constitution:

many previous; latest ratified 7 August 2008

Legal system:

Islamic religious legal system with English common law influences, primarily in commercial matters

International law organization participation:

has not submitted an ICJ jurisdiction declaration; non-party state to the ICCt

Suffrage:

18 years of age; universal

Executive branch:

chief of state: President Abdulla YAMEEN Abdul Gayoom (since 17 November 2013); Vice President Mohamed JAMEEL Ahmed (since 17 November 2013) note - the president is both chief of state and head of government

head of government: President Abdulla YAMEEN Abdul Gayoom (since 17 November 2013); Vice President Mohamed JAMEEL Ahmed (since 17 November 2013)

cabinet: Cabinet of Ministers is appointed by the president
(For more information visit the **World Leaders website** [↗](#))

elections: president elected by direct vote for a five-year term (eligible for a second term); election held on 7 September 2013 was annulled by the Supreme Court; rerun of first round held on 9 November 2013 and runoff held on 16 November (next election to be held in 2018)

election results: first round (9 November 2013); percent of vote - Mohamed NASHEED 46.9%, Abdulla YAMEEN Abdul Gayoom 29.7%, Qasim IBRAHIM 23.3%; runoff (postponed to 16 November 2013); percent of vote - Abdulla YAMEEN Abdul Gayoom elected president 51.4%, Mohamed NASHEED 48.6%

Legislative branch:

unicameral Parliament or People's Majlis (77 seats; members elected by direct vote to serve five-year terms); note - the Majlis in February 2009 passed legislation that increased the number of seats to 77 from 50

elections: last held on 9 May 2009 (next to be held in 2014)

election results: percent of vote - NA; seats by party as of February 2013 - MDP 29, PPM 18, DRP 14, JP 6, PA 2, DQP 1, independents 7

Judicial branch:

highest court(s): Supreme Court (consists of the chief justice and 6 judges)

judge selection and term of office: Supreme Court judges appointed by the president in consultation with the Judicial Service Commission - a separate body of selected high government officials and the public - and upon confirmation by voting members of the People's Council; judges serve until mandatory retirement at age 70

subordinate courts: High Court; Criminal, Civil, Family, Juvenile, and Drug Courts; Magistrate Courts (on each of the inhabited islands)

Political parties and leaders:

Adhaalath (Justice) Party or AP [Sheikh Imran ABDULLA]

Dhivehi Qaumei Party or DQP [Hassan SAEED]

Dhivehi Rayyithunge Party (Maldivian People's Party) or DRP [Ahmed THASMEEN Ali]

Gaumei Itthihaad Party (National Unity Party) or GIP [Mohamed WAHEED]

Islamic Democratic Party or IDP

Maldives Development Alliance or MDA [Ahmed SIYAM]

Maldives National Congress or MNC [Ali AMJAD]

Maldives Reform Movement or MRM [Mohamed MUNAWWAR]

Maldivian Democratic Party or MDP [Moosa MANIKU]

Maldivian Labor Party or MLP [Ahmed MOOSA]

Maldivian Social Democratic Party or MSDP [Reeko Ibrahim MANIKU]

Meedhu Dhaaira

People's Alliance or PA [Moosa ZAMEERI]

People's Party or PP [Ahmed RIYAZ]

Poverty Alleviation Party or PAP

Progressive Party of Maldives or PPM [Maumoon Abdul GAYOOM]

Republican (Jumhooree) Party or JP [Gasim IBRAHIM]

Social Liberal Party or SLP [Mazian RASHEED]

Political pressure groups and leaders:

other: various unregistered political parties

International organization participation:

ADB, AOSIS, C, CP, FAO, G-77, IBRD, ICAO, ICC (NGOs), IDA, IDB, IFAD, IFC, IFRCs, ILO, IMF, IMO, Interpol, IOC, IOM, IPU, ITU, MIGA, NAM, OIC, OPCW, SAARC, SACEP, UN, UNCTAD, UNESCO, UNIDO, UNWTO, UPU, WCO, WHO, WIPO, WMO, WTO

Diplomatic representation in the US:

chief of mission: Ambassador Ahmed SAREER (since 11 January 2013)
chancery: 800 2nd Avenue, Suite 400E, New York, NY 10017
telephone: [1] (212) 599-6194
FAX: [1] (212) 599-6195

Diplomatic representation from the US:

the US does not have an embassy in Maldives; the US Ambassador to Sri Lanka, currently Ambassador Michele J. SISON, is accredited to Maldives and makes periodic visits

Flag description:

red with a large green rectangle in the center bearing a vertical white crescent moon; the closed side of the crescent is on the hoist side of the flag; red recalls those who have sacrificed their lives in defense of their country, the green rectangle represents peace and prosperity, and the white crescent signifies Islam

National symbol(s):

coconut palm, yellowfin tuna

National anthem:

name: "Gaumee Salaam" (National Salute)

► [PLAY ANTHEM](#)

lyrics/music: Mohamed Jameel DIDI/Wannakuwattawaduge DON AMARADEVA

note: lyrics adopted 1948, music adopted 1972; between 1948 and 1972, the lyrics were sung to the tune of "Auld Lang Syne"

Economy :: Maldives

Economy - overview:

Tourism, Maldives' largest economic activity, accounts for 28% of GDP and more than 60% of foreign exchange receipts. Fishing is the second leading sector, but the fish catch has dropped sharply in recent years. Agriculture and manufacturing continue to play a lesser role in the economy, constrained by the limited availability of cultivable land and the shortage of domestic labor. Lower than expected tourist arrivals and fish exports, combined with high government spending on social needs, subsidies, and civil servant salaries contributed to a balance of payments crisis, which was temporarily eased with a \$79.3 million IMF Stand-By agreement. However, after the first two disbursements, the IMF withheld subsequent disbursements due to concerns over Maldives' growing budget deficit, and the government has been seeking other sources of budgetary support ever since. A new Goods and Services Tax (GST) on tourism introduced in January 2011, on general goods and services in October 2011, and a new Business Profit Tax introduced in July 2011 have provided a boost to revenue. Economic growth slowed to 3.4% of GDP in 2012, compared to 7.0% in 2011 because of slower tourist arrivals and weak global conditions. Diversifying the economy beyond tourism and fishing, reforming public finance, increasing employment opportunities, and combating corruption, cronyism, and a growing drug problem are major near-term challenges facing the government. Gross foreign reserves at the end of November 2012 were approximately \$356 million, compared with \$326 million in 2011, and were sufficient to finance only 2.6 months of imports. Over the longer term Maldivian authorities worry about the impact of erosion and possible global warming on their low-lying country; 80% of the area is 1 meter or less above sea level.

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$2.93 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 182

\$2.905 billion (2011 est.)

\$2.729 billion (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP (official exchange rate):

\$2.077 billion (2012 est.)

GDP - real growth rate:

0.9% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

6.5% (2011 est.)

7.1% (2010 est.)

GDP - per capita (PPP):

\$8,900 (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 123

\$8,900 (2011 est.)

\$8,500 (2010 est.)

note: data are in 2012 US dollars

GDP - composition, by sector of origin:

agriculture: 3%

industry: 17%

services: 80% (2012 est.)

Agriculture - products:

coconuts, corn, sweet potatoes; fish

Industries:

tourism, fish processing, shipping, boat building, coconut processing, woven mats, rope, handicrafts, coral and sand mining

Industrial production growth rate:

-0.9% (2004 est.)

country comparison to the world: 145

Labor force:

152,500 (2010)

country comparison to the world: 177

Labor force - by occupation:

agriculture: 11%

industry: 23%

services: 65% (2006 est.)

Unemployment rate:

28% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

14.5% (2010 est.)

Population below poverty line:

16% (2008)

Household income or consumption by percentage share:

lowest 10%: 1.2%

highest 10%: 33.3% (FY09/10)

Budget:

revenues: \$638 million

expenditures: \$917 million (2012 est.)

Taxes and other revenues:

30.7% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 90

Budget surplus (+) or deficit (-):

-13.4% of GDP (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 212

Fiscal year:

calendar year

Inflation rate (consumer prices):

5.1% (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 149

16.7% (2011 est.)

Central bank discount rate:

7% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 43

6.96% (31 December 2011 est.)

Commercial bank prime lending rate:

10.5% (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 86

10.2% (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of narrow money:

\$547.1 million (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 158

\$531.4 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of broad money:

\$1.298 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 161

\$1.237 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Stock of domestic credit:

\$1.559 billion (31 December 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 138

\$1.601 billion (31 December 2011 est.)

Market value of publicly traded shares:

\$555 million (31 December 2011 est.)

Current account balance:

-\$600 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 108

\$437 million (2011 est.)

Exports:

\$283 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 180

\$316 million (2011 est.)

Exports - commodities:

fish

Exports - partners:

France 18.9%, Thailand 15.8%, UK 11.4%, US 9.4%, Sri Lanka 8.6%, Italy 8.1%, Germany 6.4% (2012)

Imports:

\$1.406 billion (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 174

\$1.314 billion (2011 est.)

Imports - commodities:

petroleum products, clothing, intermediate and capital goods

Imports - partners:

Singapore 21.7%, UAE 20.9%, India 9.6%, Malaysia 7.6%, China 6%, Thailand 5.6%, Sri Lanka 4% (2012)

Reserves of foreign exchange and gold:

\$356 million (30 November 2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

\$326 million (30 November 2011 est.)

Debt - external:

\$890.8 million (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 163

\$684.2 million (2011 est.)

Exchange rates:

rufiyaa (MVR) per US dollar -
15.39 (2011)
14.6 (2011)
12.8 (2008)
12.8 (2007)

Energy :: Maldives

Electricity - production:

301.1 million kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 172

Electricity - consumption:

280 million kWh (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 177

Electricity - exports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 107

Electricity - imports:

0 kWh (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 109

Electricity - installed generating capacity:

62,080 kW (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 179

Electricity - from fossil fuels:

99.9% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 44

Electricity - from nuclear fuels:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 143

Electricity - from hydroelectric plants:

0% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 185

Electricity - from other renewable sources:

0.1% of total installed capacity (2010 est.)

country comparison to the world: 99

Crude oil - production:

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 196

Crude oil - exports:

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 158

Crude oil - imports:

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 97

Crude oil - proved reserves:

0 bbl (1 January 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Refined petroleum products - production:

0 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 209

Refined petroleum products - consumption:

6,875 bbl/day (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 162

Refined petroleum products - exports:

0 bbl/day (2009 est.)

country comparison to the world: 199

Refined petroleum products - imports:

6,088 bbl/day (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 141

Natural gas - production:

0 cu m (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 170

Natural gas - consumption:

0 cu m (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 175

Natural gas - exports:

0 cu m (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 151

Natural gas - imports:

0 cu m (2012 est.)

country comparison to the world: 100

Natural gas - proved reserves:

0 cu m (1 January 2013 est.)

country comparison to the world: 173

Carbon dioxide emissions from consumption of energy:

1.071 million Mt (2011 est.)

country comparison to the world: 166

Communications :: Maldives

Telephones - main lines in use:

23,140 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 183

Telephones - mobile cellular:

560,000 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 166

Telephone system:

general assessment: telephone services have improved; inter-atoll communication through microwave links; all inhabited islands and resorts are connected with telephone and fax service

domestic: each island now has at least 1 public telephone, and there are mobile-cellular networks with a rapidly expanding subscribership that has reached 135 per 100 persons

international: country code - 960; linked to international submarine cable Fiber-Optic Link Around the Globe (FLAG); satellite earth station - 3 Intelsat (Indian Ocean) (2011)

Broadcast media:

state-owned radio and TV monopoly until recently; state-owned TV operates 2 channels; 3 privately owned TV stations; state owns Voice of Maldives and operates both an entertainment and a music-based station; 5 privately owned radio stations (2012)

Internet country code:

.mv

Internet hosts:

3,296 (2012)

country comparison to the world: 153

Internet users:

86,400 (2009)

country comparison to the world: 164

Transportation:: Maldives

Airports:

9 (2013)

country comparison to the world: 159

Airports - with paved runways:

total: 7

over 3,047 m: 1

2,438 to 3,047 m: 1

1,524 to 2,437 m: 1

914 to 1,523 m: 4 (2013)

Airports - with unpaved runways:

total: 2

914 to 1,523 m: 2 (2013)

Roadways:

total: 88 km

country comparison to the world: 215

paved roads: 88 km - 60 km in Male; 14 km on Addu Atolis; 14 km on Laamu

note: island roads are mainly compacted coral (2013)

Merchant marine:

total: 18

country comparison to the world: 97

by type: bulk carrier 1, cargo 14, petroleum tanker 1, refrigerated cargo 2

foreign-owned: 4 (Singapore 4)

registered in other countries: 4 (Panama 2, Tuvalu 1, unknown 1) (2010)

Ports and terminals:

Male

Military:: Maldives

Military branches:

Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF): Marine Corps, Security Protection Group, Coast Guard (2010)

Military service age and obligation:

18-28 years of age for voluntary service; no conscription; 10th grade or equivalent education required; must not be a member of a political party (2012)

Manpower available for military service:

males age 16-49: 156,319

females age 16-49: 98,815 (2010 est.)

Manpower fit for military service:

males age 16-49: 135,374

females age 16-49: 85,181 (2010 est.)

Manpower reaching militarily significant age annually:

male: 4,167

female: 3,595 (2010 est.)

Military expenditures:

5% of GDP (2009)

country comparison to the world: 16

Military - note:

the Maldives National Defense Force (MNDF), with its small size and with little serviceable equipment, is inadequate to prevent external aggression and is primarily tasked to reinforce the Maldives Police Service (MPS) and ensure security in the exclusive economic zone (2008)

Transnational Issues :: Maldives

Disputes - international:

none

Trafficking in persons:

current situation: Maldives is a destination country for men, women, and children subjected to forced labor and sex trafficking and a source country for Maldivian children subjected to human trafficking within the country; Bangladeshi and Indian migrants working both legally and illegally in the construction and service sectors face conditions of forced labor, including fraudulent recruitment, confiscation of identity and travel documents, nonpayment of wages, and debt bondage; a small number of women from Sri Lanka, Thailand, India, China, the Philippines, Bangladesh, Eastern Europe, and former Soviet states are trafficked to Maldives for sexual exploitation; some Maldivian children are transported to the capital for forced domestic service, where they may also be sexually abused

tier rating: Tier 2 Watch List - Maldives does not fully comply with the minimum standards for the elimination of trafficking; the government does not have laws prohibiting all human trafficking offenses but introduced an anti-trafficking law to the legislature in December 2012, approved an anti-trafficking plan for 2012-13, and formed an anti-trafficking steering committee in May 2012; the government reported that it prosecuted some sex trafficking cases but did not take concrete actions to protect trafficking victims and prevent trafficking; the government continues to lack systematic procedures for identifying trafficking victims among vulnerable populations and referring them to protective services; officials continue to confuse human trafficking with human smuggling and the presence of undocumented migrants (2013)