

International Relations Class 10

23rd January, 2024 at 9:00 AM

INTRODUCTION (09:24 AM)

- A Brief Overview Of The Previous Class.

CHALLENGES OF INDO-SRI LANKA RELATIONS:(09:26 AM)

Political challenges:

- **China's angle:**
- During the previous Gotabaya Rajapaksha regime Sri Lanka turned into a satellite country for China and Indo- Sri Lanka relations suffered a serious setback.
- Sri Lanka was trying to leverage China as a counterweight to India.
- Post-2015, Sri Lanka started relying more heavily on China's funded projects such as the Colombo port project.
- China became the largest creditor of Sri Lanka.
- China's exports to Sri Lanka surpassed that of India.
- Massive investments in infrastructure projects were also made by China.
- Consequently, the Hambantota port got under Chinese lease for the next 99 years and presently serves as a pearl in China's string of pearl diplomacy.
- The Jafna Hybrid power project was also started with a Chinese company.
- India objected to this project since this renewable energy power project was just 50 km away from Tamilnadu port.
- Sri Lanka is also an active member of China's BRI.
- In 2021, with the cancellation of the trilateral agreement over Colombo port Indo Sri Lanka relations went to a serious low.
- Non-implementation of 13 amendments so far.
- Economic challenge:
- Non-signing of CEPA.

Trust Issues:

- Cancellation of trilateral agreement 2021.
- Non-implementation of the 13 Amendment.
- Non-signing of CEPA.
- Cancellation of Sampoor coal power project by Sri Lanka.
- However in 2022, The NTPC of India, signed an agreement with the Ceylon Electricity Board to jointly set up the power plant in Sampoor.

The Fisherman issues:

- **Straying of fishermen of Kacchathivu Island and Talaimannar coast.**
- **In 1974 an agreement was signed in which Kachhathivu island was ceded to Sri Lanka.**
- However, it allowed Indian fishermen to access this island for 3 purposes:
- For taking rest, drying their nets and taking part in the annual St Anthony festival.
- Due to the proximity of territorial water there is often a strain of fishermen on this coast and Sri Lanka accuses them of taking away their traditional catch.
- Use of mechanised trollers by Indian Fishermen which are considered to deprive the Catch of Sri Lankan fishermen and damage their fishing boats.
- The Sri Lankan Govt has asked India to ban the use of mechanised trollers but so far no agreement has been made though India favours regulating these trollers instead of banning them altogether.
- Social challenge:
- Probable influx of Tamil migrants in case of social and political crisis.

WAY FORWARD (09:53)

- India should consider the island nation of Sri Lanka as priority number one. as far as security concerns in IOR are concerned.
- This becomes even more important when a pro-Chinese regime has been established in Maldives and offers a great challenge to India in this region.
- Good relations with Sri Lanka at this point is therefore highly crucial.
- This could be illustrated by a recent event when On Jan 22nd 2024, Sri Lanka barred the entry of Chinese research vessels in IOR upon India's concern and these vessels or ships were then diverted to Maldives.
- India needs to leverage its soft power in Sri Lanka which would involve development projects educational collaborations medical assistance and the presence of Indian IT professionals.
- Increasing religious tourism could be a nice step.
- In 2015, Indian Govt granted 15 million dollars, for the promotion of Buddhist ties with Sri Lanka.
- This would create a Buddhist knowledge and tourism corridor.
- India needs to counter Chinese expansion through economic assistance and other development projects.
- In this regard CEPA needs to be signed as soon as possible.
- Both sides need to create certain practical arrangements to deal with the issue of bona fide fishermen crossing the international maritime boundary line.
- History cultural closeness and geographical proximity make India and Sri Lanka natural as well as permanent partners.
- India Foreign policy in this regard must be a mixed bag of Island diplomacy SAGAR initiative Neighbourhood first policy along with G21 doctrine to cement our ties even stronger.

INDIA - MALDIVES RELATION (10:20 AM)

Why Maldives is Important for India?

- Political security: Maldives is crucial for maintaining the region's political stability.
- Maldives is conceived to be an important actor in QUAD Pacific strategy which aims to contain Chinese Influence in the region.
- Maritime security: Traditional and man-made.
- **Economic reason:**
- Maldives acts as a toll gate between the Strait of Malacca and Bab al Mandab on one hand and the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca on the other.
- Maldives has a strategic location within these important shipping lanes.
- Therefore safeguarding our commerce and investment in Maldives is important for us economically.
- **Blue economy:**
- Maldives is crucial for India's success in the Blue economy.
- Diaspora: Maldives is home to about 25k Indian citizens.
- Thus Maldives is important for exhibiting India's soft diplomacy.

POLITICAL HISTORY OF MALDIVES (10:52 AM)

1965:

- Agreement signed on July 26, 1965, formally ending British authority.

1967:

- Parliamentary vote on the constitutional monarchy or republic status.

1968:

- National referendum leads to the end of the 853-year-old monarchy, and Ibrahim Nasir becomes President.

1970s:

- Rise in tourism.

1975-78:

- Political infighting emerges.

1978:

- Maumoon Abdul Gayoom becomes President.

1980-83:

- Series of coup attempts by Nasir supporters.

1988:

- Operation Cactus by India to thwart a coup attempt.

2003:

- Mohamed Nasheed founds the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), pressuring for political reforms.

2004:

- Maldives devastated by a tsunami.

2008:

- New constitution approved, and Nasheed wins Presidential election; fiscal deficit reduction measures initiated.

2012:

- Nasheed resigns, and Mohammed Waheed Hassan becomes president.

2013:

- Abdulla Yameen, Maumoon's half-brother, assumes the presidency through elections.

2015:

- Assassination attempt on Abdulla Yameen; state of emergency declared.

2018:

- Ibrahim Mohamed Solih becomes the new President.

September 2023:

- Mohamed Muizzu from the People's National Congress was elected as the new President, defeating incumbent Ibrahim Mohamed Solih of the Maldivian Democratic Party.

INDO-MALDIVES RELATIONS: SHIFTING DYNAMICS AND GEOSTRATEGIC REALITIES (11:15 AM)

- Since President Muiz acquired power in Maldives, there has been an evident shift of Maldives toward China.
- This was already expected since the incumbent president had won the election in Maldives carrying forward the India Out campaign.
- Since coming into power President Muiz has been vocal regarding the withdrawal of Indian Armed forces and naval personnel from Maldives.
- even though Indian personnel are mostly present for capacity-building purposes and for safeguarding India's sponsored dockyard in Maldives, their presence was misinterpreted by the political leader of this regime for political mileage.
- Post the visit from China, in Jan 2024, the Maldivian president misinterpreted India as a bullying force in IOR thereby creating a further deficit in Indo-Maldives relations.
- Maldives should realise that militarily economically and strategically India holds an important position Vis-a- Vis its neighbours.
- The fact remains that Maldives is a mere 700 Km away from the Indian coast and over 6000km from China.
- Maldives should realise the realities of geography and also how in the 2004 Tsunami and later on in 2014 in the Male drinking water crisis India was a first responder.
- Keeping into mind the massive anti-Indian narrative created in Maldives which can have a ripple effect in other SSS like Nepal and Bhutan.
- India now has to practice a policy of caution.
- Also India has realised, as EAM said recently, Politics is politics and can't be guaranteed that every country would agree with India every time".
- The least India can do is to continue carrying forward development initiatives, and P-to-P contact with Maldives and other SSS.
- Neighbourhood first policy along with the idea of non-interference within Gauri doctrine could be the most prudent step of India at this point.

January 2023 Visit by Indian External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar:

- Grant assistance of 100 million Rufiyaa for the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) scheme in the Maldives.
- Development pact for a sports complex in Gahdhoo and academic collaboration between Maldives National University and Cochin University of Science and Technology.
- Handover of two sea ambulances from India to the Ministry of Defence of Maldives.
- India's commitment to the Hanimaadhoo International Airport expansion project.

May 1, 2023 Visit by Indian Defence Minister Rajnath Singh:

- Handover of 'Made in India' platforms—a Fast Patrol Vessel and a Landing Craft Assault ship—to the Maldives National Defence Forces.
- Foundation stone laid for the Coast Guard 'Ekatha Harbour' at Sifavaru in Uthuru Thila Falhu atoll.

June 2023 Visit by Minister of State for External Affairs V Muraleedharan:

- Signing of 10 agreements for high-impact projects in 11 Atolls in the Maldives.
- Handover of Tuberculosis medicines to support India's plan to eliminate the disease in the Maldives.
- Commencement of the 12th edition of joint military exercise "Ex Ekuverin" between the Indian Army and the Maldives National Defence Force at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand.

September 2023 Political Developments in the Maldives:

- Presidential polls are scheduled for September with significant political developments in the country.
- Elections are considered critical with potential ramifications for immediate neighbours and geopolitics in the Indian Ocean region.

**OFFICIAL VISIT OF PRESIDENT IBRAHIM MOHAMED SOLIH TO INDIA
(AUGUST 01–04, 2022) (11:55 AM)****Joint Statement Highlights:**

- Prime Minister Modi emphasized Maldives' "special place" in India's "Neighbourhood First" policy.
- President Solih reaffirmed his government's commitment to the "India-First Policy."
- India pledged over USD 2.71 billion (30.7 billion Maldivian rufiyaa) for various projects in the Maldives.

Security Cooperation:

- Both nations reiterated their commitment to prevent the use of their territory against each other.
- Emphasized the partnership as a stabilizing force in the Indian Ocean Region.
- Joint efforts to counter transnational crime, terrorism, and drug trafficking in the Indian Ocean region.

Male Connectivity Project:

- welcomed the launch of the Great Male Connectivity Project.
- A USD 500 million project funded by New Delhi.
- Involves the construction of a 6.74 km-long bridge, marking the largest civilian infrastructure project in the Maldives.
- Connects Male with three neighbouring islands (Villingli, Gulhifalhu, and Thilafushi).
- Incorporates the use of renewable energy, making it a significant and environmentally friendly initiative.
- This project is not only India's most substantial contribution to the Maldives but also stands as the largest infrastructure project in the country overall.

SIGNIFICANCE OF MALE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT (11:58 AM)

- **It is considered the** lifeline for Maldives since it would boost connectivity between the 4 islands of Maldives.
- This project is bigger than the Sinamale connectivity project built with Chinese assistance.
- It will lead to improvement in the logistics and transport sector thereby propelling trade and tourism.

OTHER AGREEMENTS (12:01 PM)

Areas of Cooperation:

Security Partnership:

Inauguration of the National College for Policing and Law Enforcement (NCPL) during the External Affairs Minister's 2022 visit.

Development Partnership:

- Implementation of "Operation Neer."
- Signing of a USD 80-million contract for the Addu reclamation and shore protection project.
- Establishment of a drug detoxification and rehabilitation centre in Addu with Indian assistance.
- Economic recovery package: India's offer of a \$1.4 billion economic recovery package during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit in December 2018.

Line of Credit and Currency Swap Deal:

- Utilization of a line of credit for various infrastructure projects.
- Currency swap deal to enhance economic cooperation.

Infrastructure Development Projects:

- Notable projects include the construction of a 100-bed cancer hospital in Hulhumale and a 22,000-seater cricket stadium in the Maldives under a USD 800 million line of credit.
- Hanimaadhoo International Airport Project's groundbreaking ceremony was attended by India's External Affairs Minister in January 2023.

COVID-19 Support:

- India's contribution during the COVID-19 pandemic, including the gift of Covishield vaccines in January 2021.
- **Connectivity**
- **Anti-terror operations**
- Convening of the Joint Working Group on Counterterrorism, Countering Violent Extremism, and Deradicalization with participation from both sides.
- **Global support.**

(THE TOPIC FOR THE NEXT CLASS: INDO-NEPAL RELATIONS)