

Maldives

Geography

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

Area:

total area: 300 sq km

land area: 300 sq km

Land boundaries: 0 km

Coastline: 644 km

Maritime claims:

exclusive economic zone: 35-310 nm as defined by geographic coordinates; segment of zone coincides with maritime boundary with India

territorial sea: 12 nm

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

Terrain: flat with elevations only as high as 2.5 meters

Natural resources: fish

Land use:

arable land: 10%

permanent crops: 0%

meadows and pastures: 3%

forest and woodland: 3%

other: 84%

Environment:

current issues: depletion of freshwater aquifers threatens water supplies

natural hazards: low level of islands makes them very sensitive to sea level rise

Note: 1,190 coral islands grouped into 26 atolls; archipelago of strategic location astride and along major sea lanes in Indian Ocean

People

Population: 261,310 (July 1995 est.)

Age structure:

0-14 years: 47% (female 60,038; male 63,042)

15-64 years: 50% (female 63,526; male 67,020)

65 years and over: 3% (female 3,537; male 4,147) (July 1995 est.)

Population growth rate: 3.58% (1995 est.)

Birth rate: 42.8 births/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Death rate: 7 deaths/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Net migration rate: 0 migrant(s)/1,000 population (1995 est.)

Infant mortality rate: 50 deaths/1,000 live births (1995 est.)

Life expectancy at birth:

total population: 65.49 years

male: 63.99 years

female: 67.07 years (1995 est.)

Total fertility rate: 6.17 children born/woman (1995 est.)

Nationality:

noun: Maldivian(s)

adjective: Maldivian

Ethnic divisions: Sinhalese, Dravidian, Arab, African

Religions: Sunni Muslim

Languages: Divehi (dialect of Sinhala; script derived from Arabic),
English spoken by most government officials

Literacy:

total population: 91%

male: 91%

female: 92%

Government

Names:

conventional long form: Republic of Maldives

conventional short form: Maldives

Type: republic

Capital: Male

Independence: 26 July 1965 (from UK)

National holiday: Independence Day, 26 July (1965)

Constitution: 4 June 1968

Suffrage: 21 years of age; universal

Flag: red with a large green rectangle in the center bearing a vertical white crescent; the closed side of the crescent is on the hoist side of the flag

Economy

Overview: Fishing is the largest industry, employing 25% of the work force and accounting for over 60% of exports.

Industries: fishing and fish processing, tourism, shipping, boat building, some coconut processing, garments, woven mats, coir (rope), handicrafts

Agriculture: fishing, coconuts, corn, sweet potatoes

Transportation

Railroads: 0 km

Ports: Gan, Male

Airports:
total: 2

Defence Forces

Branches: National Security Service (paramilitary police force)