



**KAMARAJ IAS ACADEMY**  
Only IAS Academy by Grandson of "Perunthalaivar Kamarajar"

# Exercise Ekuverin

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**Why is in news?** Joint military exercise “Ex Ekuverin” between the Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force

- The 12th edition of **joint military exercise “Ex Ekuverin”** between the **Indian Army & the Maldives National Defence Force** has commenced at Chaubatia, Uttarakhand from 11 to 24 June 2023.
- **Ekuverin meaning ‘Friends’** is a bilateral annual exercise conducted alternatively in India and Maldives.
- A platoon strength contingent from Indian Army and Maldives National Defence Force will be participating in **14 days long exercise**.
- The exercise is aimed at **enhancing interoperability in Counter Insurgency/ Counter Terrorism Operations** under the UN mandate and carry out joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief operations.
- The focus is to share best practices, enhance coordination and cooperation between both the forces at tactical level.
- The 11th edition of the exercise was held in Maldives in December 2021.
- The defence cooperation between the two countries extends from joint exercises to assisting Maldives with defence training and equipment requirements.
- Both the nations have very close and friendly relations in economic, cultural and military cooperation.
- ‘Ex Ekuverin’ will assist in further bolstering of these ties between the two nations.
- Other exercises - **“Dosti”, “Ekatha” and “Operation Shield”**.

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# 10 REASONS WHY MALDIVES IS IMPORTANT FOR INDIA



**1** Strategically located in the Indian Ocean, Maldives archipelago comprising 1,200 coral islands lies next to key shipping lanes which ensure uninterrupted energy supplies to countries like China, Japan and India

**2** Since China started to send naval ships to Indian Ocean roughly 10 years ago – and right up to Gulf of Aden for anti-piracy operations – Maldives' significance has steadily grown and now its at the heart of international geopolitics

**3** As the pre-eminent South Asian power and a 'net security provider' in the Indian Ocean region, India needs to cooperate with Maldives in security and defence sectors.

**4** China's massive economic presence in Maldives is a major concern for India. With the country now said to owe 70% of its external aid to China, India had to push back. The current political crisis might just have offered India the right opportunity.

**5** A large section of population which supports the opposition parties like Nasheed's MDP wants India to act against Yameen.

**6** Maldives is also a member of SAARC. It is important for India to have Maldives on board to maintain its leadership in the region. Maldives was the only SAARC country which seemed reluctant to follow India's call for boycott of SAARC summit in Pakistan after the Uri attack

**7** Under Yameen, radicalization grew rapidly and it was often said that the archipelago accounted for one of the highest numbers of foreign fighters in Syria in terms of per capita. India can ill-afford a neighbor which fails to check Islamic radicalization.

**8** India and Maldives share ethnic, linguistic, cultural, religious and commercial links. India was among the first to recognize Maldives after its independence in 1965 and later established its mission at Male in 1972.

**9** There are 25,000 Indian nationals living in Maldives (second largest expatriate community), Indian tourists also account for close to 6% of tourists Maldives receives every year.

**10** India is also preferred destination for Maldivians for education, medical treatment, recreation and business. According to MEA, more and more Maldivians are seeking long term visa for pursuing higher studies/medical treatment in India.