# International Relations · GS - II

**Discuss the geopolitical and geostrategic importance of Maldives for India with a focus on global trade and energy flows. Further also discuss how this relationship affects India's maritime security and regional stability amidst international competition?**

| EXAM YEAR | PAPER | SUBJECT |
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| MARKS | WORD LIMIT |
|---|---|
| 15 | ~250 words |

## Answer Hint

**Maldives, Indian Ocean, sea lanes of communication, global trade, energy flows, maritime security, EEZ, SAGAR, Neighbourhood First, maritime domain awareness, China, regional stability**

## Model Answer

### Introduction

The Maldives occupies a strategically important position in the Indian Ocean near major **sea lanes of communication** connecting the Persian Gulf, Africa and Asia. Its location therefore has direct implications for India's trade, energy security and maritime strategy.

### Geopolitical and Geostrategic Importance

**1. Maritime location:** Maldives lies close to important shipping routes through the Indian Ocean, through which substantial global commerce and energy supplies move.

**2. Energy security:** India's economy depends significantly on maritime imports of crude oil and other energy resources. Secure Indian Ocean sea lanes are therefore vital.

**3. Maritime surveillance:** Maldives' extensive Exclusive Economic Zone makes cooperation important for monitoring piracy, illegal fishing, drug trafficking and other non-traditional threats.

**4. Regional connectivity:** India's development assistance and connectivity projects strengthen economic interdependence. In 2024, India and Maldives adopted a **Comprehensive Economic and Maritime Security Partnership** and agreed to enhance maritime cooperation.

## Impact on Maritime Security and Regional Stability

Defence cooperation, Coast Guard interaction, maritime surveillance and capacity building can improve India's maritime domain awareness and contribute to regional security. In 2024, Indian and Maldivian maritime forces continued cooperation in areas including search and rescue, pollution response and maritime law enforcement.

At the same time, increasing competition among India, China and other external powers in the Indian Ocean makes Maldives strategically sensitive. India therefore needs sustained engagement without compromising Maldivian sovereignty.

## Conclusion

Maldives is important to India not merely as a neighbouring island state but as a **strategic maritime partner positioned near vital trade and energy routes**. Stable, mutually respectful India-Maldives relations can strengthen maritime security and contribute to a secure and balanced Indian Ocean Region.

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