

GREATER MALE CONNECTIVITY PROJECT (GMCP)



Issue

The Government of Maldives has signed an agreement with Indian company AFCONS to implement the Greater Male Connectivity Project (GMCP).

Background

Last year, external affairs minister S Jaishankar had announced the joint project GMCP with his counterpart Abdulla Shahid.

Details

- The project will be the biggest infrastructure project undertaken by India in its neighbourhood in recent times. It will also be the largest infrastructure project in Maldives.
- The project will involve construction of a 6.74-km-long bridge and causeway link that will join the Maldives capital Malé with the neighbouring islands of Villingli, Gulhifalhu and Thilafushi.
- The funding of the project is done through a grant of \$100 million by India and also a line of credit of \$400 million.

About the project

- India had decided to support the project after a request from Maldivian government. It will help in inter-island connectivity in the nation.
- The bridge would allow easy movement for residents who otherwise have to be dependent on sea planes and boats, braving rough seas.

Need for the project

- Male is one of the most densely populated cities in the world. More than 40% of the country's population lives on the island.
- There is an urgent need to distribute the population by decentralizing economy and development to different islands and join them together.

Significance

India says that the project is a proof of India's participation in development of Maldives and also as a First Responder in times of any emergency.

Financing

The grant has to be returned over a 20 year period. The first five years will have no interest rate. A 1.75% rate will be applied later.

Stake for India

- Indian company has promised to complete the project by 2023. Indian project are always considered as delay works and fulfilling the deadline will be a shot in the arm for India's reputation.
- India has already been opposed from a section of citizens. The project will also help the current party in power to return back else the opposition may once again follow the China-centric policy.

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