



INS Sharda to Maldives for HADR

[Source: PIB](#)

INS Sharda arrived at **Maafilaafushi Atoll, Maldives**, for a joint Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) exercise with the **Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF)**.

- The exercise is part of India's "**MAHASAGAR (Mutual and Holistic Advancement for Security and Growth Across Regions)**" vision in the **Indian Ocean Region (IOR)**.
 - Earlier, following the **2004 Indian Ocean tsunami**, the Indian Navy, as part of its HADR operations, launched **Operation Castor** to provide vital relief to the Maldives during the crisis.
- The HADR exercise aims to enhance interoperability between the Indian Navy and MNDF to respond effectively to humanitarian challenges.
- **INS Sharda (P55), a Sukanya-class patrol vessel**, was awarded the '**On the Spot Unit Citation**' for rescuing 19 hostages from the hijacked **Iranian vessel Omari off Somalia in 2024**, showcasing operational excellence and reinforcing India's maritime security role in the IOR.
- **Exercises Between India and Maldives:** Bilateral exercises include "**Ekuverin (Army)**" and "**Ekatha (Navy)**", while the trilateral coast guard exercise "**Dosti**" is conducted with Sri Lanka.

Atoll: An atoll is a ring-shaped coral reef, island, or series of islets. It surrounds a body of water called a lagoon.



Read more: [Strengthening India-Maldives Defence Cooperation](#)

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