

1. Unfriendly government elected in Maldives

New Delhi's Diplomatic Approach

India is looking forward to engaging with the new Maldives government on various issues. This statement comes in response to President-elect Mohamed Muizzu's declaration that Indian military personnel would be asked to leave the Maldives.



Figure 1 Pro-China leader Mohamed Muizzu

High-Level Diplomatic Meeting

Indian High Commissioner Munnu Mahawar recently met with President-elect Muizzu, where he conveyed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's congratulations on the electoral victory. During this meeting, discussions were held on bilateral relations and development cooperation.

Changing Political Landscape

The recent runoff election resulted in a surprising victory for Mr. Muizzu over the incumbent President Ibu Solih. India enjoyed closed relations with Solih. The newly elected President, Muizzu, is believed to be closer to China.

The "India Out" Campaign

President-elect Muizzu has been particularly vocal about "India Out" agenda. He emphasized the importance of Maldivian sovereignty and expressed a desire for foreign troops, particularly Indian, to leave the Maldives.

Indian Military Presence in Maldives

India has maintained a strong military presence in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) for many years. Since 2013, Indian naval and air force personnel have been stationed on the Addu and Lammu islands to operate helicopters and Dornier aircraft that India had lent to the Maldives for reconnaissance operations. In November 2021, the Maldives National Defence Force reported that 75 Indian military personnel are stationed in the country.

What led to 'India Out' Protests?

In February 2021, the Maldivian opposition protested an MoU or draft agreement on maritime security signed by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with the Maldives Defence Minister, in order to construct a Coast Guard harbour base at the Uthuru Thila Falhu atoll. The construction was inaugurated during a visit by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh in May this year, and this has been the focus of the "India Out" protests.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper II; Governance

Source: The Indian Express and The Hindu

2. Nobel Prize for Literature 2023

Norwegian Author Jon Fosse Wins 2023 Nobel Prize for Literature

Who is Jon Olav Fosse?

- Fosse writes in Norwegian Nynorsk, a less common version of Norwegian.
- He started as a novelist and later became a well-known playwright.
- His works have been translated into over 40 languages.
- He's famous for his unique way of writing about everyday life and complex human emotions.
- Some of his notable works include "I Am the Wind," "Melancholy," "Boathouse," and "The Dead Dogs."
- He's not very well-known in English-speaking countries.

Relevance: GS Prelims

Source: The Hindu

3. Return of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's Wagh Nakh

Introduction

Maharashtra's Cultural Affairs Minister, Sudhir Mungantiwar, signs an MoU with the Victoria and Albert Museum in London. The MoU allows for the temporary return of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's legendary wagh nakh to Maharashtra.

What is the Wagh Nakh?

The wagh nakh, meaning 'tiger claws,' is a medieval dagger used in the Indian subcontinent. It features curved blades affixed to a glove or bar, designed for personal defense or stealth attacks.



Role of Wagh Nakh in Shivaji Maharaj's Legend

The most famous use of the wagh nakh in history comes from the story of Afzal Khan's killing by Shivaji. Khan was a general of Bijapur's Adil Shahi Sultanate. Given Afzal Khan's success in the south, he was sent by the Sultan, with a mighty army, to subdue the Marathas.

Khan marched into the Konkan and demanded a meeting with Shivaji. But Shivaji smelled treachery. Thus, he went prepared to the meeting, wearing a chainmail under his robes and hiding a wagh nakh in his sleeve.

In the meeting, Khan, in the guise of embracing him, attempted to stab the Maratha leader. But Shivaji was protected by his armour and retaliated: the wagh nakh ripped out Khan's guts. Khan would eventually be beheaded by one of Shivaji's men and in the battle that followed, Shivaji's army came out as victor.

Journey of the Wagh Nakh

East India Company officer James Grant Duff brought the weapon to Britain.

The case bears an inscription describing how Shivaji used the wagh nakh to kill the Moghul General. Duff was the Company Resident (political agent) of the Satara State from 1818-22. Duff acquired this weapon, possibly from the last Maratha Prime Minister, Baji Rao II.

Why is the Wagh Nakh Returning?

The return of cultural artifacts taken during the colonial era is a growing trend globally. Museums are increasingly facing requests to return such items to their places of origin.

The return of the wagh nakh is part of this broader movement, although it will be a temporary loan from the Victoria and Albert Museum.

The Significance of the Wagh Nakh's Return

The wagh nakh's return coincides with the 350th anniversary of Shivaji's coronation and represents a symbolic gesture in acknowledging colonial history and returning culturally significant artifacts.

Relevance: GS Prelims & Mains Paper I; Culture

Source: Indian Express