Prelims and Mains focus: about the details of the meeting; about India-Maldives relations

News: Union Home Minister met his Maldivian counterpart and discussed bilateral cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism and counter-radicalisation, among other things.

About the meeting

- The two ministers discussed issues of mutual interest in the area of security and law enforcement cooperation.

- Welcoming the strengthening of India-Maldives Partnership, the Ministers welcomed the expansion of bilateral cooperation between India and Maldives in diverse fields, including policing and law enforcement, counter-terrorism, counter-radicalisation, organised crime, drug trafficking and capacity building.

India-Maldives relations

Background

- The Maldives is located south of India’s Lakshadweep Islands in the Indian Ocean.

- India was one of the first nations to recognize Maldives’ independence.

- India and Maldives officially and amicably decided their maritime boundary in 1976.

- Since then, India and Maldives have developed close strategic, military, economic and cultural relations.
India has supported Maldives’ policy of keeping regional issues and struggles away from itself.

Development of bilateral relations

- Both nations are founding members of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the South Asian Economic Union and signatories to the South Asia Free Trade Agreement.

- **Operation Cactus**: It was an attempt by a group of Maldivians led by Abdullah Luthufi and assisted by armed mercenaries of a Tamil secessionist organization from Sri Lanka, the People’s Liberation Organisation of Tamil Eelam (PLOTE), to overthrow the government in the island republic of Maldives on 3rd November 1988. The coup d’état failed due to the intervention of the Indian Army, whose military operations efforts were code-named Operation Cactus.

- **Drinking-water crisis in Malé**: Maldives urged India for help following the collapse of the island’s only water treatment plant, India came to rescue by sending its heavy lift transporters like C-17 Globemaster III, II-76 carrying bottled water.

- The humanitarian relief efforts by the Indian side was widely appreciated in Malé across all sections of people even the Vice-President of Maldives thanked the Indian ambassador for swift action.

The current situation between India and the Maldives:

- India stands ready to work with the Maldives to strengthen maritime security and help expedite the inclusion of its Indian Ocean neighbour in the Commonwealth again.

- India has invited the country to join the International Solar Alliance.