

# CLAWS Newsletter



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by Diksha Jain

## **WEATHER WARNINGS**

### **Sri Lanka**

#### **Severe lightning advisory for several provinces**

*([Ceylon Today](#), March 03, 2025)*

On March 02, 2025, the Meteorology Department issued a severe lightning advisory along with thunderstorms for the following regions:

- Sabaragamuwa Province
- Central Province
- Western Province
- Southern Province
- Moneragala District in Uva Province

Authorities advised people to stay indoors, avoid open spaces such as fields and playgrounds, and refrain from using wired telephones or electrical generators during thunderstorms to minimise risks.

### **Maldives**

#### **Alert Yellow for torrential rain and thunderstorms with gust winds of 45mph expected.**

*([Maldives Meteorology](#), March 01, 2025)*

On March 02, 2025, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) issued a Yellow Alert for the following atolls due to extreme weather conditions:

- Fuvahmulah city (Gnaviyani Atoll, South Province) to Addu city (South Province) from 2:30 pm (local time) to 6:30 pm (local time)
- Gaafu Alif Atoll (South Central Province) to Addu city (South Province) from 5 pm (local time) to 9 pm (local time)
- Kaafu Atoll (North Central Province) to Meemu Atoll (Central Province) from 9 pm (local time) to 1 am March 02 (local time)

Gusts of wind reaching 45 mph were expected, accompanied by torrential rains and thunderstorms.

### **Dhiffushi hit by highest rainfall ever recorded in Maldives**

*([MMTV](#), March 02, 2025)*

On March 02, 2025, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) recorded the highest daily accumulated rainfall in Maldivian history in Dhiffushi, Kaafu Atoll (North Central Province), with an extraordinary 296.1 mm of precipitation measured over a 24-hour period.

The record-breaking measurement was taken between 8 a.m. (local time) on March 1 and 8 a.m. (local time) on March 2, 2025. Recognising the severity of the situation, President Dr Mohamed Muizzu declared Sunday, March 2, a public holiday for citizens to focus on safety and recovery efforts.

### **Torrential rain and thunderstorms with flooding expected.**

*([Maldives Meteorology](#), March 02, 2025)*

On March 02, 2025, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) issued an Orange Alert from Baa Atoll (North Province) to Dhaalu Atoll (Central Province) from midnight (local time) to 7 am (local time) due to extreme weather conditions. Possible flooding was expected, accompanied by torrential rains.

## **EXTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **Sri Lanka**

#### **Ambassador of Sri Lanka and Cambodian Minister of Commerce discuss bolstering trade and investment ties**

*([Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism](#), March 03, 2025)*

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Cambodia, Wijayanthi Edirisinghe, met with Cambodia's Minister of Commerce, Cham Nimul, on February 26, 2025, in Phnom Penh to enhance trade, investment, and economic cooperation. Discussions focused on deepening bilateral ties, emphasising agriculture, textiles, tourism, manufacturing, logistics, and technology. The key takeaways were:

- Expansion of Sri Lankan businesses in Cambodia, especially in finance, logistics, IT, and tourism
- Encouragement of Cambodian investment in Sri Lanka's priority sectors
- Cambodia's openness to foreign investment and regional collaboration
- Agreement on trade delegations, joint business forums, and technical cooperation

**Ambassador of Sri Lanka to Myanmar meets with Union Minister of Home Affairs and Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Myanmar**

*([Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism](#), March 05, 2025)*

Sri Lanka's Ambassador to Myanmar, Prabashini Ponnampereuma, held key meetings with Myanmar's Union Minister of Home Affairs, Lt. Gen. Tun Tun Naung, and Deputy Foreign Minister, U Ko Ko Kyaw, focusing on the repatriation of rescued Sri Lankans in Myanmar. The discussions also covered broader bilateral cooperation in education, trade, and cultural ties. The ambassador expressed gratitude for Myanmar's assistance in past repatriation efforts and its role in combating cyber scam networks in coordination with Thailand and China. Myanmar officials assured continued support in expediting the verification and return of Sri Lankan nationals currently in the custody of the Democratic Karen Buddhist Army (DKBA).

**Indian PM Modi to visit SL in April**

*([Ceylon Today](#), March 06, 2025)*

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to visit Sri Lanka in the first week of April at the invitation of President Anura Kumara Dissanayake, with reports suggesting the visit could take place on April 5. This visit is expected to enhance India-Sri Lanka relations further and build on their people-centric partnership. Modi's trip may coincide with his return from the BIMSTEC Summit in Bangkok, scheduled from April 2 to 4. During his visit, he is expected to hold high-level discussions in Colombo and inaugurate a solar power plant project in Sampur, Trincomalee, underscoring India's support for Sri Lanka's renewable energy sector.

**New appointments made to SL – Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Association**

*([News Wire](#), March 13, 2025)*

Minister of Environment Dammika Patabendi has been elected as the President of the Sri Lanka-Vietnam Parliamentary Friendship Association for the Tenth Parliament of Sri Lanka. The appointments were made during the revival meeting of the Friendship Association held in Parliament on March 11. During the event, the Speaker reaffirmed Sri Lanka's commitment to strengthening economic collaboration with Vietnam, emphasizing its role in expanding regional trade and investment. The Vietnamese Ambassador to Sri Lanka, Trinh Thi Tam, welcomed the revival of the association, calling it a fresh start in bilateral relations between the two nations.

## **Sri Lanka sends more workers to Israel amid Gaza crisis**

*([Tamil Guardian](#), March 13, 2025)*

The Sri Lankan government has expanded its labour migration programme with Israel, sending thousands of workers to replace Palestinian labourers who have been blocked from employment. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the two governments, 6,092 Sri Lankan workers have secured jobs in Israel's construction sector, with 1,018 already departing in 2025. On March 04, 2025, another 20 workers received airline tickets under the patronage of Sri Lanka Foreign Employment Bureau (SLFEB) Chairman Kosala Wickramasinghe, with more groups set to depart in the coming weeks.

## **Maldives**

### **FTA agreement to be made public with bilateral agreement: Saeed**

*([Sangu](#), March 03, 2025)*

Saudi Arabia's Cabinet has approved a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to enhance trade relations with the Maldives, following an agreement signed between the two nations on October 1, 2024. The MoU, signed between the Maldives' Ministry of Economic Development and Trade and Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Foreign Trade, seeks to boost economic and commercial cooperation. The approval of Saudi Arabia's Council of Ministers marks a key step in expanding bilateral trade ties. As part of the agreement, a special trade forum will be held in the Maldives, bringing together business leaders and government officials to explore new opportunities for trade and investment.

### **Parliament approves Abdul Raheem and Sareer as non-resident ambassadors**

*([Maldives Voice](#), March 03, 2025)*

The Maldivian Parliament has approved the appointments of two non-resident ambassadors. Former Chief of Defence Force Lieutenant General (Retired) Abdul Raheem Abdul Latheef was designated the Non-Resident Ambassador to Russia, and Ahmed Sareer was appointed the Non-Resident Ambassador to Morocco. President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu put forward both nominations and subsequently submitted for parliamentary approval.

During the parliamentary session, Abdul Raheem's appointment to Russia was confirmed with 65 votes in favour, while Sareer's appointment to Morocco was unanimously approved with 64 votes. This follows Parliament's recent approval of Abdul Raheem's appointment as the Non-Resident Ambassador to the Organization for Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and Egypt.



### **Maldives' imports from China surge by 55 percent following FTA**

*([Avas](#), March 04, 2025)*

Imports from China to the Maldives surged by 55% in January 2025, reaching MVR 1 billion, following the implementation of the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between the two countries. According to the Maldives Customs Service, China has now become the Maldives' top import source, rising from fourth place last year. With import duties on Chinese goods eliminated under the FTA, trade between the two nations is expected to grow from USD 700 million to USD 1 billion, further strengthening economic ties.

### **Maldives delivers statement in ICJ case over atrocities against Rohingya Muslims**

*([The Edition](#), March 05, 2025)*

The Maldives has formally submitted its written observations in *The Gambia v. Myanmar* case at the International Court of Justice (ICJ), reinforcing its stance on the Rohingya genocide issue. The submission follows the ICJ's acceptance of the Maldives' Declaration of Intervention under Article 63(2) of the Court's Statute. Attorney General Uz. Ahmed Usham presented the country's legal position, reaffirming its commitment to seeking justice for Rohingya Muslims and ensuring the full implementation of the Genocide Convention. The Maldives also reiterated its broader dedication to upholding the principles of the Genocide Convention and strengthening global mechanisms for the prevention and punishment of genocide.

### **Maldives participates in ITB Berlin 2025 to boost global tourism presence**

*([MMTV](#), March 05, 2025)*

The Maldives is actively participating in ITB Berlin 2025, one of the world's largest tourism trade fairs, which took place from March 4 to 6. The Maldives Marketing and Public Relations Corporation (MMPRC) led a delegation of 200 industry stakeholders from 89 companies, representing the country's tourism sector.

As part of its promotional efforts, MMPRC hosted a seminar titled *"The Next Chapter of Maldives Tourism – Berlin Edition"*, focusing on market expansion strategies and industry growth. Minister of Tourism and Environment, Thoriq Ibrahim, engaged in discussions with key tourism stakeholders, including representatives from Dertour, TUI, and Edelweiss Airlines,

to strengthen connectivity and enhance market collaboration. Additionally, meetings were held with Maldivian Consuls in Germany to bolster tourism promotion efforts in the region further.

## **INTERNAL AFFAIRS**

### **Sri Lanka**

#### **Government Establishes AI Advisory Committee to Drive Digital Transformation**

*([Lanka News Web](#), March 06, 2025)*

The Information and Communication Technology Agency (ICTA) of Sri Lanka has announced the formation of an AI Advisory Committee, a major step in advancing the country's artificial intelligence (AI) landscape. The committee will drive Sri Lanka's AI Strategy in alignment with the Digital Economy Strategy, ensuring AI policies support government initiatives, enhance public services, and strengthen regulatory frameworks. The key focus areas are:

- AI infrastructure development for research and innovation
- Data-driven strategies for sustainable AI growth
- Skills training to modernise university curricula and workforce capabilities
- Promoting AI research, startups, and private sector adoption
- Developing regulatory frameworks to ensure responsible AI governance

#### **Sri Lanka to downsize military by 2030: President**

*([News Wire](#), March 01, 2025)*

President Anura Kumara Dissanayake announced that by 2030, the Army will be reduced to 100,000 personnel, the Navy to 40,000, and the Air Force to 18,000, as part of a broader effort to modernise Sri Lanka's defence forces. Speaking in Parliament, he emphasised that while the size will shrink, the forces will become more technologically advanced to meet modern security challenges. The President stressed that the focus would shift towards professionalism and national loyalty, ensuring a modern, capable defence force instead of maintaining outdated structures.

### **Maldives**

#### **Army provides assistance due to flooding in roads due to heavy rains**

*([Maldives National Defence Force](#), March 02, 2025)*

The Maldives National Defence Force (MNDF) has been actively assisting in flood relief efforts following heavy rains that have caused widespread flooding across the country. Since March, 16,911 tonnes of water have been drained from urban roads using 19 pumps across 8 locations. The area commands of the MNDF have been actively involved in draining water and placing sandbags on the roads of the following areas:

- Kaafu Atoll Islands (North Central Province):
  - K. Huraa
  - K. Guraidhoo
  - K. Hinmafushi
  - K. Thulusdhoo
  - K. Maafushi
  - Ud Mamigili
- D. Meedhoo (Dhaalu Atoll, Central Province)
- P. Nilandhoo (Faafu Atoll, Central Province)
- L. Isdhoo (Laamu Atoll, Upper South Province)

The Malé Area Command has placed 976 sandbags in 131 households, including Malé City and surrounding villages. The army continues its drainage and flood prevention work in Hinmafushi, Thulusdhoo in Kaafu Atoll (North Central Province), and other affected areas.

**The whole constitution should be amended, not a piece: Ali Hussain**

*([Sangu](#), March 04, 2025)*

Former MP Ali Hussain previously advocated for a complete overhaul of the Constitution, arguing that amending specific provisions would not be sufficient. He maintained that an anti-defection law is incompatible with a presidential system, as it limits MPs' independence and undermines the separation of powers.

Ali Hussain also underscored the need for MPs to prioritise the national interest over party policies. He suggested that restrictions on party switching should be addressed through a comprehensive constitutional revision rather than minor amendments. Additionally, he emphasised that any changes should be made with public consultation, calling for revisions to Articles 75 and 90 as part of a broader reform effort.



## **Seven Maldivian parties sign landmark agreement to empower Women and end political violence**

*([Maldives Voice](#), March 09, 2025)*

A landmark agreement to enhance women's participation in politics and combat political violence against women has been signed by seven political parties in the Maldives. Initiated by the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, this historic agreement is the first of its kind in the country. The following parties have endorsed the agreement:

- Adhaalath Party
- Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP)
- Maldives Development Alliance (MDA)
- Maldives National Party (MNP)
- People's National Congress (PNC)
- People's National Front (PNF)
- The Democrats

It outlines key commitments, including establishing a confidential complaint system, an accountability framework, policies ensuring equal political opportunities, and dedicated budgets for awareness and capacity-building programs within the parties.

## **ECONOMIC AFFAIRS**

### **Sri Lanka**

## **RW highlights economic potential of S. India corridor**

*([Ceylon Today](#), March 03, 2025)*

Former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe stated that the economic corridor with South India is projected to create a USD 6 trillion economy by mid-century, with Sri Lanka expected to contribute USD 1 trillion. He made these remarks at the NXT Conclave 2025, held at Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi, where Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott also spoke. Wickremesinghe questioned the concept of South Asia, noting that it is a Western construct not found in the native languages of the region. He traced its modern origins to the Second World War, when the Southeast Asia Command was established, with Sri Lanka as its headquarters.

### **Sri Lanka signs \$2.5 billion debt deal with Japan**

*([The Hindu](#), March 07, 2025)*

Sri Lanka has signed a \$2.5 billion loan restructuring agreement with Japan, marking its first deal with official creditors who pledged debt relief last year. Under the agreement, Japan has granted concessions on a 369.45-billion-yen loan as part of a comprehensive debt treatment plan.

The restructuring is a crucial step in Sri Lanka's economic recovery, aligning with the International Monetary Fund's (IMF) requirements for financial stability. This deal sets a precedent for future negotiations with other creditors as the country continues efforts to overcome its debt crisis.

### **Maldives**

#### **Maldives may be heading for debt default akin to Sri Lanka**

*([The Economic Times](#), March 14, 2025)*

The Maldives is at risk of a debt default, similar to Sri Lanka, despite implementing austerity measures and planned spending cuts. The island nation's foreign exchange reserves are depleting, raising concerns over its ability to meet upcoming debt servicing payments in 2025 and 2026. Currently, the Maldives holds USD 3.4 billion in external debt, primarily owed to China and India. The immediate challenge lies in repaying USD 600 million in 2025 and USD 1 billion in 2026, heightening economic uncertainty.

## About the Author

Diksha Jain is a dedicated scholar in Defence and Strategic Studies, with a strong academic foundation in International Relations. She completed her master's degree in Defence and Strategic Studies, focusing on areas such as maritime security and the strategic importance of the Indian Ocean Region. Prior to this, she earned her bachelor's degree in International Relations, where she developed a comprehensive understanding of global politics and regional dynamics.

As a Research Assistant at the Centre for Land Warfare Studies (CLAWS), Diksha explores critical issues related to defence strategy and maritime security. Her work focuses on the Indian Ocean Region, examining its geopolitical challenges and their implications for regional stability.



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