

CLAWS Newsletter



The Perimeter Watch: Sri Lanka & Maldives | Volume I | No 2

by Diksha Jain

WEATHER WARNINGS

Sri Lanka

Heat index to reach ‘caution level’ in several areas tomorrow

([Adaderana](#), Feb 18, 2025)

On February 18, the Department of Meteorology issued a ‘red’ warning, stating the heat index to be expected at a ‘Caution Level’ for the following provinces:

- Northern province
- North Central province
- North-Western province
- Western province
- Southern province
- Sabaragamuwa province (Ratnapura district)
- Uva province (Monaragala district)

Maldives

MET office warns of heavy rain and rough seas across Maldives

([MMTV](#), Feb 27, 2025)

On February 27, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) issued a weather advisory, warning of heavy to hefty rainfall across the country, particularly in the central and southern regions. Wind speeds are expected to range from 8-18 kmph in the north-central atolls and 3-13 kmph in the south-central atolls, with gusts reaching 15 kmph and 13 kmph, respectively. The central and northern seas will be rough to very rough, with wave heights between 4 to 7 feet, while the southern atolls will experience calmer conditions, with waves between 2 to 5 feet.

Yellow alert for torrential rain

([Maldives Meteorology](#), Feb 27, 2025)

On February 28, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) issued a Yellow Alert from Vaavu Atoll (North Central Province) to Laamu Atoll (Upper South Province) from 6:30 pm to 10:30 pm (local time).

Alert White for heavy rain and thunderstorms with gusts of 40 mph.

([Maldives Meteorology](#), Feb 28, 2025)

On February 28, the Maldives Meteorological Service (MET) issued a White Alert for given atolls due to extreme weather conditions:

- Kaafu Atoll (North Central Province) to Thaa Atoll (Upper South Province) from 10:30 pm Feb 27 to 3:30 am Feb 28 (local time)
- Baa Atoll (North Province) to Laamu Atoll (Upper South Province) from 3:30 am to 9 am (local time)
- Baa Atoll (North Province) to Gaafu Dhaalu Atoll (South Central Province) from 9 am to 3 pm (local time)

Gusts of wind reaching 40 mph were expected, accompanied by torrential rains.

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Sri Lanka

Minister Vijitha Herath concludes the visit to the 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC) in the Sultanate of Oman

([Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism](#), Feb 19, 2025)

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism, Vijitha Herath, successfully concluded his visit to the 8th Indian Ocean Conference (IOC), held from February 16 to 17, 2025, in Muscat, Oman. The conference, organised by the India Foundation in collaboration with the Government of Oman, focused on the theme “Voyages to New Horizons of Maritime Partnership”. During Plenary Session 1, Minister Herath addressed the gathering, stating, “Sri Lanka’s vision for the Indian Ocean is one of shared destiny—where nations rise above rivalry to protect freedom of navigation, foster stable and sustainable prosperity based on cooperation, and find peaceful solutions to all issues.”

The Minister also visited Sri Lanka’s Embassy in Muscat and held a productive meeting with the Sri Lankan expatriate community. The Sri Lankan delegation to the IOC included:

- Rizvi Hassen, Director General, Ocean Affairs, Environment & Climate Change, Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Anodya Chirasrie, Chargé d’ Affaires (a.i.), Embassy of Sri Lanka in Muscat
- Hemantha Wijeratne, Counsellor (Employment & Welfare)

Sri Lanka becomes a signatory to the Agreement on the Conservation and Sustainable use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ)

(Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment & Tourism, Feb 19, 2025)

On February 20, 2025, Sri Lanka became a signatory to the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas Beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ) at the United Nations headquarters in New York. With this signing, Sri Lanka became the 109th signatory to the Agreement, which 17 countries had ratified.

Following the signing, the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) announced the establishment of an Inter-Ministerial Committee to oversee the ratification and implementation of the Agreement's provisions. The Committee was expected to initiate and coordinate the drafting of legislation—with international assistance—to develop the necessary domestic legal framework for early ratification.

President Disanayake, Japanese Ambassador discuss bilateral cooperation

(The Island Online, Feb 27, 2025)

On February 27, President Anura Kumara Dissanayake met with Japan's Ambassador to Sri Lanka, H.E. Akio Isomata, at the Presidential Secretariat to discuss key areas of cooperation between the two nations. During the meeting, Ambassador Isomata extended an official invitation for President Dissanayake to visit Japan and commended the new government's policy framework. He also highlighted Japan's efforts to include Sri Lanka in its newly launched security cooperation assistance program.

The discussions focused on Japan's ongoing and future contributions to Sri Lanka's economic and development initiatives, including the Japan-Switzerland-South Africa program aimed at national reconciliation in the northern region. Additionally, the status of Japanese investments, particularly in the digital economy, port and aviation projects, and Sri Lanka's Digital Transformation Program, was reviewed. Key government officials, including Economic and Financial Affairs Advisor Dr. Duminda Hulangamuwa and senior representatives from the Japanese Embassy, attended the meeting.

Ex-President Ranil heads to India for third visit in recent months

([Adaderana](#), Feb 27, 2025)

On February 27, former Sri Lankan President Ranil Wickremesinghe delivered a keynote address on global issues at the Bharat Mandapam in New Delhi. This marks his third visit to India in recent months. Wickremesinghe is scheduled to return to Sri Lanka on March 02. Diplomats and distinguished guests, including former Canadian Prime Minister Stephen Harper, and former Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott attended the event.

Wickremesinghe's speech focused on South Asia's geopolitical landscape, economic challenges, and regional cooperation. In addition to his address, he met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to discuss key bilateral and regional matters and engaged with prominent Indian business leaders.

Sri Lanka reinforces its appeal as a top travel destination at Pakistan Travel Mart 2025

([Lanka News Web](#), Feb 27, 2025)

Sri Lanka reaffirmed its position as a premier travel destination at the fourth edition of the Pakistan Travel Mart (PTM) 2025, held from January 31 to February 2 in Karachi. The Sri Lankan Consulate in Karachi facilitated the participation of Sri Lankan Airlines and two leading travel agencies, emphasising the country's commitment to expanding its tourism sector and enhancing connectivity with Pakistan. A notable highlight was the participation of Acting High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Pakistan, Christy Augustin, who participated in a panel discussion titled "Beyond the Logo – Crafting Emotional Connections in Destination Marketing."

He underscored Sri Lanka's diverse offerings, from its pristine beaches and cultural heritage to its vibrant wildlife. The Sri Lankan pavilion attracted significant attention from visitors eager to explore the country's eco-tourism and luxury experiences. The Sri Lankan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment and Tourism expressed optimism that the continued engagement with the Pakistani market would yield positive results regarding tourism growth and bilateral cooperation.

Maldives

Saudi Cabinet Approves MoU to Strengthen Trade Ties with the Maldives

([Corporate Maldives](#), Feb 15, 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.

Maldives signs export agreement with China to expand fisheries market

([MMTV](#), Feb 21, 2025)

The Maldives has signed an agreement with China to expand its fisheries export market, strengthening economic ties between the two nations. This deal is part of the China-Maldives Free Trade Agreement, which took effect on January 1, 2025. The agreement was signed on behalf of Ensis Fisheries by General Manager Hussain Afeef and by Chairman of Xinguang Show (Beijing) Commercial Management Co. Ltd.

The signing ceremony was attended by Dr. Fazeel Najeef, the Maldives' ambassador to China, and Dr. Amzath Ahmed, the Minister of State for Fisheries and Ocean Resources. The Ministry of Fisheries and Ocean Resources confirmed that Ensis products will be available for online sales in China to enhance accessibility and consumer reach. The first shipment under this agreement will be dispatched to China by mid-March.

Parliament OKs non-residential ambassadors to five countries

([Sun Siyam Media](#), Feb 24, 2025)

On February 24, the Maldives Parliament approved four ambassadors nominated by President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu for dual roles as non-resident ambassadors to five additional countries. The approved appointments received unanimous approval and are as follows:

- Dr. Mariyam Shabeena, Ambassador to Malaysia, as Non-Resident Ambassador to Brunei.

- Geela Ali, Ambassador to Belgium, as Non-Resident Ambassador to the Netherlands and Luxembourg.
- Iruthisham Adam, Ambassador to the UK, as Non-Resident Ambassador to France.
- Mohamed Luveiz, Ambassador to Singapore, as Non-Resident Ambassador to Australia.

Maldives to participate in the 58th Session of the United Nations Human Rights Council

([Ministry of Foreign Affairs](#), Feb 24, 2025)

The 58th Session of the UN Human Rights Council commenced on February 24, 2025, in Geneva, Switzerland. The high-level Segment was held from February 24 to 26, followed by the General Segment from February 27 to April 4. Maldives Foreign Minister Dr. Abdulla Khaleel addressed the Human Rights Council, highlighting the government's progress in human rights promotion and protection under President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu.

His address also emphasised Maldives' engagement with UN human rights bodies and its advocacy for equality and inclusion, particularly for Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS). As part of his engagements, Minister Khaleel delivered a keynote speech at a high-level side event titled "Advancing the Universal Human Right to a Clean, Healthy, and Sustainable Environment: Taking Stock and What Next?", organised by the Maldives Permanent Mission and the Core Group on the Right to a Healthy Environment. Additionally, he participated in two panel discussions organised by the Permanent Missions of Slovenia and Estonia.

President Dr Muizzu extends Independence Day greetings to the President and Prime Minister of Estonia

([The President's Office](#), Feb 24, 2025)

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu extended greetings to President Alar Karis, Prime Minister Kristen Michal, the Government, and the people of Estonia on their Independence Day. He reflected on his official visit to Estonia in January, calling it a historic milestone in Maldives-Estonia relations and reaffirming commitment to strengthening cooperation in bilateral and multilateral forums.

Maldives Stands Apart, Votes Against U.S. and Russia on U.N. Ukraine Resolution

(ETRUTH MV, Feb 25, 2025)

The Maldives took a decisive stance at the United Nations General Assembly, voting in favor of a resolution calling for a “comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in Ukraine”. The resolution was adopted with 104 votes in favour, 17 against, and 15 abstentions. Notably, the Maldives’ decision placed it in opposition to both the United States and Russia—despite Russia being its second-largest source of tourists. The vote aligned with European positions but diverged from South Asian neighbours like India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka, which abstained.

Among the 57 member states of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Maldives was among the few to vote in favour, alongside nations like Senegal, Sierra Leone, and Comoros. Most OIC countries, including major players such as Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, Iran, Iraq, and Pakistan, abstained. A smaller group—Sudan, Syria, and Türkiye—joined the U.S., Russia, North Korea, Belarus, and 13 others in opposing the resolution, forming a bloc of dissenters that included some of the world’s most polarised actors.

INTERNAL AFFAIRS

Sri Lanka

Courtroom Shootings Reveal Deep Security Failures

(Ceylon Today, Feb 22, 2025)

On 19 February 2025, a shooting occurred within the Colombo Hulftsdorp Court Complex, specifically in Magistrate’s Court No. 5, where Sanjeewa Kumar Samararatne, a notorious underworld leader known as Ganemulle Sanjeewa, was fatally shot. The assailants, disguised as lawyers, entered the courtroom and opened fire on Samararatne, who was being transported under heavy security from Bussa Prison.

This marks the second fatal courtroom shooting in Sri Lanka in recent history, following the 2015 killing of Samiya Chandika (Chami). The incident has raised serious concerns about the vulnerability of Sri Lanka’s judicial system to organised crime. The ability of armed assailants to infiltrate a secured courtroom has placed court staff, lawyers, and the public at significant risk, prompting urgent calls for enhanced judicial security measures.

Sri Lanka backs global disarmament, warns against AI weaponisation

([Adaderana](#), Feb 27, 2025)

Sri Lanka's Minister of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Employment, and Tourism, Vijitha Herath, reiterated the country's commitment to disarmament while speaking at the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament during the 58th session of the United Nations Human Rights Council (UNHRC). He emphasised Sri Lanka's support for legally binding Negative Security Assurances for non-nuclear states and called for the establishment of nuclear weapon-Free Zones, particularly in the Middle East.

Herath reaffirmed Sri Lanka's stance by citing its accession to the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and ratification of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty in 2023. He also raised concerns over emerging security threats, such as militarising outer space and using artificial intelligence in weaponry. Stressing the urgency of international regulations, he called for negotiations on a legally binding instrument to ban lethal autonomous weapons systems and prevent an arms race beyond Earth's atmosphere.

Maldives

Supreme Court bench reduction amendment passed by Parliament

([MMTV](#), Feb 26, 2025)

The Maldives Parliament has approved amendments to the Courts Act, reducing the Supreme Court bench from seven to five judges, including the Chief Justice. The bill, proposed by Hoarafushi MP Abdul Sattar Mohamed (PNC), aims to optimise the court's structure for better constitutional implementation. Passed with 68 votes in favor and 9 against, the amendment mandates the Judicial Service Commission (JSC) to assess and recommend the removal of two justices deemed unqualified. Parliament must finalise these removals within seven days of receiving JSC's report. The change marks another shift in the Supreme Court's composition, which has fluctuated between five and seven judges since 2008.

President concludes South Nilandhe tour, bringing renewed hope to communities

([MMTV](#), Feb 26, 2025)

President Dr Mohamed Muizzu returned to the capital after touring South Nilandhe Atoll (Dhaalu Atoll) in the Central Province, where he engaged with local leaders and residents to discuss infrastructure, housing, and essential services. During his visit, he traveled to the following islands:

- Dhaalu Kudahuvadhoo
- Maaen'boodhoo
- Ban'didhoo
- Meedhoo
- Rin'budhoo
- Hulhudheli

He confirmed that land reclamation in Hulhudheli will begin in July 2025, while Ban'didhoo's breakwater modifications and land expansion will start next year. In Maaen'boodhoo, improvements in sports, healthcare, and education were pledged. Additionally, Kudahuvadhoo's commercial harbour will be developed into a business port, and Dh. Udhoo will be designated a picnic island.

ECONOMIC AFFAIRS

Sri Lanka

Dissanayake govt unveils first budget, eyes 5% growth for Sri Lanka in 2025

([Business Standard](#), Feb 17, 2025)

The Defence Ministry has received an allocation of LKR 442 billion, with LKR 382 billion designated for recurrent spending and LKR 60 billion for capital projects. The budget includes expenses for the three armed forces, the Sri Lanka Coast Guard, and the Civil Security Department. Additionally, the Meteorology Department is part of the Defence Ministry.

This marks an increase from the LKR 423 billion allocated in 2024. The budget "reflects the government's strategy for economic development and broader policy objectives." According to President Dissanayake, tax revenue, in line with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) programme targets, is expected to increase to 15 percent of the GDP in 2025.

Sri Lanka to gradually exit use of currency notes: President on digital economic development plans

([Adaderana](#), Feb 17, 2025)

A Digital Economic Authority and a new legal framework for digital payments have been established to advance the country's digital economy. President Dissanayake recently launched the 'GovPay' digital payments platform; he stressed the need to transition from a cash-based economy through a carefully phased approach. To boost innovation, the government plans to attract investments in Artificial Intelligence, Robotics, Financial Technologies, and other

emerging sectors, to exceed USD 15 billion or 12% of GDP in digital economy revenue. LKR 3,000 million has been allocated to support these ambitious reforms for digital economic development in 2025.

Maldives

MIB launches 'faisawear' tag, allowing payments through tapping

([The Edition](#), Feb 24, 2025)

Maldives Islamic Bank (MIB) has launched the 'faisawear' tag, a contactless payment solution that enables customers to transact with a simple tap. The tag can be attached to phones, wallets, or keychains, serving as a cash card alternative for seamless payments at POS terminals. This follows the success of MIB's 'faisawear' ring series, introduced last November to widespread public acclaim. The bank has announced plans to release new ring designs and introduce further innovative, tech-driven financial services shortly.

MMA launches Tamweel Islamic Finance Initiative

([MMTV](#), Feb 26, 2025)

The Maldives Monetary Authority (MMA) has launched the 'Tamweel Islamic Finance Initiative' to raise awareness of Islamic financial services and expand training opportunities in the sector. Inaugurated by Minister of Islamic Affairs Dr. Mohamed Shaheem Ali Saeed, the initiative includes a MVR 5 million capacity development fund to support education and specialised training in Islamic finance.

As part of the initiative, MMA will launch a television awareness campaign, including a Ramadan special programme called 'Tamweel' on TVM and an Islamic finance quiz competition. The programme is being implemented in collaboration with BML Islamic, Maldives Islamic Bank, Allied Insurance, and the Maldives Centre for Islamic Finance Corporation to strengthen the country's Islamic finance sector.

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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