

Mains Master

What's the latest blip in India-Maldives ties?

Recently, the Maldives Cabinet chose not to extend an agreement with India about working together on hydrography. This agreement, signed in 2019, will end in 2024. This decision follows President Mohamed Muizzu's promise to send Indian troops back from the Indian Ocean islands, showing a shift away from the previous government's 'India first' approach led by Ibrahim Mohamed Solih.

Hydrography Overview:

- **Definition:** Scientific study of oceans, seas, water bodies via data compilation, map/chart creation, predicting changes.
- **Purpose:** Measure physical attributes, predict alterations, ensure safe navigation, support economic, security, scientific, and environmental activities.

India's Expertise:

- **IHO Membership:** Active since 1955, contributing to international hydrographic endeavors.
- **INHD Establishment:** Formed in 1874 in Kolkata, now leading hydrographic surveys and mapping.
- **Partnerships:** Collaborations with Indian Ocean and other nations (Mauritius, Seychelles, Tanzania, Maldives, etc.) for hydrographic cooperation.
- **Expanded Role:** INHD's increased role in global hydrography and maritime diplomacy, offering training to personnel from 39 countries.

Significance of 2019 MoU:

- **Context:** Signed during PM Modi's visit, symbolizing strengthened ties post President Solih's electoral victory.
- **Commitment:** Demonstrated mutual commitment to development, defence, and maritime security.
- **Operationalization:** Led to the formation of the Joint Commission on Hydrography and subsequent joint surveys between MNDF and Indian Navy.

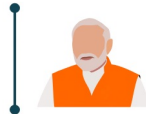
Cabinet's Decision against Renewal:

- **Administration's Objective:** President Muizzu's government aims to terminate agreements potentially compromising Maldives' national security.
- **Enhancing Military Capacity:** Focus on bolstering local military capabilities for independent surveillance and policing of their waters.
- **Sovereignty Concerns:** Emphasized by Under Secretary Mohamed Firzul, advocating exclusion of foreign involvement for safeguarding Maldivian sovereignty in such endeavors.

India- Maldives

Recent Developments

2018



- President Solih's swearing-in ceremony attended by PM Modi, indicating initial ties between the leaders.

June 2019



- MoU signed during PM Modi's state visit to Maldives.
- Reflects strengthened relations post-President Solih's electoral win.
- Emphasis on cooperation in development, defence, and maritime security.

September 2019:



- Joint Commission on Hydrography formed, solidifying collaboration.
- MNDF and Indian Navy begin joint hydrographic surveys in Maldives.

2020-During Covid-19



- India provided \$150 million in financial aid through a currency swap during the COVID-19 crisis in 2020.
- The Indian Air Force conducted 'Operation Sanjeevani', airlifting essential medicines and hospital supplies to aid Maldives.
- A medical team, accompanied by essential medicines, was dispatched from India to assist Maldives in combating the COVID-19 outbreak.

2021-2023



- Three joint hydrographic surveys conducted by MNDF and Indian Navy post-MoU agreement.

Earlier This Month (Current Developments)



- Cabinet decides against renewing the 2019 MoU.
- President Muizzu's administration aims to terminate agreements posing national security risks.
- Focus on bolstering Maldivian military capacity for independent surveillance of waters.
- Exclusion of foreign involvement advocated by Under Secretary Mohamed Firzul for safeguarding Maldivian sovereignty.



Pragyesh IAS



t.me/pragyeshIASMENTOR



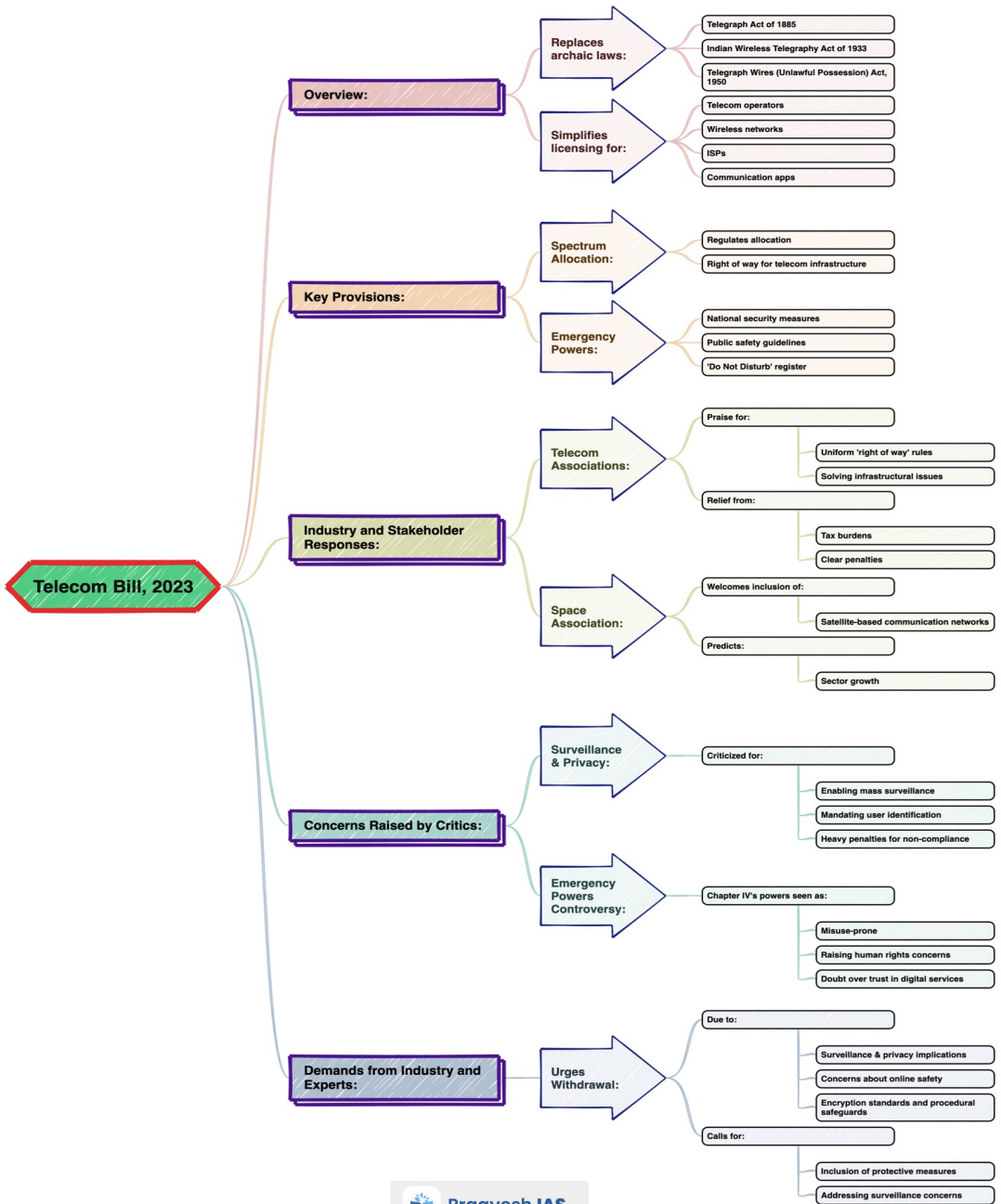
Pragyesh IAS



pragyesh.org



Will new telecom Bill streamline the sector?



A strategic choke point



- **Conflict Escalation:**
- During the Israel-Hamas conflict, Hezbollah in Lebanon was anticipated to open a second front, but tensions remained without a full-scale war.
- Ansar Allah (Houthis) from Yemen, supported by Iran, initially targeted Israel but shifted focus to commercial ships in the Red Sea.
- **Houthi Actions and Impact:**
- Houthi attacks targeted vessels in the Red Sea, posing a threat to global shipping.
- Increased incidents disrupted shipping routes, causing major companies to suspend trading in the Red Sea, leading to a 35% traffic drop.
- **Strategic Significance of Bab el-Mandeb:**
- Bab el-Mandeb, a narrow strait, crucially connects the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden and the Indian Ocean.
- Strategic importance historically led to protection from the British, and control shifted post Yemen's unification.
- **Houthi Capabilities and Effects:**
- Houthis, based near Bab el-Mandeb, possess weaponry to target vessels passing through the strait.
- Their attacks not only affected Israel's southern port but also disrupted 12% of global seaborne trade, forcing traffic reroutes.
- **Economic and Security Implications:**
- Rerouting traffic around Africa increased distances and shipping durations, impacting global trade.
- The U.S. formed a naval task force to counter Houthi threats, while regional countries avoided direct involvement.
- **Continued Threat and Response:**
- Houthis persist targeting tankers as long as the conflict between Israel and Gaza continues.
- The U.S. and allies pledged naval resources and haven't ruled out potential offensive actions against the Houthis.

