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**Joint Press Communique on Hon Indian Defence Minister HE Shri
Rajnath Singh’s visit to Maldives on the Invitation of his Maldivian
Counterpart HE Mariya Didi**

1. The Hon Defence Minister of India Shri Rajnath Singh arrived in Male on 1 May 2023 on the invitation of his Maldivian Counterpart Defence Minister Ms Mariya Didi.
2. During his visit, His Excellency Shri Rajnath Singh and Her Excellency Ms Mariya Didi held bilateral talks to enhance defence cooperation and strengthen the longstanding partnership between India and Maldives. They discussed a wide range of regional and global security issues of mutual concern, and agreed to deepen their cooperation in the defence and security domains.
3. Both Ministers reaffirmed the importance of maintaining peace, stability & security in the region and recognised the need to work together to address common security challenges. They underscored the importance of respecting international law & rules-based international order and expressed their commitment to upholding these principles.
4. The Ministers welcomed the progress made in ongoing defence cooperation between the two neighbours, including joint exercises and exchanges of visits by military officials. They also noted the importance of sharing best practices and expertise in areas such as counter terrorism, disaster management, cyber security and maritime security.
5. The Ministers agreed to explore additional avenues for cooperation, including in the areas of defence trade, capacity building and joint exercises. They also discussed the need to promote people-to-people contacts and exchanges between the armed forces of both countries.
6. During the visit, the Hon Minister Shri Rajnath Singh paid a courtesy call on His Excellency the President of Maldives Mr Ibrahim Mohamed Solih and met Foreign Minister His Excellency Mr Abdulla Shahid.

7. Further, Minister Rajnath Singh and Minister Didi attended the ceremony for the commissioning of the replacement ship for Huravee, in the presence of the President of Maldives HE Solih. The Hon Prime Minister of India HE Modi had announced the provision of the replacement ship for the aging Huravee, during President Solih's recent visit to India.
8. Minister Rajnath Singh also gifted MNDF an additional Landing Craft. The handing over of these vessels are in line with India's vision of Security and Growth for All in the Region (SAGAR) that seeks to work together with and jointly develop the capabilities of friends and partners for a safe, secure, prosperous and stable Indian Ocean Region.
9. The visit saw the laying of the foundation stone for the MNDF Coast Guard 'Ekatha Harbour' by Hon Minister Singh and Minister Didi. The development of the Coastguard Harbour and repair facility at Sifavaru is one of the biggest grant-in-aid projects of India.
10. Prior to his departure, Hon Minister HE Shri Rajnath Singh expressed his appreciation for the warm and cordial hospitality extended to him and his delegation by his Maldivian counterpart HE Ms Mariya Didi during the visit.
11. Both Parties reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening the partnership between their countries, and expressed common sentiments that they looked forward to continuing the dialogue and cooperation in the future.
12. The visit renewed the sense of commitment of the two friendly neighbours to enhance the security and prosperity of their respective countries and the region.

ABB/Savvy