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- Australia congratulated President-elect Solih, and congratulated the Maldives on high voter turnout, and a peaceful day of polling.
- The EU delegation in the Maldives congratulated President-elect Solih and praised the country on its peaceful conduct on polling day.
- Azerbaijani President Aliyev congratulated President-elect Solih on his victory in the presidential election, stating, "I congratulate you on your election as President of the Republic of Maldives. I hope that with our joint efforts relations between our countries will continue to develop in the spirit of friendship and cooperation".

<https://news.az/articles/politics/134170>

<https://edition.mv/news/7456>

<https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/human-rights-watchdog-affirms-fairness-of-presidential-polls-141939>

<https://raajje.mv/en/news/42010>

<https://www.voanews.com/a/maldives-president-elect-gains-control-of-parliament/4597702.html>

<https://raajje.mv/en/news/41565>

https://foreignminister.gov.au/releases/Pages/2018/mp_mr_180925.aspx

<http://foreign.gov.mv/index.php/en/mediacentre/news/4623-the-maldives-is-committed-to-hold-impartial-free-fair-and-transparent-elections>

<http://dlnnews.gov.in/international/maldives-hold-its-3rd-presidential-elections-tomorrow>

<https://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2018/09/286149.htm>

<https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/international/2018/10/05/fgn45-us-maldives.html>

The Maldives Enhances Bilateral Relations with U.S. & Europe

- U.S. acting Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State, for South and Central Asian Affairs, Alice Wells, visited the Maldives where she spoke about enhancing bilateral cooperation.
- The U.S. State Department, stated, "Wells will reiterate the strong U.S. commitment to our partnerships with Sri Lanka and Maldives and our shared interests in a prosperous and open Indo-Pacific region".
- U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo stated that the United States is eager to expand bilateral relations with the Maldives.
- The EU has expressed an interest in strengthening bilateral ties with the Maldives in judicial reform, ensuring human rights, rule of law, anti-corruption strategies, and climate change.
- The UK has discussed strengthening relations with the Maldives, and wants to help ensure a smooth transition to a new government, to help increase democracy, and strengthen human rights in the Maldives.

<https://raajje.mv/en/news/42173>

<http://www.dailymirror.lk/article/US-State-Department-s-Assistant-Secretary-Alice-Wells-to-arrive-in-SL-156563.html>

<https://www.theweek.in/wire-updates/international/2018/10/05/fgn45-us-maldives.html>

<https://raajje.mv/en/news/41926>

<https://edition.mv/news/7456>

<https://raajje.mv/en/news/42010>

The Maldives Works to Increase Quality of Life for Citizens

- The Maldives Environment Ministry is working to develop 32 clean drinking water facilities across the islands, to provide clean and drinkable water for its citizens.
- President-elect Solih vows to end wage discrimination, to create a minimum wage, and to train 30,000 young people to work in the tourism industry.
- A new housing plan will reclaim lagoons near Malé to provide about 82,000 flats and plots of land to build 1,000-square-foot homes for all homeless adult Maldivians, which will help alleviate overpopulation in the city, and help combat the housing shortage.
- A Maldives hospital hit a huge milestone with its first heart transplant, in its new ADK cath lab.
- Maldives' President Yameen inaugurated a monumental bridge that links the Maldives capital Male to the reclaimed suburb and airport island, which will unlock the country's economy and help lessen social issues sparked by centralization.

<https://avas.mv/en/54396>

<https://avas.mv/en/54368>

<https://avas.mv/en/53516>

<https://maldivesindependent.com/politics/details-revealed-of-total-solution-for-maldives-housing-crisis-139719>

<https://maldivesindependent.com/society/maldives-hospital-reaches-milestone-with-first-bypass-surgery-140043>

Maldives Tourism Sector Sees New Growth

- The Maldives won the prestigious Indian Ocean's Leading Beach Destination, Indian Ocean's Leading Dive Destination, and Indian Ocean's Leading Honeymoon Destination at the Annual World Travel Awards.

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- In the first three months of 2018, the Maldives saw a 10.7% increase in tourism compared to the same period last year.
- The Maldives Tourism Ministry announced in early September that the country had received its one millionth tourist of the year.
 - The tourism occupancy rate in the Maldives reached 75% in the first quarter of 2018, a 5% increase compared to the same quarter last year.
 - The tourist arrival rate in the first quarter increased 17% compared to the same period in 2017.
 - The tourism industry saw a first quarter revenue of \$993.5 million, a 20% increase from 2017.
 - Tourism Ministry statistics indicate an 8.1% increase in tourist visits to the Maldives in July 2018.
 - President Yameen announced that 21 new luxury resorts will be open by the end of 2018.
 - The Coralarium, the world's first intertidal art gallery has opened in the Maldives. The intertidal art gallery is made of nearly 30 sculptures that act as a habitat for endangered marine life.
 - The gallery is a place of preservation, conservation and education, built to raise awareness for the protection of Maldivian coral reefs.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-08/16/c_137395294.htm

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-09/10/c_137458026.htm

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-08/02/c_137363848.htm

<https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/fairmont-maldives-coralarium/index.html>

<http://www.freepressjournal.in/world/worlds-first-intertidal-art-gallery-opens-in-maldives/1326041>

<https://avas.mv/en/53078>

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nicolettilivas/2018/09/12/take-a-swim-in-this-underwater-gallery/#a2154b733482>

<https://visitmaldives.com/maldives-wins-3-significant-awards-at-the-world-travel-awards-2018/>

<https://visitmaldives.com/maldives-wins-3-prestigious-titles-at-smith-asian-travel-awards-2018/>

The Maldives Economy Shows New Promise

- The World Bank approved a \$12 million grant to improve the efficiency of the Maldives public finance management, which will be used to improve: planning and budgeting, debt and cash management, financial reporting, procurement, and State-Owned Enterprise monitoring and oversight.
- These changes to the financial system will lead to stronger preparation and prioritization of high impact and affordable public investments, will optimize cost and risks of public debt, and will improve public procurement.
- The World Bank commended the Maldives on its integrated financial management information system which has improved the quality and access of financial information, and has commended the Auditor General for taking progressive steps to disclose audit reports on public debt and guarantees.
- The World Bank also congratulated the Maldives on lowering the national deficit by 10.6%.

<https://maldivesindependent.com/business/world-bank-grants-us12m-for-maldives-public-finance-management-139717>

Maldives' Strong Commitment to Humanitarian & Environmental Aid

- The Maldives donated \$50,000 towards the Kerala flood relief fund. President Yameen announced the contribution as a token of solidarity with India.
- Ambassador of the Maldives to India Ahmed Mohamed, stated, "India is our closest neighbor. Any natural disaster or calamity that strikes our neighbor has an emotional impact on Maldives. This donation is a small gesture to a neighbor and friend who has always stood by Maldives in its hours of need."
- The world's largest 3D printed reef was submerged at Summer Island, Maldives to help grow and restore coral reefs that have been affected by the warming climate.
- The Maldives Environment Ministry announced its protection of three biodiversity hotspots that will protect different mangrove systems, as well as the marine life.

<https://maldivesindependent.com/environment/environment-ministry-declares-three-new-protected-areas-141940>

<https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/maldives-donates-50000-for-kerala-relief/articleshow/65476553.cms>

<https://visitmaldives.com/worlds-largest-3-d-printed-reef-installed-at-summer-island-maldives/>

All the best,

The Honorable Robert Wexler

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Maldives News Update

RW

Robert Wexler

Wed 10/31/2018 4:56 PM

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Sent Items

I thought you might be interested in the latest developments regarding the Maldives.

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Transparent Democratic Election Brings a New President to the Maldives

- Ibrahim Mohamed Solih has won the 3rd presidential election in the Maldives against incumbent President Abdullah Yameen.
- The democratic elections stood up against scrutiny, as the Human Rights Commission of the Maldives confirmed that there were no incidents that infringed upon anyone's right to vote. The commission also confirmed it had a free, fair and transparent election, and that all elections since 2008 have been deemed free and fair by international elections observers.
- President-elect Solih has also secured a majority in Parliament and is ready to be sworn in.
- Outgoing President Yameen met with President-elect Solih and congratulated him on his victory.
- U.S. Secretary of State Pompeo formally congratulated President-elect Solih and acknowledged that the election outcome reflected the will of the people, stating "the United States looks forward to President-elect Solih's inauguration in November and expanding US cooperation with Maldives in support of a free and open Indo-Pacific".
- The U.S. State Department commended the peaceful day of polling, and stated "The United States congratulates the people of Maldives, who peacefully raised their democratic voices to determine the future of their country."
- UK Diplomats congratulated President-elect Solih on his win, and recognized the fairness and transparency of the election.