

Saleem new SAARC secy general

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DHAKA, MAR 4: Ahmed Saleem, former President of Human Rights Commission of the Maldives, is set to become the next Secretary General of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). He will succeed another Maldivian, Fathimath Dhiyana Saeed, who resigned as the Secretary General on January 22 against the backdrop of a conflict with former President Mohamed Nasheed. "The Maldivian government has nominated Ahmed Saleem for the post of SAARC Secretary General and the proposal has been sent to all eight member states for approval," a senior Foreign Ministry official told The Independent on Sunday.

"The member states usually approve such nomination. Bangladesh has already approved the Maldivian government's selection," he added.

Born on May 26, 1949, Saleem joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in 1968 and had a distinguished career in the Maldivian Foreign Service (MFS) spanning for 26 years.

He also served as the first Director from the Maldives at the SAARC Secretariat in Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal.

Saleem was appointed as the President of Human Rights Commission of the Maldives in 2006 and served in that capacity until August, 2010.

SAARC Secretary General is appointed for three years from each member state on alphabetical rotation basis.

Fathimath, the first ever female SAARC Secretary General, assumed office on March 1, 2011 and her tenure was supposed to end on February 28, 2014.

Since Fathimath resigned before the end of tenure, the Maldivian government had to select Saleem for the remainder of the three-year term.