

# Maldivian, FlyMe to use Colombo Ratmalana airport

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Maldivian (Q2, Malé) and FlyMe (Maldives) (VP, Malé) will use Colombo Ratmalana airport rather than the main Sri Lankan gateway of Colombo Int'l once they resume scheduled flights to the island, Sri Lankan Minister of Tourism Prasanna Ranatunga told a media briefing. Ranatunga underlined that around 9,000 Maldivian citizens live near Ratmalana airport, which used to be Sri Lanka's main international gateway and is located much closer to Colombo's city centre. Besides routes to/from the Maldives, Ranatunga also identified southern India as a potential target for Ratmalana. However, he did not name specific cities or airlines. Currently, all scheduled international flights serve Sri Lanka via Colombo Int'l. The government has been trying to boost secondary airports, namely Ratmalana, Jaffna, Batticaloa, and Hambantota. Both Alliance Air (India) (9I, Mumbai Int'l) and FitsAir (8D, Colombo Int'l) have considered launching services from Jaffna, in the north of Sri Lanka, to southern India, capitalising on the fact that both regions have predominantly Tamil populations. However, these plans failed to materialise before the onset of the pandemic. The government recently waived all airport fees at Ratmalana and Hambantota to drive traffic to the airfields. However, for the time being, Sri Lanka's borders remain shut to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Maldivian operates its international network with one A320-200 and one A321-200 (it also uses DHC-6-300s, a DHC-8-200, a DHC-8-Q200, and DHC-8-Q300s on domestic routes), while FlyMe operates four Avions de Transport Régional turboprops – one ATR42-500, two ATR72-500s, and one ATR72-600, the ch-aviation fleets advanced module shows.

