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Scout saves Maldives President from assassination

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Maldivian president Maumoon Abdul Gayoom escaped assassination in his Indian Ocean archipelago thanks to a teenage boy Scout who wrestled back a knife-wielding attacker, officials said.

Mr. Gayoom, who was unharmed in the incident, paid tribute to teenager Mohamed Jaisham, who was wearing his green Scout uniform with scarf and woggle at the time. Mohamed Jaisham threw himself in front of the assailant and foiled the attack by wrestling with the man and grabbing the blade.

The boy's hand was badly wounded but he was treated at a local hospital and is now fine.

"The president was greeting people" when the would-be assassin, a 20-year-old man, "pulled out a knife and tried to stab him in the stomach," Information Minister Mohamed Nasheed said.

Luckily for the president, 15-year-old Scout Mohamed Jaisham grabbed the knife which cut his hand -- and some of his blood ended up on Gayoom's shirt, giving the initial impression that the president was also badly hurt, officials said.

Gayoom, who has ruled the islands since 1978 and is Asia's longest serving president, likes to mingle with islanders during his visits, was talking and shaking hands with people when the attack took place.

The attack took place on Hoarafushi in the north of the Maldives, a Muslim-majority nation on a chain of 1,192 coral and white sand islands off the southern tip of India.

In a twist of fate, Mr. Gayoom holds the honorary title of Chief Scout of the Maldives.