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Delivering on "SAGAR":
India's disaster assistance post cyclone
'IDAI'

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ABOUT US

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In keeping with India's increasing global profile as a leading power and the accompanying dynamism of India's foreign and security policy, the Delhi Policy Group has expanded its focus areas to include India's broader regional and global role; India's initiatives to strengthen its strategic periphery; India's political, security and connectivity challenges and policies across the Indo-Pacific; and the strategic partnerships that advance India's rise. To support these goals, the DPG undertakes research, publishes policy reports and organises conferences on strategic and geo-political, geo-economic, and defence and security issues.

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(Photographs top to bottom)

Indian Navy - First Responder to Cyclone 'IDAI' in Mozambique.

Source: The Indian Navy <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-navy-first-responder-cyclone-idai-mozambique-19-march-2019>

Indian Navy provides aid in Mozambique.

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Delivering on "SAGAR": India's Disaster Assistance Post Cyclone 'IDAI'

by
Lalit Kapur

Introducing his "SAGAR" (Security and Growth for All in the Region) vision in Mauritius on March 12, 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had declared: "the world speaks of 21st century driven by the dynamism and energy of Asia and the Pacific. But its course will be determined by the tides of the Indian Ocean. This is why (the) Indian Ocean is at the centre of global attention more than ever before". He went on to say that "Our vision for Indian Ocean Region is rooted in advancing cooperation in our region; and to use our capabilities for the benefit of all in our common maritime home", and to affirm that "We will work to ensure a safe, secure and stable Indian Ocean Region that delivers us all to the shores of prosperity... our capabilities will be there for those struck by the ocean's fury, or caught in distress on the seas".



Indian Navy - First Responder to Cyclone 'IDAI' in Mozambique.

Source: The Indian Navy <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-navy-first-responder-cyclone-idai-mozambique-19-march-2019>

The Indian Navy has been in the forefront in fulfilling the commitment made by the Prime Minister across the vast expanse of the Indian Ocean and its contiguous waters. In the last six months, missions to assist those impacted by the Ocean's fury or in distress at sea include provision of relief following cyclone Titli in Odisha and Andhra Pradesh; SAR operations in Assam; the

rescue of fishermen off Kochi; HADR assistance to the tsunami hit residents of Palu, in Sulawesi, Indonesia; evacuation of stranded Indians from Socotra following cyclone Mekunu; liaising with the navies of Nigeria, Ghana and Benin to locate and secure the release of the hijacked motor tanker Marine Express with 22 Indian crew on board; provision of relief to Mauritius following cyclone Berguitta; medical evacuation in the Maldives; and, most recently, assistance to Mozambique following the devastating cyclonic storm IDAI.



Indian Navy provides aid in Mozambique.

Source: The Indian Navy <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/content/indian-navy-first-responder-cyclone-idai-mozambique-19-march-2019>

Mozambique, a country in the Southeastern part of the African continent, has been an important partner for India's diplomatic outreach and developmental assistance since its independence from Portugal in 1975. India was among the first to establish a diplomatic mission in Mozambique in 1976, and by 1978 a large technical assistance mission from the Indian Railways had already been deployed there to rehabilitate the railway system. Mozambique's mission in New Delhi opened in 2001 and relations between the two countries have continued to grow. In 2003, the Indian Navy provided a maritime security cordon off the coast of Maputo for the African Union Summit. It did so again in 2004, when Maputo hosted a meeting of the World Economic Forum. In 2011, Mozambique signed a maritime security agreement with India, covering military technical support, logistic support and training. The signatory from the Mozambique side was their Defence Minister, Filipe Jacinto Nyusi. In July 2016, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi became the first Indian Prime

Minister in nearly 34 years to visit Mozambique, he was hosted by none other than former defence minister Nyusi, who had now become the President of Mozambique. Among the subjects the two leaders discussed was maritime security cooperation. Their discussions bore fruit when Mozambique's port of Beira was virtually razed to the ground by the Category Two Cyclone IDAI, which made landfall over the city during the early hours of March 15, 2019.



Indian Navy's Relief Operations in Mozambique.

Source: News Nation - <https://www.newsnation.in/india-news/cyclone-hit-mozambique-nationals-500-treated-indian-navy-medical-camp-sujata-sarathi-shardul-article-218127.html>

Category Two storms, by definition, are those with wind speeds ranging from 96 – 110 mph (cyclone IDAI reportedly had a top wind speed of 104 mph). Such storms involve substantial risk of injury or death to people and livestock from flying debris. They are likely to destroy temporary homes and shelters, damage apartment buildings and commercial centres, uproot trees and result in total power loss ranging from days to weeks. Cyclone IDAI was no exception: reports indicate that more than 90% of Beira, a city with over 500,000 inhabitants, has been razed to the ground. The situation was compounded by a storm surge over 13 feet high, which swept through the city ravaging everything in its path. More than 750 deaths have been reported so far and the toll is likely to rise as more bodies are discovered.

President Filipe Nyusi sought help from India, among others. The Indian Navy responded with speed and alacrity. It speaks volumes for the flexibility, reach, responsiveness and sustainability of India's maritime force presence in the Indian Ocean that they were able to bridge the gap of over 5500 Km from the nearest point on India's coast, arriving in Beira by March 18, 2019 to become

the first responders to the crisis. INS Sujata and ICGS Sarathi entered Beira on March 18, and INS Shardul followed on March 19, providing humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to the people of the devastated region. A fourth ship, INS Magar, carrying relief supplies, is on the way. All ships involved are indigenous: Sujata was built by Hindustan Shipyard, Visakhapatnam; Shardul and Magar by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers, Kolkatta; and Sarathi by the Goa Shipyard.



Indian Navy's Humanitarian Effort in Mozambique.

Source: The Indian Navy <https://www.indiannavy.nic.in/node/22342>

The nature of assistance being provided is multifold. Rescue teams from the ships have evacuated 192 stranded survivors from the Buzi area near Beira. Three medical camps have been set up, at Port Beira, Gaura-Garathe Island and Matadoura School, Imnhamizua. These have provided assistance to over 1500 affected people. The embarked Chetak Helicopter has carried out numerous sorties for evacuation of local personnel, helping local authorities carry out aerial surveillance of the area and to drop relief material to marooned people. Community services are being conducted by the ships' crew at affected locations like schools, hospitals, churches and orphanages in consultation with the local administration. The ships have set up a community kitchen that is open round the clock and provides food as well as fresh water to the local population. INS Shardul, with its much larger carrying capacity, has been used to ferry international relief material arriving at Maputo, the nation's capital over 1200 Km away (all roads to Beira have been cut by flooding). The Indian origin community of Mozambique, numbering over 20,000, has rallied to the cause

and is enthusiastically aiding the relief effort of the ships. Rescue teams are being provided transport and local SIM cards by the diaspora, so that they can reach affected sites and maintain communications.

The speed, commitment and efficiency of the Indian Navy in delivering assistance to Mozambique at a time of a major natural disaster highlights India's role as the major maritime power and maritime security provider in the Indian Ocean. It is also a visible manifestation of PM Modi's SAGAR aspiration: ensuring Security and Growth for All in the Region.



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