

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO. 497

ANSWERED ON 27/03/2026

DISASTER RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA

***497. SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA:**

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:-

(a) the nature and scale of humanitarian assistance extended to Sri Lanka in response to Cyclone Ditwah in 2025 including financial aid, material support and deployment of relief assets;

(b) the details of relief operations undertaken under Operation Sagar Bandhu including assistance provided in areas such as disaster response, medical aid, logistics and rehabilitation;

(c) whether disaster relief and humanitarian assistance form a key component of India's Neighbourhood First policy, if so, the details thereof; and

(d) the manner in which such interventions have contributed to strengthening regional cooperation and goodwill?

ANSWER

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

(SHRI KIRTI VARDHAN SINGH)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

**STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (d) OF
STARRED QUESTION NO. *497 BY SHRI BAIJAYANT PANDA TO BE
ANSWERED IN LOK SABHA ON 27.03.2026 REGARDING DISASTER
RELIEF ASSISTANCE TO SRI LANKA**

(a) & (b) Cyclone Ditwah made landfall on the eastern coast of Sri Lanka on 28 November 2025. Standing in solidarity with the people of Sri Lanka, India launched Operation Sagar Bandhu on 28 November 2025, the very day, to provide immediate humanitarian assistance and disaster relief to Sri Lanka. Within initial 3 days of operation, India delivered 53 tons of emergency relief material including two BHISHM Modular Trauma Cubes along with medicines, medical equipment and an Aarogya Maitri team of trauma specialists and emergency physicians; pivoted INS Vikrant and INS Udayagiri which were present in Colombo; deployed two Chetak Helicopters from INS Vikrant followed by three heavy lift Mi-17 helicopters of the Indian Air Force for rescuing stranded persons from inaccessible areas and distributing aid; and deployed an 80-member National Disaster Response Force contingent including K9 Search and Rescue unit for search and rescue operations. Under

Operation Sagar Bandhu, India provided comprehensive support to Sri Lanka including immediate relief supplies, medical aid, search and rescue assistance, restoration of damaged infrastructure etc. Details of HADR assistance to Sri Lanka post Cyclone Ditwah is attached at Annexure-I.

(c) & (d) India's commitment for swift and comprehensive assistance to its neighbours during events of crises and disasters is guided by its 'Neighbourhood First' policy, which accords institutional priority and centrality towards partners in India's immediate neighbourhood. India's consistent HADR support to its neighbours has been showcased repeatedly during times of crises. During the unprecedented Covid pandemic, India started sending made-in-India covid vaccines to its neighbouring partners on 20 January 2021, just after 4 days of initiating its own vaccination programme. India executed Operation Karuna in 2023 to support Myanmar post Cyclone Mocha; Operation Sadbhav in 2024 to provide HADR assistance to Myanmar, Lao PDR and Vietnam in the aftermath of Typhoon Yagi; Operation Brahma in 2025 to support Myanmar's recovery and rehabilitation post major earthquake;

disaster relief, rehabilitation support and medical aid to Nepal in the aftermath of devastating earthquake of November 2023 and post floods and landslides in Nepal in 2024 and 2025; continued medical aid, food grain assistance and disaster relief to Afghanistan since 2021. In addition to disaster relief supplies, India has been extending request-based assistance to its neighbouring partners. India has focused on creating mutually beneficial, people-oriented, regional frameworks for stability and prosperity in the region, including through the development of infrastructure projects, augmentation of capabilities, extending financial, budgetary and humanitarian assistance.

India's HADR initiatives are a symbol of friendship and goodwill and help foster cooperation and diplomatic ties with recipient nations. By providing timely, need-based and rapid assistance during emergencies, India has reinforced trust and goodwill with partner countries. While, India's swift HADR assistance has supported the disaster preparedness of partner countries, India's medical assistance has contributed to building stronger health systems in recipient nations. These sustained efforts have enhanced India's

reputation as a dependable first responder and a constructive regional partner.

Annexure-I

Details of HADR assistance to Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu and beyond

Sl. No.	Nature of Assistance/deployments	Details of assistance
1	Disaster relief essential supplies	India delivered over 1100 tons of disaster relief material to Sri Lanka, including waterproof tents, tarpaulins, blankets, hygiene kits, clothing, mosquito nets, solar lamps ready-to-eat meals, 500 mobile water purification units, emergency dry ration viz. rice, sugar, lentils, oils, flour etc.
2	Medical Aid	(i) 14.5 tons of essential medicines and medical equipment (ii) 2 BHISHM Modular Trauma Cubes along with Aarogya Maitri Team (<i>The team provided urgent assistance to affected people and imparted on-site training to medical officers of Sri Lanka Air Force for further deployment and operations of BHISHM Cubes in affected areas</i>)
3	Indian Army Field Hospital	An Indian Army Field hospital was set up with 85 medical personnel team of Indian Army in Mahiyanganaya region of Sri Lanka. The hospital set up comprising facilities of ambulances, trauma care units, Operation Theaters to provide critical health services. <i>The hospital treated over 8000 persons till its de-induction on 14.12.2025</i>
4	80-members	India was the first country to deploy trained

	Specialized Search and Rescue Teams from NDRF	disaster responders with 80 NDRF personnel including K9 Search and Rescue unit. The teams were deployed on 29 November 2025 in worst affected areas of Sri Lanka including Baulla, Kachchikade, Puttalam, Colombo and Gampaha. The team performed search and rescue operations in coordination with the Sri Lankan authorities. <i>The teams rescued and assisted over 450 persons.</i>
5	Deployment of 2 Chetak helicopters from INS Vikrant followed by 3 Mi-17 V5 helicopters	2 INS Chetak helicopters followed by deployment of 3 IAF Mi-17 helicopters worked with Sri Lankan Air Force personnel for swift rescue preferably to pregnant women, infants, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable group of people. The rescued individuals included nationals of Sri Lanka, India, Germany, Slovenia, UK, South Africa, Poland, Belarus, Iran, Australia, Pakistan and Bangladesh The deployment assisted airlifting injured persons, transporting Sri Lankan Army personnel and distributing relief material to remote and inaccessible areas.
6	Evacuation of Indian nationals	Government evacuated 424 Indian nationals by using IAF aircrafts on gratis and facilitated travel of 2076 Indian nationals by commercial flights from the cyclone hit areas of Sri Lanka
7	Integrated Task Force of Indian Army	The Indian Army Signalling Team assisted to restore the damaged communication infrastructure in Mahiyanganaya, Sri Lanka
8	4 Bailey Bridge	India sent emergency supply of 4 Bailey

	systems along with Indian Army Engineers Team	Bridge systems along with a specialized team of Indian Army Engineers to restore the damaged transport connectivity in cyclone affected areas of Sri Lanka. <i>The first bailey bridge was installed in Kilinochchi district of Sri Lanka on 23 December 2025.</i>
9	Deployment of IAF Aircrafts	India deployed 2 IAF C130J, 1 IAF IL76, 4 IAF C-17 Globemaster, 2 Chetak Helicopters and 3 IAF Mi-17 V5 Helicopters to deliver the relief supplies and perform search and rescue operations
10	Deployment of Indian Navy and Indian Coast Guard Ships	India pivoted INS Vikrant and INS Udayagiri, which were in Sri Lanka, and deployed INS Sukanya, INS Gharial, INS LCUs -L51, L54, L57 and ICGS Shaurya to deliver relief and supplies
11	Reconstruction package worth US\$ 450 million	In addition to the assistance extended to Sri Lanka under Operation Sagar Bandhu, Government announced a special reconstruction package of US\$ 450 million towards rebuilding of cyclone-affected regions of Sri Lanka on 23 December 2025, during the visit of Hon'ble Minister of External Affairs to Sri Lanka. The package includes US\$ 350 million in concessional Lines of Credit and US\$ 100 million as grants for rehabilitation and restoration of roads, railway and bridge connectivity, fully/partially damaged houses, support for damaged health and education systems, agriculture and for disaster preparedness

12	Supply of additional 10 Bailey Bridge systems	India delivered 10 Bailey bridges to Sri Lanka on 5 February 2026, as part of India's reconstruction package to Sri Lanka
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