

Mission Sagar

Mission Sagar was a [COVID-19](#) relief mission launched by the government of India in May 2020 as a part of its efforts to provide essential aid to the Indian Ocean countries. This was followed up by Mission Sagar II in November and Mission Sagar III in December of that year.

As per the Ministry of External Affairs, Mission Sagar is in tandem with the SAGAR (SECURITY and Growth for All in the Region) initiative.

***Note:** Mission Sagar is different from the SAGAR initiative. Mission Sagar is a humanitarian and inter-country outreach program, while the SAGAR initiative is a policy doctrine of maritime cooperation.

Overview of Mission Sagar

As stated earlier Mission Sagar is in alignment with the [SAGAR initiative](#). The initiative is a vision for economic and security cooperation between India and its maritime neighbours.

Following the COVID-19 pandemic the government of India took the decision to fulfill the vision of the SAGAR initiative by providing essential humanitarian aid to its maritime partners.

A series of 3 missions were launched in 2020, which were carried out by the ships of the Indian Navy. These ships bought essential items such as medicines to the ports of India's maritime partners. We will further discuss the details of all the Mission Sagar's launched by the government of India.

The First Mission Sagar - I

India sent INS Kesari left port on 10 May 2020 with food items, medicines and medical assistance teams. It would make its way to the Indian Ocean nations of Mauritius, Seychelles, Madagascar, Comoros and La Reunion. These nations are part of the Indian Ocean Commission of which India became an observer

It was the first time that a single relief mission was undertaken to cover all the island nations in the Western Indian Ocean. The only notable exception was Sri Lanka where the Indian Air Force airlifted supplies into the country.

INS Kesari returned to the port of Kochi on June 28, 2020 traveling over 7,500 nautical miles over 55 days.

Mission Sagar - II

In November 2020, INS Airavat left port. It was delivering food to Sudan, South Sudan, Djibouti and Eritrea.

Along with fulfilling a humanitarian mission, India was also strengthening its strategic position as these countries sat on the major shipping lane between the Red Sea and the Suez Canal. Thus they are vital shipping routes and can prove to be a strategic asset in times of conflict.

Mission Sagar - III

In December 2020, INS Kiltan made its way towards Cambodia and Vietnam. The INS Kiltan was carrying 15 tons of Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) for disaster relief following catastrophic floods in Vietnam and Cambodia.

Like the previous Sagar missions, this exercise was to show that India is a dependable partner for southeast Asian nations and the first responder in the region.

It also highlighted the importance of the [Association of Southeast Asian Nations](#) (ASEAN) in furthering existing strategic ties.

Mission Sagar - IV

In March 2021, INS Jalashwa reached Port Anjouan, Comoros to deliver 1000 metric tonnes of rice to the island nation. This is the second time an Indian naval ship is arriving at Comoros. Earlier, as part of Mission Sagar I, India had delivered medicines and sent medical assistance teams to Comoros.

Conclusion

In the process of providing much needed humanitarian aid and strengthening relations with its maritime partners, India also aims to counter the Chinese 'string of pearls' doctrine and any other instances of its growing clout in the region.