

Operation Maitri, Purpose, Response, Key Operational Highlights

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Operation Maitri was a large-scale humanitarian and disaster relief operation launched by the Government of India to assist Nepal after the devastating earthquake on April 25, 2015. The earthquake, measuring 7.8 on the **Richter scale** maximum intensity of X on **Mercalli Scale**, killed and injured thousands, and left countless others homeless.

Operation Maitri

“Maitri,” meaning “friendship” in Sanskrit, accurately reflected the spirit behind the operation. Operation Maitri was one of the largest disaster response operations ever launched by India in a foreign country. It was managed by the Indian Armed Forces, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), and the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in close coordination with the Nepalese government and ex service men of Gurkha Regiment.

Also Read: [Operation Sindoor](#)

Operation Maitri Details

On April 25, 2015, Nepal was hit by its most powerful earthquake in over 80 years with its epicenter near Lamjung, about 77 km northwest of Kathmandu. This earthquake triggered aftershocks and landslides across the Himalayan region, affecting parts of northern and eastern India, Tibet, and Bangladesh as well.

- The UN declared it a **Level 3 emergency**, the highest categorization of a humanitarian crisis.
- Infrastructure including **roads, hospitals, heritage sites, and power lines** was severely damaged.
- Several countries requested India to rescue their stranded nationals

Operation Maitri India Response

The gravity of the disaster prompted India to immediately step in and provide rapid assistance to the Himalayan nation in accordance with our **Act East Policy**. Within hours of the earthquake, the Indian **Prime Minister** Narendra Modi directed the mobilization of relief and rescue teams under Operation Maitri. It was one of the quickest and most comprehensive, underlining the deep cultural, geographic, and historical ties between the two countries.

Also Read: [The Resistance Front](#)

Operation Maitri Multi Phase, Multi- Agency Operation

Operation Maitri was executed in phases, with troops, engineers, and medical teams deployed to the affected areas. The Indian Air Force (IAF) and Indian Army played pivotal roles, alongside the NDRF, in providing immediate relief and medical support.

Key Operational Highlights

- The IAF deployed over 15 aircraft, including C-17 Globemasters, IL-76, C-130Js, and helicopters for airlifting rescue teams and relief supplies of more than 1200 tonnes including food, water, medicine, tents and blanket.
- India's prompt dispatch of search-and-rescue dogs, communication equipments, and cranes also helped in mitigation.
- The Indian Army set up field hospitals and surgical units in Kathmandu and surrounding regions. Medical teams, including orthopedic and trauma specialists, to treat thousands of injured individuals.
- Engineering teams were sent to clear the rubble and restore power and communication services in the nation.
- Water purification systems were sent to ease pure water supply in rural and worst affected areas.

Operation Maitri Indo- Nepal Relations

While political ties between India and Nepal have seen ups and downs, Operation Maitri reaffirmed the people-to-people connection and India's role as a dependable neighbour. The government and people of Nepal expressed deep gratitude for India's timely intervention. Hashtags like #OperationMaitri and #IndiaWithNepal trended on social media, and videos showing Indian soldiers rescuing children and elders went viral. Despite a few diplomatic tensions in later years, Operation Maitri remains one of the most positively remembered foreign interventions in Nepal's modern history.

Operation Maitri Humanitarian Diplomacy

Operation Maitri was more than just a disaster relief mission; it was a symbol of India's compassionate diplomacy, military professionalism, and regional responsibility. India received widespread international praise for its speed, scale, and effectiveness. While other nations mobilized their support in the days that followed, India was already on the ground within 6 hours of the earthquake. India's efforts were seen as a model of regional leadership and friendship, and it underscored India's growing stature as a first responder in **South Asia**. Operation Maitri became a blueprint for future humanitarian missions by India. It demonstrated the capability of the Indian Armed Forces and civilian agencies to:

- Mobilize large-scale resources within hours
- Coordinate logistics across difficult terrain
- Cooperate with foreign governments under pressure

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