



# Indian succor for Sudan

As Sudan begins its fragile transition, India must evolve from first responder to long-term partner, leveraging expertise in digital infrastructure, agriculture, energy, and MSMEs to aid reconstruction



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On July 29, 2025, India handed over a consignment of 2,000 MT of rice to the acting Humanitarian Aid Commissioner of Sudan. This follows India's assistance of 25 tons and 2 tons of life-saving medicines in May 2023 and March 2025, respectively. India's humanitarian aid to the people of Sudan reaffirms its age-old tradition of being a reliable first responder in times of crisis, reflecting the enduring solidarity between India and Sudan.

Traditionally, India's engagement with conflict-hit and politically unstable African countries has been rooted in deep humanitarian solidarity and a commitment to peacekeeping. From sending food, medicines, and emergency relief to joining the United Nations Peacekeeping Operations (UNPKO), India has built a rich legacy of prioritising humanitarian efforts over political interests.

However, the scale and complexity of modern conflicts, such as in Sudan, which has hollowed out the nation's institutions, depleted its economy, and devastated over 13 million people, necessitate that India's efforts expand beyond emergency relief and transition to a comprehensive, multi-sectoral role in reconstruction and development.

Sudan has witnessed an unending spiral of widespread and brutal violence since April 2023, when fighting erupted between the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and the paramilitary Rapid Support Forces (RSF). The political leadership in Sudan has also accused the United Arab Emirates (UAE) of backing the RSF with arms and logistical support. Entire cities, from Khartoum to Geneina in Darfur, have been vastly devastated, making Sudan a tragic epicentre of conflict and humanitarian despair. As Sudan's crisis continues to unfold, its new Prime Minister, Kamil al-Taib Idris, first since the conflict erupted in April 2023, officially assumed office on 31 May 2025, marking the formal start of the internationally recognised transitional government and the much-needed economic reconstruction plan for Sudan.

The recent developments offer India a critical opportunity to play a significant role in Sudan's post-civil war reconstruction, as the stakes extend beyond humanitarian goodwill and align with India's strategic, economic, and geopolitical interests.

Sudan's strategic location, at the crossroads of the Horn of Africa, the Red Sea, and North Africa, makes it pivotal for regional maritime security. A stable Sudan would strengthen India's footprint in Africa. With its unique combination of technological prowess, low-resource



development experience, and South-South solidarity, India is exceptionally well placed to be a strong and reliable partner in Sudan's journey of redevelopment.

India's proven strengths in solar energy, agri-tech, digital public infrastructure (DPI), health services, MSME development, education, and biofuels can assist in building long-term resilience based on strong foundations. As most of these interventions have already been operated at scale at home and, increasingly, expanded in other parts of Africa, the next task could be to package them into a coherent "Sudan Reconstruction Plan" that can deliver impact even in an unstable security environment. India's DPI systems (digital identity, digital payments, and data exchange) offer Sudan a well-tested blueprint to embrace a digital mode of development. Aadhaar-style digital ID systems can be locally adapted to verify beneficiaries.

Unified Payments Interface (UPI) technology — already in use for cross-border payments with several African and Asian partners — can enable instant, low-cost transactions as and when required.

Also, the Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) provides a neutral, open-protocol marketplace where Sudanese traders, transporters, and service providers can connect with customers without relying on a single corporate entity.

Agriculture has been Sudan's economic backbone. The country has the largest proportion of arable land in Africa. Yet, conflict, lack of irrigation, and outdated farming methods have immensely reduced productivity. India's agricultural expertise — spanning low-cost irrigation systems, solar-driven pumps, drought-resistant seeds, mechanisation, and farmer

cooperatives like FPOs — can be immensely transformative for Sudan.

Facilitating value addition through small-scale milling, oil pressing, and packaging units — backed by MSME finance — would also be required to be gradually integrated into the agrarian sector. This would not only enhance domestic food security but could restore Sudan's agricultural export capacity, bringing in foreign exchange and enhancing livelihood opportunities.

However, none of this could succeed without a coherent financing and governance structure. Financing could be in a blended form through multiple streams, viz, International Solar Alliance (ISA), Africa50, LoCs through the EXIM Bank, multilateral grants, carbon finance, etc. By enhancing the role of the Indian private sector — MSMEs, affordable healthcare providers, EdTech firms, and renewable energy companies — Indian industries could also find long-term markets in Sudan.

India now stands at a pivotal moment to translate its support for Sudan into targeted, transformative action. By actively engaging in Sudan's recovery process, India can demonstrate effective partnership through concrete initiatives in development, infrastructure, agriculture, and digital public goods. It is imperative for India to collaborate with Sudan's transitional government and international stakeholders to design and implement a comprehensive Sudan Reconstruction Plan.

Strategic support now will not only aid Sudan's transition but also ensure India's lasting influence as a responsible and committed partner in Africa's development. India should seize this moment to lead by example, championing peace, stability, and sustainable progress in the Global South.

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