Exercise Mountain Guardian 2026: India and UAE armies train together

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News

The **Indian Army** and the **UAE Land Forces** began the joint exercise **'Mountain Guardian 2026'** on **5 October 2026** at the **Foreign Training Node, Chaubatia**, near **Ranikhet**, Almora district, **Uttarakhand**. It runs until **18 October 2026**.

Key facts

Troops	**92** personnel in all; India: a **Bhairav Battalion**; UAE: a Mountain Infantry Battalion
Women	Women officers and soldiers of both armies take part
Focus	**Mountain warfare** and joint action in sub-conventional operations
Training	Drone operations, surveillance grids, rock climbing, obstacle and endurance drills, firing, a final field exercise
Edition	Reports call it the **third edition** of the India–UAE army exercise (earlier editions were held as **Desert Cyclone**; the first, in January 2024, was at Mahajan, Rajasthan)

Background

- **Bhairav battalions** are new light commando units the Indian Army began raising in **2025**.
- Other India–UAE exercises: **Desert Knight** (Air Force, with France), **Zayed Talwar** (Navy), and **Desert Flag** (multinational air exercise hosted by the UAE).
- India and the UAE signed a **Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) in February 2022**, India's first such deal in the region; they have been **Comprehensive Strategic Partners since 2017**.
- **UAE:** federation of **7 emirates**, capital **Abu Dhabi**; formed in **1971**.

Tamil Nadu link: The **Madras Regiment** (HQ **Wellington, Nilgiris**) is the oldest infantry regiment of the Indian Army (from 1758). The **Defence Services Staff College** is also at Wellington, and the **Officers Training Academy** is in **Chennai**.

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