5th edition of India–Australia joint military exercise 'AUSTRAHIND 2026' begins in Thiruvananthapuram

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News

The 5th edition of the India–Australia joint military exercise 'AUSTRAHIND 2026' began on 19 Oct 2026 at the Foreign Training Node, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, and runs till 1 Nov. India has about 120 troops, including the Garhwal Rifles; Australia about 120 from 13 Brigade. Theme: 'Joint Sub-Conventional Operations in Island and Coastal Environment under Chapter VII of the UN Mandate'. A New Zealand observer delegation is taking part for the first time.

Key facts

Edition / dates	5th; 19 Oct – 1 Nov 2026
Venue	Foreign Training Node, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala
Troops	India – about 120 (Garhwal Rifles + other arms); Australia – about 120 (13 Brigade)
Theme	Joint sub-conventional operations in island & coastal settings under UN Charter Chapter VII
Drills	Surveillance & reconnaissance, protection of vital installations, HADR

Previous	4th – Irwin Barracks, Perth (Australia), 13–26 Oct 2025; NZ observers this time (first)

Background

- UN Charter: Chapter VI – pacific settlement of disputes; Chapter VII (Articles 39–51) – action with respect to threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression – the Security Council can impose sanctions and authorise force.
- Other India–Australia exercises: AUSINDEX – navy (bilateral, since 2015); Pitch Black – multinational air exercise hosted by the Royal Australian Air Force at Darwin; Malabar – navies of India, US, Japan and Australia (Australia back since 2020).
- Ties: QUAD – India, US, Japan, Australia; revived in 2017. India–Australia 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' – 2020. Garhwal Rifles Regimental Centre – Lansdowne (Uttarakhand).

Tamil Nadu link: Thiruvananthapuram, the venue, was the capital of the old Travancore State. Its Thovalai, Agastheeswaram, Kalkulam and Vilavancode taluks joined Madras State on 1 Nov 1956 (States Reorganisation Act, 1956) to form Kanyakumari district; Marshal A. Nesamony of the Travancore Tamil Nadu Congress led that struggle. (No report says the Madras Regiment is taking part in this exercise.)

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