33rd Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise 'SIMBEX-2026' begins at Visakhapatnam (21–26 Oct)

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News

The 33rd edition of the Singapore–India Maritime Bilateral Exercise, 'SIMBEX-2026', is being held at Visakhapatnam from 21 to 26 Oct 2026. Republic of Singapore Navy ship RSS Supreme arrived on 21 Oct; the opening ceremony was held the same day. INS Nilgiri and INS Kamorta represent the Indian Navy. Harbour phase (21–23 Oct) – subject-matter expert exchanges, cross-deck visits, sports and planning conferences; sea phase (24–26 Oct, Bay of Bengal) – anti-submarine, anti-surface and anti-air warfare drills. Aim: interoperability and peace and stability in the Indo-Pacific.

Key facts

Edition	33rd; 21–26 Oct 2026; Visakhapatnam (Eastern Naval Command)
Ships	Singapore – RSS Supreme (Formidable-class frigate); India – INS Nilgiri (Project 17A), INS Kamorta (Project 28)
Phases	Harbour 21–23 Oct; Sea 24–26 Oct (Bay of Bengal)
Origin	1994 – as 'Exercise Lion King'
Other exercises	SITMEX – Singapore–India–Thailand trilateral maritime exercise (since 2019); 'Bold Kurukshetra' – army

Background

- History: begun in 1994 as 'Lion King', an anti-submarine exercise, SIMBEX is one of the Indian Navy's longest-running bilateral naval exercises, held both in Indian waters and in the Singapore / South China Sea region. Its silver jubilee (25th edition) in 2018 was held at Port Blair and Visakhapatnam.
- Relations: Singapore is a key partner in India's 'Act East' policy (2014). Ties were elevated to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership' during PM Modi's visit in Sept 2024. Singapore is a founding member of ASEAN (1967).
- Geography / history: Singapore is a city-state at the southern tip of the Malay Peninsula, at the southern entrance of the Strait of Malacca. Stamford Raffles set up a British trading post in 1819; it joined Malaysia in 1963 and became independent on 9 Aug 1965. Visakhapatnam (Andhra Pradesh) is HQ of the Eastern Naval Command.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil is one of Singapore's four official languages, with English, Malay and Mandarin; most people of Indian origin there are Tamils. Chennai and Singapore have close sea, air and trade links.

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