India–Malaysia joint military exercise 'Harimau Shakti 2026'

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News

The Indian Army's Additional Directorate General of Public Information (ADGPI) announced on 'X' that the India–Malaysia army exercise 'Harimau Shakti 2026' will be held from 18 to 30 November (ANI, 14 Nov 2026). Following the fifth edition, it would be the sixth (the announcement gave neither the edition number nor the venue). The aim is to improve interoperability, professional cooperation and mutual understanding between the two armies. The fifth edition was held from 5 to 18 December 2025 at the Mahajan Field Firing Range, Rajasthan, with troops mainly from India's Dogra Regiment and Malaysia's 25th Battalion. It focused on sub-conventional operations under a UN Chapter VII mandate, counter-terrorism, heliborne drills from MI-17 helicopters and counter-IED techniques. The fourth edition was held in December 2024 at Bentong Camp, Pahang, Malaysia, as a jungle-warfare exercise. 'Harimau' means tiger in Malay, so the name means 'tiger strength'.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Exercise	Harimau Shakti 2026 – next after the 5th (6th)
Countries	India – Malaysia (armies)
Dates	18–30 November 2026
Announced by	Indian Army ADGPI (post on 'X')

Point	Details
5th edition	5–18 Dec 2025 – Mahajan range, Rajasthan (Dogra Regiment)
4th edition	2–15 Dec 2024 – Bentong Camp, Pahang, Malaysia (Mahar Regiment)
Focus (past editions)	2024 – jungle warfare; 2025 – counter-terrorism in semi-urban terrain under UN Chapter VII; 2026 theme not announced
Name	Harimau (Malay) = tiger
Naval exercise	Samudra Laksamana (India–Malaysia)

Background

- Malaysia: a federation in South-East Asia spread over the Malay Peninsula and northern Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak); capital Kuala Lumpur, administrative capital Putrajaya. Malaya won independence from Britain on 31 August 1957, and 'Malaysia' was formed in 1963. It is one of the five founders of ASEAN (1967). The Strait of Malacca separates the Malay Peninsula from Indonesia's Sumatra – one of the world's key shipping lanes linking the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea.
- India–Malaysia ties: during PM Anwar Ibrahim's visit to India (August 2024), relations were raised to a 'Comprehensive Strategic Partnership'. Defence cooperation includes the army exercise 'Harimau Shakti' and the naval exercise 'Samudra Laksamana'. Malaysia is a key partner in India's 'Act East' policy.
- UN Charter – Chapter VII: deals with action on threats to the peace, breaches of the peace and acts of aggression; under it the Security Council may authorise measures from sanctions to the use of force. Chapter VI deals with the peaceful settlement of disputes. India is among the largest troop contributors to UN peacekeeping, so these exercises include UN-type scenarios.
- History: since Chola times Tamil Nadu and the Malay Peninsula have had sea-borne trade and cultural links. In the 19th–20th centuries many Tamils migrated to British Malaya to work on rubber estates, railways and ports; even today most Malaysians of Indian origin are Tamils.

Tamil Nadu link: Tamil Nadu: (1) Tamil is widely spoken in Malaysia as a minority language; Tamil-medium primary schools run within its national school system, and Thaipusam is a holiday in several Malaysian states. (2) The first 'International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies' of the IATR was held in April 1966 at Kuala Lumpur (University of Malaya), through the efforts of Fr Xavier S. Thani Nayagam; the second was held in Chennai in 1968. (3) Eastern Fleet ships take part in India–Malaysia naval exercises, and Chennai has close sea and air links with Penang and Kuala Lumpur.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

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What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Exercise: Harimau Shakti 2026 – next after the 5th (6th); Countries: India – Malaysia (armies); Dates: 18–30 November 2026; Announced by: Indian Army ADGPI (post on 'X').

What is the background to this news?

Malaysia: a federation in South-East Asia spread over the Malay Peninsula and northern Borneo (Sabah, Sarawak); capital Kuala Lumpur, administrative capital Putrajaya.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. The Malay word 'Harimau' in the exercise name 'Harimau Shakti' refers to which animal?

A) Elephant

B) Eagle

C) Tiger

D) Lion

Answer: C – Explanation: Tiger – 'Harimau Shakti' means tiger strength. The Malayan tiger is Malaysia's national animal and appears on its coat of arms.

2. Chapter VII of the UN Charter, under whose mandate exercises like Harimau Shakti rehearse, deals with –

A) Action on peace threats

B) Peaceful settlement

C) International Court

D) Trusteeship system

Answer: A – Explanation: Action on threats to peace, breaches and aggression, including force. Peaceful settlement is Chapter VI; ICJ, XIV; trusteeship, XII.

3. In which city was the first International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies held in 1966, through Fr Thani Nayagam's efforts?

A) Colombo

B) Jaffna

C) Madurai

D) Kuala Lumpur

Answer: D – Explanation: Kuala Lumpur (University of Malaya, April 1966), organised by the IATR. The second was in Chennai (1968) and the third in Paris (1970).

4. Which is the bilateral maritime exercise of the Indian Navy and the Royal Malaysian Navy?

A) Samudra Shakti

B) SIMBEX

C) Samudra Laksamana

D) JIMEX

Answer: C – Explanation: Samudra Laksamana ('Laksamana' means admiral in Malay). Samudra Shakti is with Indonesia, SIMBEX with Singapore and JIMEX with Japan.

5. The Strait of Malacca separates the Malay Peninsula from which island?

A) Borneo

B) Sumatra

C) Java

D) Sri Lanka

Answer: B – Explanation: Sumatra (Indonesia). Linking the Indian Ocean and the South China Sea, the strait is one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

Sources: ANI (14 Nov 2026); The Statesman (Dec 2025); News On AIR (Dec 2025); PIB – Ministry of Defence (Harimau Shakti 2024, 2 Dec 2024; 2025, 5 Dec 2025); Indian Navy; PMIndia joint statement (Aug 2024); Tamil Digital Library – Proceedings of the First International Conference Seminar of Tamil Studies. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.