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# Exercise PRAGATI 2026 — India's Maiden 13-Nation Army Multilateral Drill

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CURATED &amp; WRITTEN BY

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# Exercise PRAGATI 2026 — India's Maiden 13-Nation Army Multilateral Drill

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✓ Every fact web-verified against primary sources

The maiden edition of **Multilateral Exercise PRAGATI 2026** (*Pragati-I*) concluded on **May 31, 2026** at the **Foreign Training Node (FTN)**, Umroi, near Shillong, Meghalaya. Held over **May 18–31, 2026** (culminating on the edition date), it was **India's first-ever 13-nation Army multilateral exercise**, bringing together **over 400 military personnel** for counter-insurgency drills and Indian Ocean Region (IOR) confidence-building. A **Defence Industry Exposition** was held on the sidelines on May 30–31.

## WHAT IS EXERCISE PRAGATI?

| PARAMETER    | DETAIL                                                                                                     |
|--------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Full form    | <b>PRAGATI — Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region</b>   |
| Edition      | <b>Maiden</b> (Pragati-I 2026)                                                                             |
| Dates        | <b>May 18–31, 2026</b>                                                                                     |
| Venue        | <b>FTN Umroi, near Shillong, Meghalaya</b>                                                                 |
| Host         | <b>Indian Army</b>                                                                                         |
| Participants | <b>13 nations; 400+ personnel</b>                                                                          |
| Focus        | Counter-insurgency / counter-terrorism in semi-mountainous, jungle terrain; interoperability; mutual trust |
| Validation   | Culminated in a <b>72-hour validation exercise</b>                                                         |

## THE 13 PARTICIPATING NATIONS

### UPSC RELEVANCE

Note the composition: a mix of partners — mapping directly onto India's

### NEIGHBOURHOOD FIRST, ACT EAST, AND IOR

outreach.

## DRILLS CONDUCTED

- **Helicopter slithering operations**
- **IED (Improvised Explosive Device) detection** along operational routes
- **Rock-face descent / mountaineering** techniques
- Cordon-and-search, jungle navigation, and joint planning
- A **Defence Industry Exposition** (May 30–31) showcasing indigenous defence equipment to partner nations — linking defence diplomacy to **defence exports**.

## WHY IT MATTERS — STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

### 1. From Bilateral to Multilateral Defence Diplomacy

India has long run **bilateral** Army exercises (e.g., Maitree with Thailand, Mitra Shakti with Sri Lanka, Surya Kiran with Nepal). PRAGATI marks a shift to a **multilateral architecture** — institutionalising India's role as a **regional security convenor**, not just a bilateral partner.

### 2. India as a Net Security Provider in the IOR

The exercise reinforces India's self-image as a “**net security provider**” and “**first responder**” in the Indian Ocean Region, complementing:

- **SAGAR** — Security and Growth for All in the Region (2015 doctrine)
- **MAHASAGAR** — the expanded maritime-vision framing for the Global South
- **IORA, IONS, Colombo Security Conclave** — existing IOR institutions

### 3. Counter-China Signalling

By convening Southeast Asian and IOR littoral armies around counter-terrorism cooperation, PRAGATI quietly counters **China's expanding military and infrastructure footprint** across the region, while staying framed around the apolitical theme of counter-insurgency.

### 4. North-East as a Strategic Hub

Hosting at **Umroi, Meghalaya** projects India's North-East as a **gateway to Southeast Asia** (Act East), shedding its periphery image.

#### INDIA'S MAJOR MULTILATERAL / BILATERAL EXERCISES (QUICK MAP)

| EXERCISE             | PARTNER(S)                         | SERVICE             |
|----------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| <b>PRAGATI 2026</b>  | 13 nations                         | Army (multilateral) |
| <b>MILAN</b>         | Multinational (Navy)               | Navy                |
| <b>TARANG SHAKTI</b> | Multinational (2024 onward)        | Air Force           |
| <b>Malabar</b>       | India, US, Japan, Australia (Quad) | Navy                |
| <b>Yudh Abhyas</b>   | USA                                | Army                |
| <b>Surya Kiran</b>   | Nepal                              | Army                |
| <b>Mitra Shakti</b>  | Sri Lanka                          | Army                |
| <b>Garuda Shakti</b> | Indonesia                          | Army                |

#### UPSC RELEVANCE

| PAPER          | RELEVANCE                                                                                                                                                           |
|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>GS3</b>     | Security — defence cooperation, counter-insurgency, defence exports/diplomacy                                                                                       |
| <b>GS2</b>     | IR — Act East, Neighbourhood First, IOR institutions, India as net security provider                                                                                |
| <b>Mains</b>   | “India is moving from bilateral to multilateral defence engagement in the Indian Ocean Region. Examine the strategic rationale with reference to recent exercises.” |
| <b>Prelims</b> | PRAGATI full form; maiden 2026; Umroi (Meghalaya); 13 nations; distinguish from MILAN (Navy), Tarang Shakti (Air Force), Malabar (Quad-Navy)                        |

## FACTS CORNER

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#### EXERCISE PRAGATI 2026:

Full form: Partnership of Regional Armies for Growth and Transformation in the Indian Ocean Region

Edition: Maiden (Pragati-I)

Dates: May 18–31, 2026

Venue: FTN Umroi, near Shillong, Meghalaya

Host: Indian Army; 13 nations; 400+ personnel

Focus: Counter-insurgency / counter-terrorism; IOR trust-building

Validation: 72-hour exercise; Defence Industry Exposition on sidelines (May 30–31)

**13 NATIONS: INDIA, BHUTAN, CAMBODIA, INDONESIA, LAOS, MALAYSIA, MALDIVES, MYANMAR, NEPAL, PHILIPPINES, SEYCHELLES, SRI LANKA, VIETNAM**

**DRILLS: HELICOPTER SLITHERING, IED DETECTION, ROCK-FACE DESCENT, CORDON-AND-SEARCH**

#### INDIA'S IOR DOCTRINES:

SAGAR — Security and Growth for All in the Region (2015)

MAHASAGAR — expanded maritime vision for the Global South

IOR institutions: IORA, IONS, Colombo Security Conclave

#### DON'T CONFUSE:

PRAGATI = Army multilateral (2026)

MILAN = Navy multilateral

TARANG SHAKTI = Air Force multilateral

MALABAR = Quad navies

*Sources: PIB, Indian Army, The Hindu*

Source: Exercise PRAGATI 2026 — India's Maiden 13-Nation Army Multilateral Drill — Ujjayi.com | Free UPSC & State PCS Current Affairs

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