

India, UK conduct Naval Exercise in Bay of Bengal

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The aircraft carrier HMS Queen Elizabeth, Britain's largest warship, and its strike task group is conducting complex maritime exercises with the Indian Navy in the Bay of Bengal as part of efforts to enhance interoperability and naval cooperation.

Key Highlights

- Britain has sent the 65,000-tonne carrier and its task group to the Indian Ocean as part of the country's moves to enhance its profile in the Indo-Pacific and to foster defence ties with nations across the region. The task group is set to sail to the disputed South China Sea on the next leg of its deployment.
- The three-day annual Konkan exercise between the Indian and British navies will see warships from both sides conducting a range of multi-ship, air, sea and sub-surface maritime drills, as well as close quarter manoeuvring.
- The exercise is being conducted at a time when both the UK and India are in the midst of bolstering the capabilities of their navies with aircraft carriers, and the UK carrier strike group is spearheading Britain's joint expeditionary capability.
- HMS Queen Elizabeth is equipped with fifth generation F-35B Lightning multi-role aircraft, which are jointly manned by the Royal Air Force, Royal Navy and US Marine Corps.
- The group includes six Royal Navy ships and a submarine, a US Navy destroyer, a frigate from the Netherlands and 32 aircraft, and is manned by 3,700 sailors, aviators and marines from the combined forces of the UK, US and the Netherlands.

SOURCE: *Hindustan Times*