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Russia Holds Naval Drills With India in Bay of Bengal

By AFP

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Russian Defense Ministry

Russia said Tuesday it was holding joint naval exercises with India in the Bay of Bengal, as the two countries bolster security ties despite Moscow's offensive in Ukraine.

The United States has in the past voiced concern about India holding joint drills with Russia, which has been trying to expand its influence in the region.

"The purpose of the exercise is to comprehensively develop and strengthen naval cooperation between Russia and India," Moscow's Defense Ministry said.

The drills will help the two navies "jointly counter global threats and ensure the safety of civilian shipping in the Asia-Pacific region," Moscow added.

They are planned to last until Wednesday and will involve ships from Russia's Pacific Fleet, including the Admiral Tributs anti-submarine destroyer, it said.

India has economic and security interests in both Russia and the West and has tried to strike a careful balancing act between the two sides, despite the conflict.

It has not joined Western countries in sanctioning Moscow over the offensive in Ukraine and has benefited from a steep discount in Russian oil supplies.

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