



## Exercise Eastern Bridge VI

### Why in News?

Recently, the **Indian Air Force (IAF)** and the **Royal Air Force of Oman** began a five-day bilateral exercise at the Jodhpur air force station. The exercise is named **Eastern Bridge VI, as is in its sixth edition.**

- The exercise seeks to promote professional interaction, exchange of experiences and enhancement of operational knowledge, besides **strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.**
- The Exercise **Eastern Bridge V** was held in October 2019 at the Air Force Base Masirah, Oman.



### What is Oman's Strategic Significance for India?

- **About:**
  - Oman is **India's closest defence partner in the Gulf region** and an important anchor for India's defence and strategic interests.
    - Oman is at the gateway of **Strait of Hormuz** through which India imports one-fifth of its oil imports.
  - Defence cooperation has emerged as a key pillar for the robust **India-Oman strategic partnership**. Defence exchanges are guided by a **Framework MOU which was recently renewed in 2021.**
  - Oman is the **only country in the Gulf region** with which all **three services of the Indian armed forces** conduct regular bilateral exercises and staff talks, enabling close cooperation and trust at the professional level.

- **Naseem Al-Bahr** is the naval exercise conducted between both the countries.
- **AL Nagah** is the joint exercise between the armies of two countries.
- **Eastern Bridge** is the joint exercise between the air forces of two countries.
- Oman also provides critical operational support to Indian naval deployments in the Arabian sea for anti-piracy missions.
- Oman also actively participates in the [Indian Ocean Naval Symposium \(IONS\)](#).
- India has supplied rifles to Oman. Also, India is considering setting up a defence production unit in Oman.

▪ **Access to Port of Duqm in Oman:**

- In a strategic move to expand its footprint in the Indian Ocean region, India has secured access to the key Port of [Duqm](#) in Oman for military use and logistical support.
- This is part of India's maritime strategy to counter Chinese influence and activities in the region.
- The Port of Duqm is situated on the **southeastern seaboard of Oman**, overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean.
- It is strategically located, in close proximity to the [Chabahar port](#) in Iran. With the [Assumption Island](#) being developed in Seychelles and Agalega in Mauritius, Duqm fits into India's proactive maritime security roadmap.

[Source: IE](#)

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