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8th India–France Bilateral Air Exercise ‘Garuda’ Begins in France

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On November 16, 2025, the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the French Air and Space Force (FASF) began the 8th edition of the bilateral air exercise ‘Garuda’ at the Mont-de-Marsan Air Base in France. The exercise will run until 27 November 2025.

Background:

Origin: Exercise Garuda, launched in 2003, is a bilateral air combat exercise between the IAF and the FASF, conducted alternately in India and France to strengthen interoperability, coordination, and operational capabilities.

Previous edition: 7th edition of Garuda exercise was held at Jodhpur Air Force Station in Jodhpur, Rajasthan from 26 October to 12 November 2022.

About Garuda 25:

Objectives: The exercise aims to refine operational tactics and procedures while fostering interoperability, mutual learning, professional interaction, and the exchange of operational knowledge and best practices between both air forces.

Focus: The exercise centres on air-to-air combat, air defence operations, and joint strike missions conducted in high-intensity simulated combat environments.

Participation: The IAF is participating with Su-30MKI fighter aircraft supported by C-17 Globemaster III airlift and IL-78 air-to-air refuelling tankers, operating alongside French Rafale and other multirole fighters in complex air-combat scenarios.

Collaboration: Exercise Garuda 25 also serves as a platform for professional interaction, exchange of operational expertise, and sharing of best practices between the Indian and French Air Forces.

Significance: The exercise highlights the IAF’s commitment to global engagement and strengthens defence cooperation under the India–France Strategic Partnership, established in 1998 and covering defence, security, nuclear, space, and Indo-Pacific cooperation.

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