



PM to commission warship *INS Vikrant* on September 2

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier carries on board an air wing consisting of 30 aircraft

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi will preside over the commissioning of the country's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-1), at Kochi on September 2, the culmination of what the navy described on Thursday as "the most prestigious warship building project in the maritime history of India".

"It is indeed a proud moment for our great nation, as with commissioning of Indian Naval Ship (*INS Vikrant*), India has joined an elite list of five seafaring nations having the niche capability to indigenously design and build an aircraft carrier of over 40,000 tonnes," said the navy.

INS Vikrant will also be by far the largest warship to have ever been built in an Indian shipyard. *Vikrant* means "victorious" and "gallant".

Built at the cost of ₹20,000 crore, the IAC-1 is the namesake of an illustrious predecessor. Initially built as a Royal Navy aircraft carrier, Her Majesty's Ship (*HMS Hercules*), the first *INS Vikrant* became

an Indian warship in March 1961 and remained in service till 1997, playing a vital role in the 1971 war by blockading what was then East Pakistan.

The reborn *INS Vikrant* was designed by the Warship Design Bureau (WDB), the navy's in-house design establishment. It was constructed by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), a public sector shipyard under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.

The job of an aircraft carrier is to achieve air superiority far out at sea and, to do so, *INS Vikrant* carries on board an air wing consisting of 30 aircraft. These include MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31 and MH-60R Seaking multi-role helicopters, and the indigenous Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters and Light Combat Aircraft (Navy).

The *INS Vikrant* is equipped with a ski-jump for launching aircraft, and a set of three 'arrestor wires' for dragging them to a halt when they return after completing their mission. This

combination of methods is known as "short take off but arrested recovery (STOVAR).

The *Vikrant* has been in production since April 2005, when the ceremony of "steel cutting" was conducted. To boost the carrier's indigenous content, the warship grade steel that it is made of was successfully indigenised by the Steel Authority of India (SAIL), in collaboration with the Defence Research & Development Organisation.

It took almost four years to fabricate the hull and the ship's keel was laid in February 2009. The first phase of construction ended with the launch of the ship in August 2013. It took to the sea in August 2021 and has carried out multiple rounds of trials since then.

The carrier, which is 262 metres long and 62 metres wide, displaces approximately 43,000 tonnes when it is fully loaded. Powered by four gas turbines that generate 88 megawatts of power, *INS Vikrant* works up a maximum speed of 28 knots (52

kilometres per hour) and has an endurance of 7,500 nautical miles (13,900 km).

The warship has about 2,200 separate compartments, which house the machinery and a crew of around 1,600 personnel, and includes specialised cabins for female officers and sailors.

INS Vikrant is designed with a high degree of automation for operating machinery, ship navigation and survivability. It is equipped with state-of-the-art equipment and systems. These include the latest medical facilities, a modular operation theatre, a physiotherapy clinic, an intensive care unit, laboratories, a computerised tomography scanner, X-Ray machines, dental complex, isolation ward, and telemedicine facilities.

The navy says *INS Vikrant* symbolises the unity of India, as products from 18 states and union territories of India have gone into its making. These include products from Ambala, Bangalore, Coimbatore, Daman & Diu, Hyderabad, Howrah, Indore, Jalandhar, Kachchh, Kota, Kanpur, New Delhi, Panaji, Pune, Silvassa, Thiruvananthapuram, and Vishakhapatnam.

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