

LCA lands on INS Vikrant

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Context- In an important milestone, the Naval variant of the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) undertook its maiden landing onboard the country's first Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) INS Vikrant.

Key Highlights

- It shows India's capability to design, develop, construct and operate IAC with indigenous fighter aircraft.

History of Aircraft Carriers in India:

- Right from its Independence, India was well aware of the requirement for aircraft carriers to establish itself as a blue water navy.

INS Vikrant (R11)- India's First Aircraft Carrier:

- The INS Vikrant was first launched in 1945 as Hercules.
- India purchased the aircraft carrier from Britain in 1957.
- It was the first ever carrier for an Asian country and it remained so for a long time.
- INS Vikrant saw action during the Goa Liberation Operation in 1961.
- It played a significant role in the 1971 war with its aircraft decimating the enemy.
- The new capability of the aircraft carrier inspired the induction of INS Vikramaditya and the plans for its reincarnation.
- However it was decommissioned from active service in 1997.

INS Viraat– Over 30 Years of Service to the Nation:

- It was originally commissioned by the British Royal Navy as HMS Hermes in 1959.
- INS Viraat was commissioned by the Indian Navy in 1987.
- Its First major operation was **‘Operation Jupiter’ in 1989** as part of Peacekeeping Operations in Sri Lanka, following the breakdown of the Indo- Sri Lankan Accord of 1986.
- It played a pivotal role in Operation Parakram, which was carried out in the wake of the 2013 terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament.
- By establishing a blockade against Pakistan during the 1999 Kargil War, the INS Viraat played a crucial part in Operation Vijay.

INS Vikramaditya- Indian Navy’s Biggest Ship:

- Russia’s refurbished Admiral Gorshkov was commissioned into the Indian Navy when INS Vikramaditya at Severodvinsk, Russia in 2013.
- It is a state-of-the-art ship, i.e. capable of operating a versatile range of high-performance aircraft, such as the MiG 29K fighters, KM 31 AEW helicopters, multi-role Sea Kings, and utility Chetaks.

INS Vikrant (IAC-1): The Self-Reliant Rebirth

- Designed by the Indian Navy’s in-house Warship Design Bureau (WDB) and built by Cochin Shipyard Limited, a Public Sector Shipyard under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping & Waterways.
- The Indigenous Aircraft Carrier is named in honour of her historic predecessor, India’s first aircraft carrier, that played an essential part in the war of 1971.
- It has been built with state-of-the-art automation features and also it is the largest ship ever built in the maritime history of India.
- The 262-meter-long aircraft carrier has a full displacement of close to 45,000 tonnes which is much larger and advanced as compared to her predecessor.
- The ship is powered by four Gas Turbines totaling 88 MW power and it has a maximum speed of 28 Knots.
- The carrier has an overall indigenous content of 76%.
- The ship is also capable of operating an air wing consisting of 30 aircraft comprising of MIG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31, MH-60R multi-role helicopters, in addition to indigenously manufactured Advanced Light Helicopters (ALH) and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) (Navy).
- **Relevance:**
 - This would provide India with two operational aircraft carriers, which will greatly improve the country’s maritime security.
 - It serves as a shining example of the country’s pursuit of “Atma Nirbhar Bharat” and gives the Government’s “Make in India” initiative further momentum.
 - With the IAC Vikrant, India has joined an elite group of countries with the specialised capacity to design as well as to construct an aircraft carrier domestically, including the U.S.A., U.K., France, Russia, and China.

Notes

- Aircraft carriers are extremely strong and they have powerful weapons.
- Their military capabilities, that include carrier-borne aircraft, have completely changed the marine domain.
- An aircraft carrier offers a wide range of strategic advantages.
- This offers incredibly flexible operational options. Surveillance, air defence, airborne early warning, protection of Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), and anti-submarine warfare are some of its principal functions.