INS Vikrant Begins Sea Trials

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Why in News

Recently, the **Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) 1** named **INS Vikrant, started sea trials** (one of the last phases of trials).

- It is **likely to be commissioned in 2022.** At present, **India has only one aircraft carrier**, the Russian-origin **INS Vikramaditya.**
- Earlier, the **Defence Acquisition Council (DAC)** approved issuance of **Request for Proposal (RFP)** for six advanced submarines for the Indian Navy under **Project-75I**.

Key Points

- **About:**
  - The vessel, to be named **Vikrant after the decommissioned maiden carrier of the Navy.**
    - India **acquired the Vikrant from the United Kingdom in 1961**, and the carrier played a stellar role in the **1971 war** with Pakistan that led to the birth of Bangladesh.
  - Over **76% of the material and equipment on board IAC-1 is indigenous.**
  - It will have an **air component of 30 aircraft**, comprising **MiG-29K fighter jets, Kamov-31** airborne early warning helicopters and the soon-to-be-inducted **MH-60R** multi-role helicopter, besides the **indigenous Advanced Light Helicopters**.
  - It is expected to have a **top speed of 30 knots (approximately 55 kmph)** and is propelled by four gas turbines. Its **endurance is 7,500 nautical miles at 18 knots** (32 kmph) speed.
  - The shipborne weapons include **Barak LR SAM and AK-630**, while it has **MFSTAR and RAN-40L 3D radars as sensors.** The vessel has a **Shakti EW (Electronic Warfare) Suite.**
  - It has **a pair of runways** and a 'short take off but arrested recovery' system to control aircraft operations.

- **Significance:**
  - **Adds Combat and Sea Control Capability**, especially in the Indian Ocean Region.
  - **Increased Ability of Air Power:** It would **offer an incomparable military instrument** with its ability to project air power over long distances, including air interdiction, anti-surface warfare, offensive and defensive counter-air, airborne anti-submarine warfare and airborne early warning.
  - **Self-Reliance:** Only five or six nations currently have the capability of manufacturing an aircraft carrier — **India joins this elite club now.**
- **Future Endeavours:**
  - Since 2015, the **Navy has been seeking approval to build a third aircraft carrier** for the country, which, **if approved, will become India's second Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC-2).**
  - This proposed carrier, to be named **INS Vishal**, is intended to be a giant 65,000-tonne vessel, **much bigger than IAC-1 and the INS Vikramaditya.**

Source: TH