

# Fair winds and following seas: India's first naval aircraft carrier reborn as INS Vikrant

The indigenous aircraft carrier INS Vikrant was commissioned on Friday by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Here's how the aircraft carrier is different from its predecessor, the Vikrant R11, from which it borrows its name.



In this undated file photo, the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) Vikrant sails in the sea. IAC Vikrant was commissioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on September 2. (PTI Photo)

INS Vikrant, India's first indigenously made aircraft carrier and the largest ship built in the country's maritime history, was **commissioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi** on Friday at Cochin Shipyard Limited in Kerala.

The ship, built at a cost of Rs 20,000 crore, has a flying deck that is 262 metres in length and 62.4 meters wide and can make up for two football fields. It has been built using indigenous equipment and machinery supplied by India's major industrial houses as well as over 100 MSMEs.

**#WATCH** | PM Narendra Modi commissions indigenous Aircraft Carrier IAC Vikrant, the largest & most complex warship ever built in India's maritime history, into the Indian Navy at a ceremony in Kochi, Kerala. [#INSVikrant pic.twitter.com/8oiQN2AnMg](https://pic.twitter.com/8oiQN2AnMg)

— ANI (@ANI) September 2, 2022

The new ship has been christened after **INS Vikrant** or Vikrant (R11), India's first aircraft carrier which was built for the British Royal Navy as HMS Hercules in 1943 and saw action during the India-Pakistan war in 1971.

## THE STORY OF INS VIKRANT

India's first aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, with pennant number R11, was built for the British Royal Navy as HMS (Her Majesty's Ship) Hercules on October 14, 1943. It was commissioned in the British Royal Navy in 1945.

# THE OLD INS VIKRANT

- India's first Aircraft Carrier INS Vikrant acquired from UK in 1957
- Was called HMS Hercules in British navy
- It was commissioned in 1961
- Deployed in Bay of Bengal in 1971 war against Pakistan
- Length of old INS Vikrant was over 210 metres
- Decommissioned in 1997
- Was sold as scrap in 2014

After World War II ended, the ship's construction was stopped. It was later sold to India in 1957 in an incomplete condition.

INS Vikrant underwent a four-year-long refitting at Harland and Wolf Yard in Belfast, Ireland. The ship arrived in India on November 3, 1961 and formally join the Indian Navy fleet in the Bombay Harbour. The commissioning event was attended by then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru amid great fanfare.

INS Vikrant played a major role in India's decisive victory in the 1971 war with Pakistan. It helped suppress the ground movements and resupply the Pakistani Army in the east by blockading East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) as a whole.

The ship was decommissioned in 1997 and laid anchored off Mumbai Harbour, serving as a museum. In 2013, the **central government decided to scrap the ship** as it was becoming too expensive for its upkeep. Despite opposition from certain groups, the ship was sold off to Darukhana ship-breaker for Rs 60 crore. The ship was finally scrapped in 2014.

## HOW INS VIKRANT IS DIFFERENT FROM ITS PREDECESSOR

The new INS Vikrant is 262-metre-long, as against its predecessor which was 192-metre-long. The new ship displaces approximately 43,000 tonnes when fully loaded, as against the former Vikrant which had a full load displacement of 20,000 tonnes.

The newly commissioned INS Vikrant has a maximum designed speed of 28 knots with endurance of 7500 nautical miles.