



INDIAN NAVY: BUILDING A POWERFUL BLUE WATER NAVY

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In light of the current geopolitical and security environment in the Indian Ocean region, India requires a modern navy to safeguard its maritime interests and carry out new duties.

The Indian Navy, which is the primary display of India's maritime might, wants to rule both the Indian and Pacific oceans. It has been working tirelessly to improve naval prowess. The Indian Navy's plans to modernise, however, have been hampered by a number of obstacles, including financial limitations and structural dysfunction in the Indian military industry.

In his speech to the nation on Navy Day 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to his credit, referred to the history of the Chola Kingdom. One of the main factors influencing the Cholas' dominance in the economy was their navy, which was regarded as one of the greatest at the time. Even in the 21st century, this is still true. The dreams of a New India, a youthful country in the process of converting itself into a modern nation, have been carried by the Indian Navy, a partner in progress. Admiral Alfred T. Mahan highlighted the strategic significance of the Indian in these. As a result, whoever achieves maritime supremacy in the Indian Ocean would be a significant player on the international stage.

The Indian Ocean region is at the core of a geopolitical landscape that is always changing, much like the oceans. From the Malacca Straits conundrum to terrorism's expansion, the developing conflict between the United States and Iran in the Middle East, as well as the region's quick militarization and nuclearization, the current situation between India and Pakistan is a boiling pot, which makes these issues even more complicated. The most urgent concern of all, however, is the perception of a rising tide of Chinese influence that, it feels, now extends all the way into India's backyard and beyond its borders.

Extended neighbourhood, especially penetrating weaker nations with its financial might and land grab tactics. A "strategic maritime triangle" has developed in the Indian Ocean as a result of the expansion of China's People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN), the rise of the indigenous Indian Navy, and the US. Naval hegemony over the world's commons.

According to Hew Strachan, "Strategy is the choices, and geography determines strategy." That one makes in the face of

constraint," the current environment in the IOR is a complex interaction of many factors, and India, because of its central location and strategic vantage point at the centre of the Indian Ocean Region, is at the centre of many of the most urgent geopolitical developments in the world even though it has a lot of clout.

As a result, the Indian Navy, which represents India's maritime might in its purest form, acts as a solid foundation in defending our country's interests both at home and abroad. As a result, it is imperative that India's maritime strength be increased, which strongly supports the expansion of the Indian Navy at this precise time.

Plans for Indian Navy's Modernization and Outreach: What Have We Achieved So Far?

Over the past ten years, the Indian Government and Navy have worked tirelessly to increase naval prowess. In light of the current geopolitical and security environment in the Indian Ocean region, India requires a modern navy to safeguard its maritime interests and carry out new duties.

India has strengthened its eastward advancement strategy in order to achieve the goal of the Indian Navy's expansion plan, which is to rule both the Indian Ocean and the Pacific (Indo-Pacific construct). The Indian Naval forces have recently increased the extent of their engagement in the Indian Ocean and are taking a more proactive role there.

The Indian Navy's responsibility extends beyond protecting our coastline, since maritime terrorism, piracy, human and drug trafficking, illegal and unreported fishing, the trafficking of illegal weapons, and poaching present numerous threats to the region's marine safety and security. To successfully respond to these concerns, security forces need to have a better understanding of the marine operations taking place in the area. By deploying its ships for Indian Diaspora evacuation and disaster relief, the Indian Navy has taken a proactive approach to disaster risk management. Additionally, there had been a significant increase in port calls, visits, and participation in maritime exercises with international partners. In order to maintain watchfulness, the Indian Navy has also approved mission-based deployment, in which mission-ready ships and planes will be stationed year-round near key Sea Lanes of Communication and Choke Points in the Indian Ocean.



The Navy is working to fill capability gaps in areas like aircraft carriers, tankers, docks for landing platforms, mine-hunting boats, submarines, and integrated helicopters. Through the addition of long-range marine reconnaissance aircraft, integrated helicopters, high-altitude long-endurance aircraft, or remotely piloted aircraft, we are also improving our surveillance capabilities. Enhancing capabilities through the use of contemporary platforms, munitions, and sensors has been the main goal.

There is a proposal to implement a 10-year plan to develop facilities for extra soldiers, vessels, planes, and drones on the islands, upgrading the current military infrastructure, in addition to establishing a Tri-service command in the Andar and Nicobar Islands. In addition to being significant from a geopolitical standpoint, Andaman & Nicobar has developed into a staging area for India's IADR efforts. In Northern Andaman, INS Kohassa has been officially opened as the third aviation hub for the Navy. In Madagascar and Mauritius, the Indian government has constructed listening posts and naval surveillance facilities.

The creation of the Information Fusion Center (IFC), situated in Gurgaon's Information Management and Analysis Center for the Indian Navy. The IFC will improve maritime safety. And will exchange relevant real-time vessel information with friendly countries regarding white-shipping.

The development of combat capabilities and the production of weapons and equipment by the Indian Navy have advanced recently. The Indian Navy intends to have 200 ships, 300 planes, and 24 attack submarines, according to the Maritime Capability Perspective Plan, they stated. The Navy now possesses about 132 ships, 220 aircraft, and 15 submarines. We need at least three aircraft carriers, as the Indian Navy currently only possesses one, the INS Vikramaditya. Due to the need for a 65,000 tonne Catapult Assisted Take-Off But Arrested Recovery (CATOBAR) carrier with electric propulsion, the Navy has asked for additional funding. In the world, India is ranked sixth for having perfected the art of an arrested landing and ski-jump takeoff on the deck of a carrier, after Russia, the US, France, the UK, and China, according to the testing of Naval Light Combat Aircraft intended to operate from INS Vikramaditya. But there are still important challenges that the Indian Navy must deal with.

Indian Navy's Effort to Modernise

The Naval Commander Conference in April 2019 concentrated on important elements of force accretion and modernization. The Indian Navy (IN) is developing a massive plan to greatly improve its operational capability by bringing in new warships, submarines, and planes in addition to enhancing its overall influence in the important maritime zones, it was revealed during the discussions. The Navy intends to have a force level of 200 ships, 300 aircraft, and 24 attack submarines under this plan. The Navy now possesses about 132 ships, 220 aircraft, and 15 submarines. While emphasising a number of important topics during the conference in October 2019, CNS Admiral Karambir Singh also called attention to the essential

capability gaps. He also emphasised the need for three aircraft carriers to ensure that there is always at least one operational carrier available. He emphasised that the competence gaps must be filled, particularly in light of the IN's expanding mandate in the Indian Ocean Region.

Strategic Perspective and Maritime Security

Any navy's force size is directly correlated to its mission and level of threat. The IN published a White Paper titled "Maritime Security and Strategic Perspective" based on these important factors. Later, a new version with the title "Revised Maritime Security and Strategic Perspective" was published. According to a brief summary, "The updated policy has been dubbed 'Ensuring Secure Seas: Indian Maritime Security Strategy, in acknowledgement of two critical components. First, a seamless and comprehensive approach to maritime security is necessary due to the increase in the sources, types, and intensity of threats, as well as some blurring of traditional and non-traditional lines. Second, maintaining maritime security is vital to provide India the "freedom to use the seas" for its national interests. The title's broader outlook also takes into mind the IN's expanded mandate, which includes responsibility for total maritime security, including coastal and offshore security.

The Maritime Capability Perspective Plan of the Indian Navy (Mcpp)

The IN currently has 150 ships and submarines in its fleet. The notion of the Indian Navy's perspective-planning in terms of "force levels" has changed from focusing on "numbers" of platforms to one that emphasises "capabilities." Regarding force additions in the near future, the IN is doing so in accordance with an MCPP that aims to reach a force level of roughly 200 ships by 2027. The IN wants to change it from being a buyer's navy to a builder's navy. To increase output, the Navy is also appealing to the private shipbuilders.

2015-2030 Indian Naval Indigenization Plan (INIP)

In addition to encouraging domestic businesses, such as Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), to take part in the construction of ships and related naval equipment, the Indian Naval Indigenization Plan (INIP) 2015-2030 was recently issued.

Current and Recently Completed Projects

Project-71 Indian Aircraft Carrier IAC-1. On February 28, 2009, Al Cochin Shipyard Limited lowered the keel of India's first indigenously constructed IAC-1, called INS Vikrant (CSL). India now belongs to the select group of countries capable of developing and building an air craft carrier thanks to this project. The largest and most prestigious battleship project in the nation was INS Vikrant. The LAC must be constructed by CSL for the IN. The Directorate of Naval Design of the Indian Navy completed the first design of the Aircraft Carrier (DND). The CSL design team improved the original concept. The ship, which is intended for short takeoffs but assisted landings, has reached its intended length of around 260 metres and is almost



at its maximum breadth of 60 metres (STOBAR). “In October 2020, IAC-I is anticipated to enter the Navy. The dates for each trial have been planned. We will shortly enter into advanced agreements with Cochin Shipyard Limited “Principal Director of Naval Design for the Indian Navy, Commodore J. Chowdhary, stated in January 2019.

IAC-2: INS Vishal, India’s second indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC-2), is still awaiting government sanction. According to the RFP, IAC-2 is expected to have a displacement of 65,000 tonnes, a length of 300 metres, with Calapult Take Off and Barrier Arrested Recovery (CATOBAR).

Shivalik Class Project 17

The Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders Limited produced the multipurpose stealth craft of the Shivalik Class for IN (MDL). The Project 17 Class frigates’ initial design was created by the DND, then MDL created the final version. These are the first locally produced warships that have stealth technology. This class of ships is headed by the Shivalik, followed by the Salpura and the Sahyadri. All of the ships have been put into service, and the experience gained during their design and construction will be useful for future endeavours.

Nilgiri Class Project 17A

MDL and Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE) are constructing Project 17A Nilgiri-class stealth frigates for the IN. In September 2012, the Cabinet Committee on Security gave the Indian Ministry of Defence (MoD) the go-ahead to develop warships under Project 17A. Shipbuilding agreements with MDL and GRSE were signed by the MoD in February 2015. The first stealth frigate, INS Nilgiri (12651), had its keel laid at MDL in December 2017. The ship is scheduled to be delivered in 2022 and was launched in September 2019. Seven frigates in total have been ordered, four of which will be built by MDL and three by GRSE. The Project 17A frigates incorporate cutting-edge engineering and stealth features like radar suppression screens and radar-resistant deck fittings. In September 2018, MDL and GRSE signed a contract with Bharat Electronics Limited to purchase seven Barak-8 air defence missile systems from Israel Aircraft jhuluaa koIndustry. Additionally, MDL hired Fincantieri to deliver technical support for Project 17A.

Kolkata Class Destroyers, Project 15A

The new stealth destroyers constructed by MDL for the IN under Project 15A are the guided missile destroyers of the Kolkata class. The Project 15B destroyers follow the Type 15 Delhiclass destroyers in the order of precedence. In August 2014, the first destroyer was put into service, and in November 2016, the third. They go by the names INS Chennai, INS Kolkata, and INS Kochi.

The Project 15B class of Guided Missile Destroyers

The Project 15B destroyer is a variation of the Kolkata-class destroyers that MDL is constructing. In January 2011, a

deal for the building of four Project 15B destroyers was signed. INS Visakhapatnam (D 66), the first Project 15B ship, had her keel laid in October 2013 and was launched in April 2015. The INS Mormugao (D 67), the second destroyer in the class, had its keel laid in June 2015, and it was launched in September 2016. By 2021, the first ship is anticipated to join the IN, and the other three will follow one after the other. The P-15B ship keeps the Kolkata-class hull shape but adds a stealthier flush deck and cutting-edge weaponry. The DND-designed vessels will have higher manoeuvrability, better seakeeping, and enhanced survivability. The destroyers will be among the most technologically advanced guided missile destroyers in the world because to their cutting-edge weaponry and sensor package.

Project 1135.6 Frigates

According to a statement made by the Indian Ministry of Defense (MoD) on January 30, 2019, an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) was reached between India and the Russian Federation on October 15, 2016, to build additional Project 1135.6 Follow-on ships at Goa Shipyard Limited (GSL). In accordance with the IGA, the Government has a contract in place with GSL for the building of two ships, with delivery dates of June 2026 and December 2026, respectively. The Follow-on P 1135.61 series of frigates are powerful platforms with a mission span covering the full spectrum of naval warfare. They are specially designed to meet the IN’s unique requirements. The ships would be equipped with cutting-edge indigenous weaponry and sensors, including sonar, the BrahMos missile system, and the Combat Management System, among others.

Project 28 ASW Corvette

GRSE is constructing four Kamorta Class indigenous Anti-submarine Warfare (ASW) corvettes for the IN. The guided-missile corvettes of the Kora-Class are replaced by those of the Kamorta Class in service with the IN. In August 2014, the INS Kamorta, the IN’s command corvette, was commissioned. The third vessel, INS Kiltan, was commissioned on October 16, 2017, while the second vessel, INS Kadmatt, was put into service in January 2016. The final vessel, the INS Kavaratti, was launched in May 2015 and will shortly be put into service.

Mines Counter Measures Vessels

According to media sources, India will shortly release a new request for proposals (RFP) for the construction of 12 mine-countermeasure vessels (MCMVS) in partnership with a foreign shipyard at an estimated cost of 32,640 crore (about \$4.5 billion). The chosen foreign collaborator has nominated GSL to work with them. The current mine sweepers are nearing the end of their useful lives and no progress has been achieved. It was also mentioned that the IN has agreed to pay Thales Australia 306 crore (\$42 million) for eight mine countermeasure clip-on influence sweeps to outfit its rapid interceptor crafts, which are expected to be delivered in 2021–2022.



Shallow Water ASW Crafts

Eight antisubmarine warfare shallow water boats (ASWSWCS) will be built and supplied for IN by GRSE under a deal valued at 26,311,32 crore. The first craft must be delivered in 42 months, while the last one must be delivered in 84 months.

Amphibious Capability

At a cost of 20,000 crore (about \$2.9 billion), or four Landing Platform Docks (LPD), MOD cleared them in July 2018. Armed forces use LPDS ships to transfer personnel, weapons, helicopters, and amphibious vehicles into combat zones via the water. IN already possesses five landing ship tanks and the INS Jalashwa (LPD) (Large).

Fleet Support Ships

India had a contract for a fleet tanker with a follow-on option for up to three additional tankers with the Italian shipbuilder Fincantieri in 2008. This option for one follow-on ship has already been acted upon by IN. Anadolu Shipyard in Turkey has been chosen by Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) to assist in the construction of five 45,000-ton fleet support ships for the IN. Additionally, the MoD has approved the introduction of five locally built fleet support ships.

Subsurface Vessels

As opposed to 24 in 1997, the Maritime Capability Perspective Plan (MCP), which was introduced in 2012, calls for at least 18 conventional submarines. When finalised, the Kalvari Class project's completion and the decision to build six more diesel-electric submarines with Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) as part of Project 75 (India) will help close the gap between the present and future fighting power.

Project 75

Kalvari Class

The first of the six Scorpene class submarines constructed as part of Project 75, INS Kalvari, was launched on December 14, 2017. On September 28, 2019, the second submarine, INS Khanderi, was put into service. Vela and Karanj are currently being built. The sixth submarine is known as INS Vagsheer, and the fifth is known as INS Vagir. By 2022, all remaining submarines will have been delivered.

Life extension and Refit

The IN has upgraded six of its submarines—four of the Sindhughosh class and two of the Shishumar class—as part of the Major Refit and Life Certification (MRLC) programme in an effort to fill the gaps in its combat capability. Russian shipyard Zvezdochka and Larsen and Toubro announced their collaboration in July 2018 to upgrade four Sindhughosh-class submarines for roughly 70,000 dollars each (\$0.7 billion). MDL has hired ThyssenKrupp Marine Systems (TKMS) of Germany to upgrade two submarines of the Shishumar class for 410 crore (about \$0.05 billion).

Submarine Force Accretion-Project 75(1)

On January 31, 2019, the Defence Acquisition Council gave its approval for the building of six diesel-electric submarines with AIP at an estimated cost of about 45,000 crores (\$6.3 billion). Expression of Interest (EOI) was released on June 20, 2019, in order to identify possible Indian Strategic Partners (SPS) for P 75. (1). The chosen Indian SP will work with the chosen OEM to build all six submarines in India. In addition, the initiative would provide IN the option to produce six more submarines. Within two months, the potential SPs are expected to respond to the EOI. Three Indian shipyards, L&T, MDL, and HSL, were reportedly expected to reply to the EOI, according to the media. The RFP would then be sent to the businesses who made the short list. The EOI is expected to get responses from five top foreign submarine manufacturers, including Navantia's S-80, ThyssenKrupp's Type 214, Rubin's Amur, Naval Group's Scorpene, and Daewoo's KSS3.

Nuclear Submarine Programme

First steps were taken with the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) submarine programme. As one of the three legs of India's triad of airborne, naval, and land-based platforms as a minimum nuclear deterrent, the decision was made by India in 1983 to develop and deploy nuclear submarines to serve as India's sea-based nuclear deterrent. A Russian Charlie-class nuclear-powered cruise missile submarine was leased from Russia and operated in the IN as INS Chakra from 1988 to 1991 in order to gain experience operating nuclear submarines. India once more leased an Akula-II class SSN in 2012 for a period of ten years. The first Arihant submarine was launched in 2009 and put into service in August of that same year. To be effective, the Navy will need more than one SSBN, therefore it is said that India aims to have a total of six SSBNs, with the second one, INS Arighat, already launched and scheduled to be put into service by 2021. Additionally, according to the IN, two to four additional Arihant-class submarines with progressively larger configurations have already started construction. According to reports, India is also negotiating for a \$3 billion ten-year lease of a Russian Project 971 Shchuka-B class ship that will be customised and outfitted with homegrown communications and sensor technology. It will probably be called Chakra-III.

Can the Indian Navy handle the future?

India is widely acknowledged for its involvement in the region and is regarded as a guardian of the regional order, particularly with regard to preserving open sea lanes, freedom of navigation, and assuming the position of "Net Security Provider."

India had a modest but powerful regional naval posture at the start of the twenty-first century. The Indian Fleet, which has long been regarded as a "blue water" navy, has many difficulties.

The budgetary assistance for Indian army is one of their biggest problems. The Indian government has acknowledged that there has been no discernible rise in military spending over the last five years. Despite having the seventh-strongest navy in



the world, we spend among the least on the armed forces. According to data from the fiscal years 2017 and 2018, India's navy receives only 15% of the country's overall military spending, significantly less than its rivals in the Quad. In comparison, Australia and Japan spend over 25% and 23% of their military budgets, respectively, while the United States spends nearly 30% of its budget on its navy. Although it is difficult to find official figures from China, studies suggest that the country spends approximately three times as much total on its military as India does.

Despite being primarily a maritime nation, the Indian Navy receives the smallest percentage of the pie among the three forces. With a budget of 23,156 crore for 2019–2020, the government's ambitious goal to rank among the finest in the world took a significant hit. Thus, the goal of making the Indian Navy a "World Class Navy" is hindered by financial limitations.

There are issues with India's defence sector that limit the growth of the Indian Navy. India currently has five significant shipbuilding facilities. However, because of India's severe bureaucratic structure, these large-scale shipbuilding industries have developed persistent issues with low production and poor organisation and management, leading to a significantly longer construction cycle of the main naval ships for the Indian Navy than the global average.

Ironically, out of the three forces, the Indian Navy has utilised social media the most, notwithstanding the recent arrests. The Indian Navy forbade the use of social media and smartphones on bases after seven navy employees were accused of disclosing private information. However, this demonstrates the weakness of the forces and calls for a practical reorganisation of the Indian Navy to enhance cyber security and monitoring. Additionally, optimum staffing and operational effectiveness are urgent needs.

Another issue worth mentioning is that some of the ships in the lineup that are currently under construction will eventually replace those that are being phased out. As a result, for every two to three new ships that are added, one ship from the current strength retires. Delays are also caused by flaws; for example, the introduction of the Second Kalvari Class assault submarine was postponed because of 36 flaws. The Indian Navy must also publish detailed plans for implementing cutting-edge technologies like big data analytics and artificial intelligence. Additionally, the Indian Navy has thus far prioritised expanding its fleet of submarines above enhancing their effectiveness. However, India continues to harbour a strong ambition to develop a naval force that may help it achieve its strategic objective of becoming a significant global actor.

The Road Ahead

While the US is at the top of the list of the top five naval powers in the world and China is closely behind, the Indian Navy is not included. In order to change from a "Buyer's Navy into a Builders Navy," the Indian Navy must now make consistent efforts. Navies are not built in a day.

The mindset has also evolved with the times. For the Indian Navy to be seen as a powerful blue water force, it must

adapt and improve its marine readiness. The emphasis should be on rapid capability expansion, sometimes known as "nation building through shipbuilding," which is based on indigenous construction, self-reliance, and participation from both the public and commercial sectors. Instead than counting heads, the emphasis should be on improving capabilities.

India is getting ready to be a more active "maritime security provider" in the eastern Indian Ocean, according to a statement posted on the US Foreign Policy website. India must keep making investments in its force-readiness capabilities, manpower, and technology if it hopes to become a regional naval power.

Despite the enormous difficulties mentioned above, the Indian Navy has demonstrated an exceptionally rapid operational pace over the past ten years and has developed into a multidimensional, networked force that is prepared for battle and capable of meeting any maritime challenge in the twenty-first century. The Indian Navy is still a respectable, well-organized, and capable force. The Indian Navy plays four different types of functions to safeguard the country's maritime interests: military, diplomatic, constabulary, and benevolent.

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