

India's first indigenous aircraft carrier begins another phase of sea trials

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: India's first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) Vikrant began another series of sea trials on Sunday to carry out complex manoeuvres in high seas ahead of its planned induction in August. The 40,000-tonne aircraft carrier, the largest and most complex warship to be built in India, successfully completed a five-day maiden sea voyage in August and underwent 10-day sea trials in October.

"The IAC now sails to undertake complex manoeuvres to establish specific readings of how the ship performs in various conditions," Navy spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal said, adding various sensor suites of the ship would also be tested.

The warship has been built



at a cost of around Rs 23,000 crore and its construction propelled India into a select group of countries having capabilities to build state-of-the-art aircraft carriers.

President Ram Nath Kovind and Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu visited the ship recently in Kochi.

"After two successive high profile visits the President and Vice President of India within a span of less than two weeks, IAC Vikrant is heading out for the next set of sea trials," Commander Madhwal said.

"Both dignitaries, having reviewed the progress, had conveyed their satisfaction and expressed their best wishes to all the stakeholders involved in the project," he added.

While the maiden sea trials were to establish propulsion, navigational suite and basic operations, the second sea trial witnessed the ship being put through its paces

leading out for the next set of sea trials," Commander Madhwal said.

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in terms of various machine-
ery trials and flight trials.
"The ship in fact was out
for 10 days proving its sus-
tenance in the very second
sortie. Various seamanship
evolutions were also suc-
cessfully cleared during the
second sortie," the Navy
official said.

Several scientists from the
Naval Science and
Technological Laboratory, a
DRDO facility based at
Visakhapatnam, are wit-
nessing the third phase of
sea trials of Vikrant.

The warship will operate
MiG-29K fighter jets,
Kamov-31 helicopters, MH-
60R multi-role helicopters.

It has over 2,300 compart-
ments, designed for a crew
of around 1700 people,
including specialised cabins
to accommodate women
officers.

Vikrant has a top speed of around 28 knots and a cruising speed of 18 knots with an endurance of about 7,500 nautical miles, officials said.

The IAC is 262 metres long, 62 metres wide and it has a height of 59 metres. Its construction began in 2009.

The warship has been built by Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL).

India currently has only one aircraft carrier -- INS Vikramaditya,

The Indian Navy has been focusing on significantly bolstering its overall capabilities in view of China's growing efforts to increase its military presence in the Indian Ocean Region.

The Indian Ocean, considered the backyard of the Indian Navy, is critical to

Iran offers to assist India in transportation of aid to Afghanistan

STATE TIMES NEWS
NEW DELHI: Iran has offered to assist India in the transportation of wheat, medicines and coronavirus vaccines to Afghanistan which has been reeling under a serious humanitarian crisis. The offer was made by Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian during a telephonic conversation with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Saturday, according to the Iranian foreign ministry. In the conversation, Amir-Abdollahian also called for the formation of an inclusive government in Kabul, the Iranian foreign ministry said. "Regarding Afghanistan, Amir Abdollahian stressed the need to form an inclusive government in the country. He also referred to India's humanitarian aid to Afghanistan, announcing measures and cooperation by the Islamic Republic of Iran to transfer this aid in the form of wheat, medicine and COVID-19 vaccine to the country," it said in a statement.

ties for transporting the aid to the war-torn country through Pakistan are yet to be thrashed out with Islamabad.

There is an option for India of sending aid to Afghanistan via the Chabahar port in Iran. Located in the Sistan-Balochistan province on the energy-rich Iran's southern coast, the Chabahar port is being developed by India and Iran to boost trade ties.

The freezing of non-humanitarian funding by major donors to Afghanistan following its takeover by the Taliban in August has led to a severe economic crisis that deepened the humanitarian crisis. "A wide-ranging conversation with my Iranian colleague, FMR @Amirabdollahian. Discussed the difficulties of Covid, challenges in Afghanistan, prospects of Chabahar and complexities of the Iranian nuclear issue," Jaishankar tweeted on Saturday.

The Iranian foreign ministry said Jaishankar also referred to his country's

The Iranian foreign ministry said Amir-Abdollahian exchanged views with Jaishankar on key bilateral, regional and international issues.

"In response to the Indian foreign minister's question about the latest situation in the fight against the coronavirus in Iran, Amir-Abdollahian referred to the good trend of the nationwide vaccination in the Islamic Republic," it said.

It noted that the Iranian foreign minister "positively assessed" the fight against COVID-19 in Iran and said, "We have been able to properly contain the virus, and so far 89 per cent of people have been vaccinated and are receiving a third dose of vaccine." On the Vienna talks over lifting the sanctions on Iran, the Iranian foreign minister stressed that the discussions are going in the "right direction". "We have the necessary will to reach a good agreement in good faith, and if the Western side also has this goodwill and determina-

against the pandemic and noted that though the number of cases was rising, vaccination was moving at a good speed.

"He expressed pleasure with the forthcoming visit of Iran's top diplomat to India and called it a very good opportunity to develop bilateral cooperation," it added.

mark in Indian warship construction history," Commander Madhwal said. "Despite surging COVID cases in the country and the resultant challenges, the combined teams from multiple organisations associated with the project are upbeat and committed to meet the timeliness," he said.

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COVID vaccination certificates in 5 poll-bound states won't have PM's photo

STATE TIMES NEWS

NEW DELHI: Covid vaccination certificates issued in the five poll-bound states will not have Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photo since the model code of conduct has come into force there, an official source said.

The Union Health Ministry will apply necessary filters on the Co-WIN platform to exclude Modi's photo from the vaccine certificate, the source said.

Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa will be held between February 10 and March 7 in seven phases with the counting of votes on March 10, the Election Commission announced on Saturday.

With the announcement of the schedule, the Model Code of Conduct for governments, candidates and political parties has come into force.

"The Health Ministry will apply necessary



filters on the CoWIN platform to exclude the picture of the prime minister from the COVID-19 certificates being given to people in these five poll-bound states because of the model code of conduct coming into force," an official source told PTI.

In March 2021, Health Ministry had taken a similar initiative during the polls held in Assam, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Puducherry as suggested by the Election Commission following complaints raised by some political parties.

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