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# India is Turning an Old Aircraft Carrier Into a Luxury Hotel

The Viraat will soon be hosting conferences and tourists instead of patrolling the seas.



US Navy



By Eric Tegler Feb 16, 2016

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What do you do with a decommissioned aircraft carrier? In America we generally scrap them, turn them into museums, or send them to the sea bottom where they'll become skeletons for coral reefs. But India sees potential tourism gold in its soon-to-be-retired aircraft carrier.



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The INS Viraat is the world's oldest operational aircraft carrier, a ship the Indians purchased from Great Britain, who deployed it during the Falklands War in the 1980s. After a nearly 60-year operational life, Viraat is currently making its last cruise as a part of the Indian Navy. It's bound for Mumbai where it will be decommissioned in June. Once out of service, the carrier set to be developed into an adventure tourism center, according to *The Times of India*.

India's defense ministry has proposed converting the old aircraft carrier in a joint venture with the government of Andhra Pradesh (one of the 29 states of India) and a private group, according to Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu. Naidu told another Indian newspaper, *The Tribune*, that the converted Viraat "...will have 500 rooms and a conference hall to seat 500 people. Since it is an aircraft carrier, helicopters can easily land on it. It will be convenient to hold conferences apart from being a major tourist attraction,"

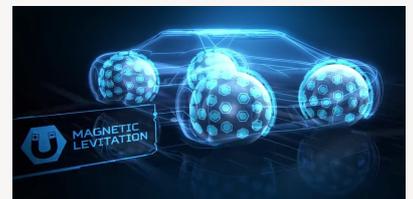
The ship is envisioned as a platform for activities from yachting and sea sports to sailing, gliding, and cruising. Hosting conferences and drawing pleasure seekers to an aircraft carrier may seem like a far-fetched idea, but as anyone who has experienced the heat and crowding of India can attest, getting offshore (or even just to the pier) for a bit is an appealing thought.

The Indian Navy will not be without aircraft carriers after the *Viraat* becomes a tourist attraction. The service will lean on its other aircraft carrier, a former Soviet ship now called *Vikramaditya*, for power projection. It will be joined in 2018 by India's first domestically designed and built aircraft carrier, INS *Vikrant*.

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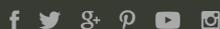
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