

## Project Seabird - Indian Navy Karwar Naval Base

The Project Seabird at the Karwar Naval Base is the country's largest naval infrastructure project which aims at providing fleet support and maintenance of warships.

### What is Project Seabird?

- It is a naval infrastructure project which entails the creation of a naval base at Karwar (Karnataka) on the west coast of India.
- It was approved in 1999 following the [Pokhran-II](#) by the then Union Defence Minister George Fernandes. Also read about [Pokhran-II \(Nuclear Testing\) - \[May 11, 1998\]](#).
- It is aimed at providing fleet support and maintenance of warships.
- The first phase of the naval base called Operation Seabird was completed in 2005 and the second phase started in 2011.
- Construction of the naval air station is one of the major highlights of the second phase.
- AECOM - Architecture Engineering Construction Operations and Management will manage and oversee the planning, design, contracting, construction and acceptance of the entire works, including construction of a new Naval Air Station.
- 3,000 feet long runway, docking space for 30 warships, hangars for aircraft are part of this Rs 19,000 crore project spread over 11,000 acres of land.
- Some other featured facilities of the base are:
  - The specialised dockyard repair and maintenance facilities (with piers, wharfs, revetments, quay walls, etc.)
  - Covered dry berths for ships and submarines
  - New technologically advanced security and communication systems
  - A Naval Air Station (including multiple runways, hangars, housing, ordnance handling areas, services, personnel support infrastructure, etc.)
  - Various utilities systems as well as housing and residential complexes at multiple locations
- The project involves several technical and environmental challenges owing to the partially hilly terrain.

### Project Seabird - Background

- Due to congestion in the shipping lanes from commercial shipping traffic, fishing boats and tourists, the Indian Navy faced security challenges for its Western Fleet in Mumbai Harbour, during the [Indo-Pakistan War of 1971](#).
- To address these concerns, at the end of the war, various options were considered and alternative locations including Thiruvananthapuram, Kannur and Thoothukudi for a base on the west coast were evaluated.

- In the early 1980s, then Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Oscar Stanley Dawson conceived of a dedicated naval base sandwiched between the craggy hills of the Western Ghats and the Arabian Sea near Karwar in Karnataka state.
- It had significant advantages being located south of the naval bases in Mumbai and Goa and north of Kochi. It is out of range of most strike aircraft from neighbouring countries and is located very close to the world's busiest shipping route between the Persian Gulf and East Asia.
- It also offered a natural deep-water harbour and significant land area for expansion, allowing larger aircraft carriers to berth.
- However, the development was delayed due to a variety of reasons, including the 1991 economic crisis.

### Significance of Project Seabird

- Upon completion, this \$3 billion decade-long program and effort will provide the Indian Navy with its largest naval base on the west coast and also the largest naval base east of the Suez Canal.
- The new and expanded naval complex will be able to support several major warships, at least 30 vessels and submarines and yard crafts.
- It will house a state-of-the-art Naval Air Base and maintenance section.
- Karwar is a coastal city that attracts tourists. The Navy air station along with the civil terminal project under Project Seabird helps the growth of the destination. It will strengthen the country's trade, economy and humanitarian assistance and give more teeth to the Indian Navy.

### INS Kadamba - Project Seabird

- INS Kadamba is an integrated strategic naval base of the Indian Navy situated at Binaga Bay near Karwar in Karnataka on the western coast of India.
- The first phase of construction of the base, code-named Project Seabird, was completed in 2005.
- INS Kadamba is currently the third-largest Indian naval base and is expected to become the largest naval base in the eastern hemisphere after completion of expansion Phase IIB.
- The base can accommodate the operational fleet of Western Naval Command and reduce the traffic in the existing naval base located at Mumbai.
- It is India's third functional naval base after those in Mumbai and Visakhapatnam.
- INS Shardul became the first warship to be commissioned at INS Kadamba in 2007.