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Akula Class – Attack Submarine

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India has planned to lease out one more Akula Class nuclear powered submarine from Russia. According to reports, both the countries have signed a deal for this, worth almost 3 Billion US dollars. This new attack submarine will **replace Indian Navy's INS Chakra 2** whose lease is expiring in the year 2022.

Submarine is a warship with a streamlined hull designed to operate completely submerged in the sea for long periods, equipped with a periscope and typically armed with torpedoes or missiles.

Types

- **Conventional Submarines:** These are the ones which are powered by electric motors

and batteries.

E.g. Project-75 Class Submarines

- **Nuclear Powered Ballistic Submarines:** These are powered by nuclear fuel, thereby capable of operating underwater for longer durations. Primary role of such submarines is to provide strategic deterrence.

E.g. INS Arihant

- **Nuclear Powered and Armed Submarines (SSN):** These submarines have unlimited endurance and high speeds and are armed with cruise missiles and heavyweight torpedoes, thus complementing carrier battle groups.

E.g. Akula Class Submarines.

Akula Class Submarines

- The Akula Class Submarine uses a nuclear reactor for propulsion, allowing it to remain underwater for an extended period of time which makes its detection impossible.
- This class of Submarine can be used for multiple tasks like hunting enemy submarines, intelligence surveillance etc.

Benefits

- It will help India in training Arihant and Arihant-class cruise on SSN submarines.
- It can be deployed at important focal points in Indian Ocean and thus India will be able to enjoy strategic dynamic of the region. Also, the submarine will have a deterrent impact.
- Induction of this SSN will make India an Indian Ocean Power with full spectrum of operational capabilities.
- The submarine will act as a supreme board for India's indigenous SSN development program as it will provide clues on submarine designs, nuclear submarine operation and maintenance etc.
- It is also the symbol of deep Indo-Russia relations as no two other countries in the world have exchanged any nuclear element in defence armament yet.

India-Russia Defence Trade

- Since the year 1988, Russia has been supplying India with nuclear powered submarines. INS Chakra 1 was inducted into Indian Navy in the year 1998.
- INS Chakra 2 was inducted into Indian Navy in the year 2012.
- Akula Class Submarine will get inducted by the year 2024.
- India and Russia has also come into a joint venture for production of 200 Kamov lightweight multi-role military helicopters for India. The deal for the same was inked in 2015.
- India has recently signed agreements with Russia on S-400 air defence missiles and

AK 203 Rifles. This India has done, despite the risk of invoking sanctions under **Countering America's Adversaries through Sanctions Act (CAATSA)**.

- These trade deals are important for Indo-Russian ties due to Russia's growing interest in the geo-politics of Indo-Pacific Region.

Way Forward

- Choke points in Indian Ocean need to be controlled through submarines, for maintaining influence in the region.
- **India needs a very rapid submarine building program** to protect its interests in International Waters, especially between the Strait of Hormuz and the Strait of Malacca.
- More SSNs are required for the deployment at the Indian Ocean in the wake of Chinese ships patrolling the ocean. This is also necessary to deter competitors of India in the International Waters.
- Besides building submarines, **India needs to build surveillance capabilities** so that it can exactly detect location of submarines of other countries in the Indian Ocean.

The new Akula Submarine will definitely provide boost to Indian Navy operational capabilities but India needs to build its own such submarines, considering the cost of lease. Also, it needs to provide a push to its present submarine programmes, especially 'Project-75'.