Naval Aviation in India

Prelims – *Current events of National Importance*

Mains (GS III) | *Various Security Forces & Agencies & Their Mandate*

Why in News?

India and France recently signed a government-to-government contract for 26 Rafale Marine (Rafale M) fighter aircraft for the Indian Navy.

Rafale Marine (Rafale M) fighter aircraft
• Rafale M is a ***4.5-generation twin-jet fighter jet*** that is proven in combat and can hold its own against any other, including the Chinese-made J15. • **Designed and produced by** – Dassault Aviation, French manufacturer of military aircraft and business jets. • It is able to operate from both an aircraft carrier and a shore base. • **Capabilities** - Air-defence & air-superiority, Reconnaissance, Nuclear deterrence, Air-to-ground precision strike, Close air support, Anti-ship attacks; and Buddy-buddy refuelling. • The Rafale-M has been operational with the French Navy, aboard its nuclear-powered Charles de Gaulle aircraft carrier, since 2004.

Naval Aviation in India

- Naval aviation is crucial for maintaining control of the seas, supporting naval and ground forces, and projecting military power along distant shores.
- It includes fixed-wing carrier borne squadrons, land-based Maritime Patrol Aircraft, Helicopters and Remotely Piloted Aircraft operated from warships and ashore.

Key roles of Naval Aviation	
Fleet air defence	Providing air cover for naval forces beyond the reach of land-based aircraft.
Strategic power projection	It allows deployment of air power without needing land bases.
Anti-surface warfare	Attacking enemy ships with air-launched missiles.
Supporting amphibious warfare	Aiding marine landings and operations inland.
Mine countermeasures	Using aircraft to detect and clear enemy mines.

- The Indian Navy currently operates 2 aircraft carriers - the *INS Vikramaditya* procured from Russia and the indigenously built *INS Vikrant* commissioned in September 2022.
- **Significance of Rafale-M for India -** A great advantage that accrues with the induction of the 26 Rafale MS for the Indian Navy is the commonality with the IAF Rafales.

- This provides the desirable scope for interoperability and joint training, as well as for maintenance and safe practices of these assets and their aircrew between the two services.

Reference

The Indian Express | Rafale-M fighter jets



SHANKAR
IAS PARLIAMENT
Information is Empowering