Shifting the Focus on Indian Navy

Why in news?

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The Indian Navy celebrates Navy Day on December 4 to commemorate its successful sea-borne attack off Karachi harbour during the 1971 India-Pakistan war.

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What is the importance of Indian Navy?

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- According to warship replacement programme, Indian Navy (IN) has to maintain a force level of at least 120 ships with an average life of 20 years.
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- It has to induct at least six warships annually.
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- Over the years the IN has developed skill-sets to build warships for tropical conditions characterised by high temperatures, humidity and salinity that creates a corrosive climate.
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- Therefore, IN warships are export-worthy marine platforms to other Indian Ocean littoral countries.
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- The IN is also an instrument of maritime diplomacy.
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- It involves goodwill visits by warships to foreign ports, naval exercises, humanitarian assistance and disaster relief, besides persuasive deployment.
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What is the problem?

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- Over the years the army and air force has been accorded priority to counter landward threats.

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- This has constrained IN only to warship replacement programmes.
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- But there is a strategic shift towards China with the recent stand-off at Doklam and the presence of Chinese warships in the Indian Ocean.
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- The Indian and Chinese navies come into contact with each other either in the waters of the Indian Ocean or the South China Sea.
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- In June 2016 a Chinese spy ship tailed two Indian Navy warships in Japanese territorial waters east of Okinawa.
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- Similarly in 2012, another Indian warship, the INS Airawat, was challenged by Chinese navy boats while sailing along the coast of Vietnam.
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- So, the naval firepower is critical for India to consolidate its strategic interests in the IOR & SCS.
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- Hence proper focussed should be given on it.
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Source: BusinessLine

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