

## **Apex Court halts dismantling of INS Viraat**

### **Why in news?**

Recently Supreme Court ordered status quo with regard to the dismantling of India's decommissioned aircraft carrier INS Viraat.

### **What was the Supreme Court (SC) order?**

- Envitech Marine Consultants Pvt Ltd wants to buy INS Viraat and convert it into a museum.
- But Defence Ministry declined to provide a No-Objection Certificate for repurchasing the vessel.
- The company approached the SC, filed a petition and the court ordered that status quo needs to be maintained with regard to dismantling the ship.

### **How does this order will impact Alang ship breaker?**

- The shipbreaker at Alang purchased INS Viraat as scrap from an auction conducted by Metal Scrap Corporation Limited.
- It took about Rs 60 crore loan to purchase the vessel and to tug it to Alang and if dismantling gets delayed 12% interest will hurt the company & can go them bankrupt.
- The profit for the shipbreaker depends on turnaround time which is the period between the dismantle of ship & selling it as scrap i.e. faster a ship is broken the more the profit.
- Moreover the company has made a bill of entry with the customs department i.e. ship now became a goods on which an import duty is levied and the order will affect the company now.

### **How much of the aircraft carrier has been dismantled so far?**

- On September 28, 2020 INS Viraat arrived at Alang & at the farewell ceremony Union minister revealed that state was prepared to spend Rs 500 crore to preserve the aircraft.
- But team of experts expressed concerned about the faster deterioration of the hull which will make it prone to accidents in future.
- In October last year, Gujarat Maritime Board has given permission to break the vessel.
- Now 40% of the aircraft carrier is dismantled i.e. flight deck, the ski jump,

the accommodations meant for the sailors have been dismantled leaving a large gaping hole in the front side of vessel.

### **What was the earlier negotiation between the shipbreaker & firm?**

- The shipbreaker says that if Envitech was serious about preserving the aircraft carrier it should have participated in the government auction.
- It also said that the private firm was given enough time to produce an NOC from the government for repurchasing INS Viraat.
- INS Viraat had arrived at Alang in September 2020 and Envitech went public with its attempt to save the aircraft carrier on September 30.
- In subsequent months, the shipbreaker told that the aircraft carrier could be refloated and taken away from Alang.
- Now after the dismantle of the ship began, the hopes of recovering the decommissioned aircraft carrier is lost.

**Source: The Indian Express**

