

Delayed Aircraft Carrier Refitted For India Starts Sea Trials

By [The Moscow Times](#)

July 07, 2013

The  **Moscow Times**

A Russian-built aircraft carrier refitted for the Indian navy started final sea trials Friday in the White Sea, the Sevmash shipbuilder announced.

The Vikramaditya — formerly the Admiral Gorshkov — which was refitted at the Sevmash shipyard near Arkhangelsk, is due to be handed over in Fall 2013. A mixed Russian-Indian crew is on board the carrier as the Indian sailors learn how to operate the vessel.

"The warship has been refueled and started sea trials at 2 p.m. Moscow time today," Sevmash head Mikhail Budnichenko told reporters at the St. Petersburg International Naval Show.

According to Budnichenko, the trials in the White Sea will continue for about 25 days and include the testing of maneuverability and other technical characteristics of the vessel.

After that, the Vikramaditya will sail to the Barents Sea, where the ship will be tested

for aircraft takeoff and landing procedures.

Several MiG-29K naval fighter aircraft and two helicopters will be used in the Barents Sea trials, Budnichenko said.

A report on the results of the final trials must be passed to the Indian side on October 15, he said.

The refit of the ship has lurched from one crisis to another since India and Russia signed a \$947 million deal in 2005 for its purchase and refit. Delivery has already been delayed three times, pushing up the cost of refurbishing the vessel to \$2.3 billion, amid acrimony between Moscow and New Delhi over the contract.

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