Indian Navy Commissions New Warships



INS Vela is commission in Mumbai Nov. 25. *INDIAN NAVY*

MUMBAI – India commissioned its newest surface combatant, the 7400-ton guided missile destroyer INS Visakhapatnam (D61), Nov. 21, and its newest submarine, INS Vela (S24), Nov. 25, both in Mumbai.

Visakhapatnam is the lead ship in a class of four stealth guided-missile destroyers under Project 15B. The second ship is scheduled for commissioning in 2023, followed by the third and fourth ships in 2025.

The Visakhapatnam was designed by the Indian navy's Directorate of Naval Design and constructed by Mazagon Dock Ltd. in Mumbai using indigenously sourced steel.

Vela, a 1,700-ton Scorpene-class air independent propulsion diesel submarine, was also built by Magazon Dock Ltd. in collaboration with the Naval Group in France. It is the fourth in a series of the six Scorpene-class submarines being

constructed in India for the Indian navy. The navy operates or is building both attack and ballistic missile submarines.

While many navies are building frigates, the number of navies acquiring destroyers is relatively small.

The DDGs represent an evolutionary development for the Indian navy, starting with the 6,200-ton, three-ship Project 15 Delhi class and the three ships of the 7,400-ton Project 15A Kolkata class.

The Delhi-class was influenced by Russian weapons and combat systems, whereas the newer ships feature western and indigenous systems. The Kolkata class added the supersonic BrahMos anti-ship and land-attack missile. The P15B ships are about the same size as the P15As, but with more advanced systems from Russian, western and indigenous sources. They also have a reduced radar cross section. According to India's Ministry of Defence, the overall indigenous content of the project is about 75%.

"Today, as INS Visakhapatnam manufactured by MDSL is successfully commissioned, there is no doubt that in the coming times, we will be shipbuilding not only for our own needs, but also for the needs of the entire world. I'm confident that INS Visakhapatnam will live up to her name and strengthen our maritime security," Minister of Defence Rajnath Singh said at the commissioning ceremony.

The defense minister said the Indian navy has an important role to keep the oceans open, safe and secure. "Challenges such as piracy, terrorism, illegal smuggling of arms and narcotics, human trafficking, illegal fishing and damage to the environment are equally responsible for affecting the maritime domain. Therefore, the role of the Indian navy becomes very important in the entire Indo-Pacific region," Singh said.