

# Prez to launch frigate Vindhyagiri on Aug 17

AJAI SHUKLA

New Delhi, 14 August

In January 2011, the Indian Navy suffered one of its worst peacetime losses when one of its front-line warships, the Nilgiri-class frigate INS Vindhyagiri, collided in Mumbai harbour with a German merchant. By a miracle, nobody lost their lives, but the vessel sank after a fire onboard.

But the Navy is going ahead with its tradition of keeping its warships, or at least their memory, alive. The resurrection of INS Vindhyagiri began with its salvaging and decommissioning in 2012. Now, on Thursday, the military's Supreme Commander, President Droupadi Murmu, will preside over the launch of a new INS Vindhyagiri.

The reborn warship will be the

sixth in a series of seven new guided-missile frigates being built under Project 17A. Four are being built by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders (MDL), Mumbai, and three by Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.

The first five ships in Project 17A have already been launched by MDL and GRSE between 2019 and 2022. The sixth one, INS Vindhyagiri, is named after a mountain range, like its predecessors: INS Nilgiri, Himgiri, Udaygiri, Dunagiri, and Taragiri. The seventh frigate will be named anew since it doesn't have a predecessor.

The successor warships of Project 17A have improved stealth

features, advanced weapons and sensors, and platform management systems.

"The old Vindhyagiri, in its nearly 31 years of service from July 8, 1981, to June 11, 2012, had witnessed various challenging operations and multinational exercises. The newly christened Vindhyagiri stands as a sym-



bol of India's determination to embrace its rich naval heritage while propelling itself towards a future of indigenous defence capabilities," announced the Ministry of Defence (MoD) on Monday.

The seven Project 17A frigates have been designed in-house by the Warship Design Bureau

(formerly the Directorate of Naval Design), an Indian Navy establishment that designs all the Navy's latest warships.

"Aligning with the country's resolute commitment to atmanirbharta, a substantial 75 per cent of the orders for equipment and systems of Project 17A ships are from indigenous firms, including micro, small, and medium enterprises," stated the MoD.

It has contributed to the design of India's first indigenously designed aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant, the first indigenous nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine, INS Arihant, and the 10 Delhi-class destroyers that are built using stealth technology.

The design of Project 17A was finalised by the Navy in 2013 and made public in April 2018 at DefExpo 2018 in Chennai.