

INS Arnala touches the waters of Bay of Bengal

First of 16 anti-sub warships built indigenously

AJAI SHUKLA

New Delhi, 20 December

Indian Navy Ship (INS) Arnala, the first of 16 anti-submarine warfare shallow water craft (ASW-SWC) being built in India for the Indian Navy, was launched on Tuesday at Larsen & Toubro's (L&T's) Kattupalli shipyard near Chennai.

Of the 16 ASW-SWC on order, eight are being built by Garden Reach Shipbuilders and Engineers (GRSE) Kolkata, in partnership with L&T; and the other eight by Cochin Shipyard. The Navy plans to have all 16 corvettes built and in service by 2026. Industry sources say the cost of all 16 corvettes will be ₹12,622 crore, or \$1.6 billion. In 2022 exchange rates, that comes to ₹789 crore (\$99 million) per vessel.

The Navy's need for shallow



The Navy's need for shallow water anti-sub craft stems from the peculiar nature of the Arabian Sea bed

water anti-submarine craft stems from the peculiar nature of the Arabian Sea bed, which is extremely shallow even tens of nautical miles from the coast.

"The ship has been named INS

Arnala to signify the strategic maritime importance accorded to the island of Arnala (located about 13 kilometres north of Vasai, Maharashtra) by the great Maratha warrior, Chhatrapati Shivaji

Maharaj," said a Ministry of Defence (MoD) statement, released on Tuesday. "She (INS Arnala) made her first contact with the waters of the Bay of Bengal at 10.40 hours at the launch ceremony graced by Rasika Chaube, financial advisor (defence services), MoD. In keeping with the Naval maritime tradition, Chaube launched the ship to the chanting of invocation from the Atharva Veda," announced MoD.

A contract for building eight ASW-SWC was signed between MoD and GRSE on April 29, 2019. The new Arnala-class corvettes will replace the Navy's ageing Abhay-class ASW ships. According to the MoD, "The Arnala-class is designed to undertake anti-submarine operations in coastal waters and low-intensity maritime operations, including subsurface surveillance in littoral waters." The 77.6 metre-long Arnala-class ASW corvettes have a

displacement of 900 tonnes, with a maximum speed of 25 knots and endurance of 1,800 nautical miles.

"Despite challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, GRSE has made substantial progress on the ships of this project," stated MoD. "As part of the Prime Minister's vision of Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India), the ASW-SWC corvettes will have over 80 per cent indigenous content, ensuring that large-scale defence production is executed by Indian

manufacturing units," the MoD said.

Navy hands over fifth Scorpene sub

INS Vagir, the fifth Kalvari-class Scorpene submarine, constructed at Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Mumbai, in collaboration with Naval Group, France, was handed over to the Navy on Tuesday.

The cost of all 16 corvettes will be ₹12,622 crore, or \$1.6 billion. In 2022 exchange rates, that comes to ₹789 crore (\$99 million) per vessel