

Now, Agnikul first pvt firm to build launch pad in India

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After the recent launch of the country's first privately developed rocket, another space-tech start-up, Agnikul Cosmos, has now successfully set up India's first-ever launch pad designed and operated by a private player at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota.

This comes after Skyroot Aerospace successfully launched its Vikram-S rocket on a sub-orbital flight from Sriharikota on November 18, becoming the first Indian company to do so.

The facility, designed by Agnikul and executed in support from the Indian Space Research Organisation (Isro) and the Indian National Space Promotion and Authorisation Centre (IN-SPACe), has two sections — the Agnikul launch pad and the Agnikul Mission Control Centre. All critical systems connecting the two sections, which are four kilometres apart, will ensure 100 per cent operationality during countdown. The launch pad has been specifically built to enable it to support liquid-stage controlled launches, while allowing Isro's range operations team to monitor key flight safety parameters. It also has the ability to share critical information with Isro's Mission Control Centre.

Agnikul's first mission, which will be a controlled and guided vertical launch using its patented engine, will set off from this launch pad. The mission would be a technology demonstrator that will mirror Agnikul's orbital launch, but at a



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reduced scale. It is building a private small satellite rocket, Agnibaan, that will be capable of carrying up to 100 kg of payload to low Earth orbits about 700 km high. The vehicle has a plug-and-play engine that is configurable to precisely match the mission's needs.

Agnilet is the world's first single-piece 3D printed engine, fully designed and made in India. In early 2021, it became the first engine to be test-fired successfully by a private company in the country at Isro.

"The first exclusive launch pad for a private launch vehicle has come up at

the Satish Dhawan Space Centre. Now, India can travel to space from one more space platform, thanks to Agnikul," said S Somanath, secretary, Department of Space, and chairman of Isro.

Agnikul had recently raised \$20 million in a Series B round from Silicon Valley-based venture capital firm and another investor, Rocketship.

Agnikul is an IIT Madras-incubated start-up founded in 2017 by Srinath Ravichandran and Moin SPM.

It also became the first Indian company to sign an agreement with Isro in December 2020.

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