

# SIXTH SCORPENE TAKES TO WATER

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Grand launch: INS Vagsheer being launched at the Mazgaon Dockyard on Monday. Emmanuel Yogini

The sixth and last of the French Scorpene-class submarines, *INS Vagsheer*, was launched into water at the Mazagon Docks in Mumbai.

“The sixth submarine will now commence setting to work of various equipment and their harbour trials. The crew will thereafter sail the submarine for the rigorous sea acceptance trials after which the submarine would be delivered to the Navy by late next year,” the Navy said. Defence Secretary Ajay Kumar was the chief guest at the ceremony.

*INS Vagsheer* was launched by Ms. Veena Ajay Kumar, in keeping with the naval tradition of launch and naming by a woman. The six submarines were being built under Project-75 by the Mazagon Docks under technology transfer from the Naval Group as part of a \$3.75-billion deal signed in October 2005. *INS Kalvari* was commissioned in December 2017; *INS Khanderi* in September 2019; *INS Vagir* in November 2020; *INS Karanj* in March 2021; and *INS Vela* in November 2021.

*INS Vagir* is undergoing sea trials now. The Navy has drawn up plans to install an air independent propulsion (AIP) module on all the Scorpènes as they go for refit, beginning with *INS Kalvari*, in the next couple of years to enhance their endurance.

Development of an indigenous AIP module by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) is in advanced stages. The tender to build six more advanced conventional submarines under Project-75I is in the Request For Proposal stage. The Navy has a 30-year submarine-building programme and after the P-75I, it intends to design and build conventional submarines indigenously.

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