

With stealth ship, India in elite group

Self-reliance:The newly commissioned warship *INS Kiltan* in Visakhapatnam on Monday. C.V. Subrahmanyam

The country is rapidly marching towards indigenisation and the commissioning of the third Kamorta class Anti-Submarine Warfare (ASW) stealth corvette is a classic example of that, said Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

She was in Visakhapatnam on Monday at the Eastern Naval Command to commission *INS Kiltan*, the third of the four Project-28 Kamorta class ASW.

Addressing the naval officers and the media from the deck of the newly commissioned ship, she said, "This ship is unique, as about 81% is built indigenously and is the first built by India that has a superstructure made up of carbon fibre composite material. This makes it a stealth corvette and makes India one among the few nations that have this technology or this class of ships."

Builder's Navy

The keel was laid in 2010 under the Project-28 scheme and was built by Garden Reach Ship Builders and Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata.

Ms. Sitharaman said the Indian Navy was moving from the status of a 'buyer's navy to builder's navy.'

"This is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Make in India' initiative and we need to become more self-reliant. We have already gained the expertise in building hulls and we now need to focus on propulsion and weapon technology," she said. She pointed out that India had a long coastline with a vast EEZ (Exclusive Economic Zone) and there was a need to have a capable and potent navy.

The Indian Navy, she said, had been playing an important role in defending the borders as well as in peace and humanitarian missions.

Chairman and Managing Director of GRSE V.K. Saxena said the partnership between GRSE and the Indian Navy began in 1961 and so far it had built over 100 ships for the Navy and the Indian Coast Guard. "In the next few years, we will be delivering about 10 ships to the Navy with state-of-the-art technology," he said.

Tough steel

INS Kiltan has been constructed using high grade steel (DMR 249A) produced by the state-owned Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL). It has a displacement of 3500 tonnes, spans 109 meters in length and 14 meters at the beam and is propelled by four diesel engines to achieve speeds in excess of 25 knots with an endurance of 3450 nautical miles.

The carbon composite material gives it an extra stealth edge and also lowers the top weight and maintenance cost.

The installed propulsion and auxiliary systems provides very low radiated underwater noise feature, required for anti-submarine warfare.

The enhanced stealth features include 'X' form of Hull, full beam superstructure, inclined ship sides and use of Infra Red Signature Suppression (IRSS).

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