MoD signs ₹498.58-crore deal with Cochin Shipyard to refit INS Betwa

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News

On 11 November 2026 the Ministry of Defence signed a ₹498.58-crore contract in New Delhi with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for the 'Normal Refit and Re-powering' of INS Betwa, a Brahmaputra-class frigate of the Indian Navy. It was signed in the presence of Defence Secretary Rajesh Kumar Singh. The ship's steam-based propulsion will be replaced by a diesel-engine-based system, giving higher thermal efficiency, lower fuel use and quicker start-up. Its weapon suite will also be modernised. More than 50 MSMEs will be involved, and the Ministry said the project supports Aatmanirbhar Bharat and Make in India. In 2023 a ₹313.42-crore contract was signed with the same shipyard for the mid-life upgrade of INS Beas, a ship of the same class.

Key facts for the exam

Point	Details
Ship	INS Betwa (F39) – Brahmaputra-class (Project 16A) guided-missile frigate
Contract	₹498.58 crore; 11 November 2026, New Delhi
Shipyard	Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi
Scope	Refit + steam-to-diesel propulsion + weapon modernisation

Point	Details
Industry	50+ MSMEs
Built by	Garden Reach Shipbuilders & Engineers (GRSE), Kolkata
Commissioned	7 July 2004 (launched 26 Feb 1998)
Sister ships	INS Brahmaputra, INS Beas

Background

- Naval history: The Brahmaputra-class (Project 16A) frigates are an improved version of the Godavari class; all three – Brahmaputra, Betwa and Beas – were built by GRSE, Kolkata. Indian Navy frigates are often named after rivers. On 5 December 2016, while being undocked from a dry dock at Naval Dockyard Mumbai, Betwa tipped onto its side and two sailors died; it was set upright in February 2017.
- Science: In steam propulsion, water is boiled in a boiler and the steam drives a turbine; a diesel engine is an internal-combustion engine in which the fuel burns inside the cylinder. A diesel engine has no spark plug – fuel ignites from the heat of highly compressed air.
- Geography: The Betwa rises in the Vindhyan region of Madhya Pradesh, flows north-east and joins the Yamuna near Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh. Orchha lies on its banks. The Ken–Betwa link is the first project under the national river-interlinking plan; the Daudhan dam is being built on the Ken inside Panna Tiger Reserve; the PM laid its foundation stone at Khajuraho on 25 December 2024.
- Economy: Cochin Shipyard (1972) is a PSU under the Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways; it built India's first indigenous aircraft carrier, INS Vikrant (2022). Upgrading older ships extends their service life at far lower cost than building new ones.

Tamil Nadu link: No direct link. The Tamil Nadu–Puducherry coast falls under the Eastern Naval Command, headquartered at Visakhapatnam; the Flag Officer Commanding Tamil Nadu & Puducherry Naval Area (FOTNA), based in Chennai, oversees the area.

Frequently asked questions

What is this news about?

On 11 November 2026 the Ministry of Defence signed a ₹498.58-crore contract in New Delhi with Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL) for the 'Normal Refit and Re-powering' of INS Betwa, a Brahmaputra-class frigate of the Indian Navy.

What are the key facts to remember for the exam?

Ship: INS Betwa (F39) – Brahmaputra-class (Project 16A) guided-missile frigate; Contract: ₹498.58 crore; 11 November 2026, New Delhi; Shipyard: Cochin Shipyard Limited (CSL), Kochi; Scope: Refit + steam-to-diesel propulsion + weapon modernisation.

What is the background to this news?

Naval history: The Brahmaputra-class (Project 16A) frigates are an improved version of the Godavari class; all three – Brahmaputra, Betwa and Beas – were built by GRSE, Kolkata.

Practice questions (with answers)

1. With which company was the ₹498.58-crore contract signed to refit INS Betwa and switch it to diesel propulsion?

A) Cochin Shipyard

B) Mazagon Dock

C) Hindustan Shipyard

D) Goa Shipyard

Answer: A – Explanation: Cochin Shipyard (CSL) – builder of INS Vikrant. It also won the 2023 contract to upgrade INS Beas.

2. INS Betwa belongs to which class of frigates?

A) Talwar class

B) Shivalik class

C) Nilgiri class

D) Brahmaputra class

Answer: D – Explanation: Brahmaputra class (Project 16A) – Brahmaputra, Betwa, Beas; built by GRSE, Kolkata. Shivalik is Project 17, Nilgiri Project 17A.

3. The Daudhan dam of the Ken–Betwa river-link project lies inside which tiger reserve?

A) Bandhavgarh

B) Panna

C) Kanha

D) Satpura

Answer: B – Explanation: Panna (Madhya Pradesh) – dam on the Ken; a 221-km canal carries water to the Betwa. India's first national river-link project.

4. Tamil Nadu's coast comes under which command of the Indian Navy?

A) Western Command

B) Southern Command

C) Eastern Command

D) Andaman Command

Answer: C – Explanation: Eastern Naval Command – HQ Visakhapatnam. Southern Command is at Kochi (training); Western Command at Mumbai.

5. The Betwa, which gives the ship its name, rises in Madhya Pradesh and joins which river?

A) Ganga

B) Chambal

C) Son

D) Yamuna

Answer: D – Explanation: Yamuna – near Hamirpur, Uttar Pradesh. Orchha stands on the Betwa, which flows through the Bundelkhand region.

Sources: News On AIR; The Week; ThePrint; ETV Bharat; Awaz The Voice; Business Standard; DT Next. © Shanmugam IAS Academy.