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India to Begin Trials of Homegrown AIP Equipment in December

Delays had forced the Indian Navy to abandon its plan to deploy AIP in Scorpene submarines.

New Delhi (Sputnik) — India's Defense and Research Development organization (DRDO) is preparing for trials of its long delayed Air Independent Propulsion (AIP).

On October 18, Sputnik had reported that due to delays in the development of AIP by DRDO, the Indian Navy had decided to do away with its plan to equip homegrown AIP into the last two Scorpene-class submarines, also known as Kalveri-class submarines.

The first Kalveri-class submarine is expected to be inducted by January 2017, with a delay of more than four years. India has planned to induct the last two submarines of this class in 2020 and 2022. French firm DCNS won a contract to build six Kalveri-class submarines at a cost of USD 3.5 billion.

DCNS had also proposed to set up a 100% Indian subsidiary to manufacture AIP but it failed to impress Indian authorities because of similar AIP technologies being developed by DRDO. AIP is vital equipment for modern submarines that enhance their survivability under water. It uses limited amounts of stored liquid gas which ultimately is used to charge the battery of the submarines.

Due to this, submarines can remain under water for longer periods of time. As development of homegrown AIP is being delayed, it might attract foreign manufacturers from Russia, Germany and Sweden to propose construction of AIP under technology transfer in India, so that the probability of winning a contract for an additional six submarines under the Indian Navy project 75i is increased.