

INDIA GETS SUBMARINE RESCUE SYSTEM

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The Indian Navy joined a select group of naval forces in the world on Wednesday when it inducted its first non-tethered Deep Submergence Rescue Vehicle (DSRV) system at the Naval Dockyard in Mumbai. The DSRV is used to rescue crew members from submarines stranded under water in the high seas.

The DSRV can be operated at a depth of 650 metres and can rescue 14 people at a time. The state-of-the-art system is also equipped with a decompression chamber that can accommodate submariners and a remotely operated vehicle (ROV), which can be used to beam images and provide immediate assistance. The Western Naval Command had recently successfully held trials with actual simulations with different classes of submarines.

Describing it as a landmark event, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Sunil Lanba said, "The induction of the DSRV marks the culmination of years of effort of the Navy in acquiring this niche submarine rescue capability. It is the latest in terms of technology and capability."

'Rescue across the globe'

The DSRV can also be transported by air, enabling it to conduct rescue operations across the globe. "Our endeavour is to train our crew to provide submarine rescue services in the Indian Ocean region and beyond," Admiral Lanba said.

The Indian Navy currently operates five different classes of submarines.

Observing that deep sea submarine rescue capability is critical for the Navy, Vice Admiral Girish Luthra, Commanding Officer, Western Naval Command said the system would help reduce the reaction time, thereby increasing the possibility of a successful rescue. "This project is yet another milestone in the defence partnership between India and the United Kingdom," he added.

In March 2016, the Indian Navy had signed a Rs. 2,000 crore contract with the U.K.-based James Fisher Defence (JFD) for two submarine rescue systems as well as maintenance for 25 years. Admiral Lanba said the second system would be inducted in April and would be based at the Eastern Naval Command in Vishakapatnam.

"These are the first two 'third-generation' systems in the world at present," said Giovanni Corbetta, Managing Director, James Fisher Defence. "The second one is already on its way to Vishakapatnam. We should be able to start the trials by the end of January," Mr. Corbetta added. The DSRV was built at JFD's facility in Glasgow and was shipped to Mumbai earlier this year.

The Indian Navy has also signed a Rs. 9,000 crore contract with the Hindustan Shipyard Limited for two ships, which would serve as the dedicated mother ships for the submarine rescue system, the first of which is expected to arrive by 2022. At present the system is housed on-board a ship which has been taken on lease from the Shipping Corporation of India (SCI).

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