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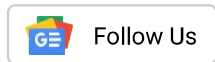
Premium

Navy plans to get undersea chariots, made in India, for special operations

Will add to capabilities of marine commandos, increase op range

Written by [Amrita Nayak Dutta](#)

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These chariots are undersea vessels, and are used by almost all advanced navies. These come in very handy if the Navy has to operate in shallow waters, carry out surveillance or target the adversary's coastal installations, its ships in harbour.

The **Indian Navy** is planning to acquire indigenously-made swimmer delivery vehicles — also known as underwater chariots and midget submarines — as part of efforts to modernise and strengthen the capabilities of its Marine Commandos (MARCOS) for special undersea operations.

Defence sources told The Sunday Express that these chariots, which will be able to carry a crew of at least six, will be powered by lithium-ion batteries.

The sources said there are plans to procure a few dozen chariots for the Navy after the initial prototype is cleared.

The size of these delivery vehicles will enable divers to carry bigger cylinders in the chariots – letting them stay underwater for longer hours – and thereby enhancing the overall operational range in shallow waters.

The size of the chariots will also permit carriage of additional weapons for various operations.

Defence sources said the Navy is designing the vehicles in consultation with the

industry, based on which the prototype will be made.

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EXPLAINED

Shallow water ops

These chariots are undersea vessels, and are used by almost all advanced navies. These come in very handy if the Navy has to operate in shallow waters, carry out surveillance or target the adversary's coastal installations, its ships in harbour.

The chariots are highly specialised platforms used by almost all advanced navies in the world. These are self-propelled vehicles which can be launched from ships or submarines, depending on their size and the roles they are to perform. In World War II, manned human torpedoes were referred to as chariots.

They can be used for a range of missions which include shallow-water surveillance, attacking the adversary's coastal installations, and even their ships in harbour.

According to a Forbes article, the Pakistan Navy has a small submarine – a fraction of the size of a regular submarine – which is in use by the SSG (N), its Special Service Group.

The chariots allow marine commandos to access areas close to the adversary's harbour – which submarines are not able to reach due to shallow waters – and aid transportation of weapons and equipment to areas of operations.

Not much information is publicly available on the swimmer delivery vehicles currently used by the Navy.

Some sources point to the use of Italian-made chariots by the Navy for several years now. Around 2012, the **Ministry of Defence** had asked **Hindustan Shipyard Limited** to build two of these submarines.

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