

India to induct N-powered submarine soon: Navy chief

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India will commission the nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarine INS Aridhaman soon, Indian Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi said at a news conference in New Delhi on Tuesday.

The third domestically made such a submarine (after INS Arihant and INS Arighaat) is undergoing final trials. And, once inducted into the Navy, it will strengthen India's deterrence ability amid China's naval expansion, as well as Pakistan's pending acquisition of new Chinese-made submarines.

While the Aridhaman is expected to be more advanced than the previous two nuclear-powered submarines, India lags China, which is significantly behind the United States in numbers.

The central government has approved the building of two nuclear-attack submarines that would take eight to 10 years.

"We have got the sustenance, reach and intent," Tripathi said of the Indian Navy's ambitions to grow, and not just in



Navy chief Admiral Dinesh Tripathi was speaking at the release of an updated version of India's maritime doctrine ahead of Navy Day, which is celebrated on December 4

PHOTO: PTI

its immediate waters.

"The Indian Ocean region remains our core focus area, but we also know that our interests lie beyond," he said when

referring to the Indo-Pacific region.

Tripathi was speaking at the release of an updated version of India's maritime doctrine ahead of Navy Day, which falls on Thursday.

The latest doctrine includes the distinct category of "no peace, no war", reflecting changes in modern warfare such as how the Indian Navy would address "grey-zone operations."

The doctrine, first issued in 2004 and last updated in 2015, is the Navy's top document used for decision making.

India, which currently has two aircraft carriers in service, INS Vikramaditya and INS Vikrant, will need at least another in the coming times. But it is likely to continue with two for a while even after one is decommissioned, on account of age, according to the Navy chief.

China commissioned its third aircraft carrier, the Fujian, in November. An aircraft carrier is reportedly being built in India.

Since last year's Navy Day (annually celebrated to commemorate the Indian Navy's victory in the 1971 war against Pak-

istan), India has commissioned one submarine and 12 warships.

Of this, one, the INS Udaygiri, is the 100th domestically designed warship, and INS Mahe, the latest to be commissioned, is the country's first privately designed warship. Fifty-one new naval platforms are under construction in India, and the navy is expected to receive its first four Rafale marine fighter jets by 2029, according to the chief.

Tripathi opened the news conference with remarks on the India-Pakistan conflict in May. He said he could not share a lot of the military details because "Operation Sindoor is still in progress."

He added that the forward deployment of the Indian Navy in the Arabian Sea put pressure on the Pakistan navy and affected major commercial activity in that country's ports over the four days of the conflict.

He said the Indian Navy, which has women in different roles, including as sailor-soldiers and fighter pilots, is increasingly using gender-neutral language. The navy is also working to include women in the submarine cadre in the future.