

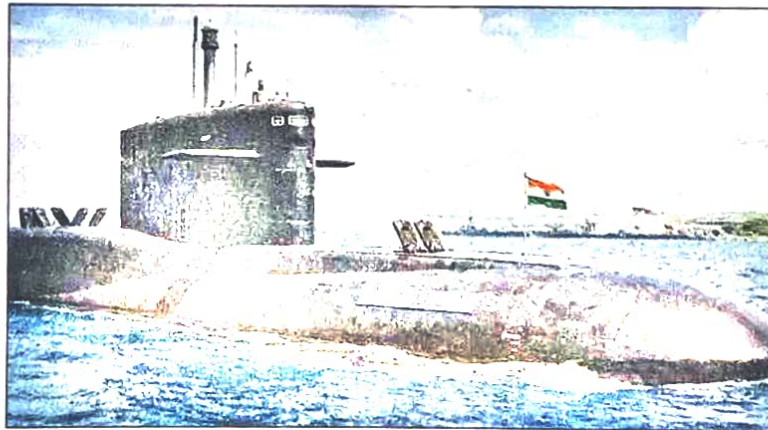
India inducts nuclear-armed sub

IMRAN AHMED SIDDIQUI

New Delhi: India on Friday inducted its third indigenously built nuclear-powered submarine, INS Aridhaman, which can fire nuclear-tipped ballistic missiles and is expected to bolster sea-based nuclear deterrence.

Earlier in the day, the navy also commissioned the advanced stealth frigate, INS Taragiri, at a separate ceremony in Visakhapatnam.

A naval official said Aridhaman's induction would allow India to maintain "continuous at-sea deterrence", ensuring that at least one nuclear-armed submarine was on patrol at



The INS Aridhaman before its commissioning ceremony.
(@JM_Scindia/X via PTI)

all times amid the current geopolitical situation.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, present at the commissioning ceremonies of both

Aridhaman and Taragiri, said in a cryptic post: "It's not just a word, it's a symbol of power, Aridhaman."

Sources said Aridhaman

was designed to carry more long-range nuclear-tipped missiles than its predecessors, INS Arihant and INS Arighaat, commissioned in 2016 and 2024, respectively.

India's navy, which has proven air and land-launched nuclear capabilities, has been sharpening its focus on boosting its underwater nuclear prowess.

India is among a small group of countries — which includes the US, Russia, China and France — to possess nuclear triad capability, meaning it can launch nuclear-tipped missiles from air, land and sea.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ►

India inducts N-armed sub

► FROM PAGE 1

“Aridhaman has more firepower than its predecessors and can carry up to 24 K-15 Sagarika missiles and eight K-4 missiles or K-5 missiles, which can be nuclear-tipped. Arihant and Arighaat can carry about 12 K-15 Sagarika missiles or four K-4 missiles,” a navy official said.

SSBNs (ship, submersible, ballistic, nuclear vessels) provide India with assured second-strike capability. In the event of a devastating first strike on land-based silos and airbases, an SSBN lurking deep underwater can deliver a retali-

atory nuclear strike, he said.

Rajnath said Taragiri would significantly strengthen India’s naval capability.

“The 7,000-tonne ship, equipped with BrahMos and other missiles, can keep track of the enemy’s actions. It will ensure coastal surveillance of India’s long maritime borders and also engage in humanitarian missions,” he said.

Rajnath added that 95 per cent of India’s trade “happens through sea route” and its “energy security also relies on this route”.

“Therefore, a strong navy is not an option but a basic ne-

cessity,” he said.

The defence minister underscored the importance of India’s navy maintaining round-the-clock presence across the Indian Ocean Region amid the global uncertainties.

“Whenever tensions flare, the Indian navy steps in to guarantee the security of commercial vessels and oil tankers,” he said.

“It is not only safeguarding India’s national interests, but is also prepared to take every necessary measure to protect our citizens and trade routes across the globe.”