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Goa Shipyard Begins Building India's First Indigenous Air Cushion Vehicle for Coast Guard

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Construction has begun on India's first indigenously built hovercraft, known as an Air Cushion Vehicle (ACV), at Chowgule & Company Pvt. Ltd. in Goa. The initiative marks a significant step forward for the nation's defense manufacturing capabilities and maritime security preparedness.

The project stems from a ₹387.44 crore contract between the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and Chowgule & Company for the supply of six ACVs to the Indian Coast Guard (ICG). The procurement falls under the Buy (Indian) category, highlighting the government's push for the Aatmanirbhar Bharat (self-reliant India) vision.

Drawing on proven Griffon Hoverwork designs, the ACVs are being tailored for India's unique coastal and maritime requirements. These crafts will deliver high speed, agility, and the ability to operate in shallow waters, marshlands, and other challenging coastal terrains. Their mission capabilities will include patrol, interception, reconnaissance, humanitarian assistance, and search-and-rescue operations.

According to the ICG's Deputy Director General (Materiel & Maintenance), Inspector General Sudhir Sahni, the addition of ACVs will significantly boost the Coast Guard's operational reach along India's 7,500-kilometer coastline and island territories. The hovercraft's ability to transition seamlessly between land and water offers a tactical advantage in securing maritime borders and responding rapidly to emergencies.

Beyond enhancing security, the program is designed to stimulate growth within India's defense ecosystem, particularly among Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) engaged in shipbuilding and supporting industries. The first unit is expected to be ready ahead of schedule, with all six planned for delivery within the contract timeline.

Hovercraft technology offers versatility unmatched by traditional vessels, making these ACVs ideal for estuaries, river deltas, and disaster-prone coastal areas where quick deployment is crucial. By manufacturing them domestically, India reduces dependence on imports, builds local expertise, and strengthens strategic autonomy in defense procurement.

The commencement of this project at Chowgule Shipyard reflects a broader national strategy: investing in indigenous design and production to safeguard sovereignty while advancing industrial capability. Once operational, these ACVs will become a vital asset in the Indian Coast Guard's fleet, enhancing the nation's maritime security, disaster response capacity, and readiness in an increasingly complex regional security environment.