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TNN Feb 17, 2012, 03.48AM IST

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NEW DELHI: A naval spy drone, a Searcher-II of Israeli-origin, crashed into a hill while returning from a surveillance sortie during an exercise at Visakhapatnam on Thursday afternoon. "There were no casualties or damage on the ground. A Board of Inquiry has been ordered to ascertain the exact reason behind the crash," said an officer.

With UAVs emerging as a modern force-multiplier in modern-day warfare, Indian armed forces have inducted well over 100 drones, both for their snooping as well as targeting capabilities, since the 1999 Kargil conflict.

Compared to the many more inductions in the Army and the IAF, the Navy currently has eight Searcher-II and four Herons, which are being used for maritime surveillance up to 200 nautical miles, with another two Herons being ordered from Israel. The armed forces have also inducted some Israeli Harpy and Harop 'killer' UAVs, which are capable of loitering over targets before they explode into them.

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