Singapore navy testing unmanned mine-hunter: report

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The Singapore navy is testing an unmanned underwater vessel capable of detecting and destroying mines as part of its modernisation plans, a report said Saturday.

The remotely-controlled mine-hunting vessel is able to operate at depths of 100 metres (330 feet) for up to five hours and hit a maximum speed of six knots, the Straits Times reported.

Electronic devices attached to the 2.5 metre-long vessel, which is developed locally, enable it to scan the seabed to detect and destroy mines.

The vessel is part of the Singapore Navy's drive to modernise its fleet using unmanned systems.

It will be able to undertake tasks "too dangerous and difficult" for navy personnel, the newspaper quoted Chief of Navy Chew Men Leong as saying.

The navy currently has two types of unmanned surface vessels in active service, but both do not possess mine-hunting capabilities, the report said.

Mine-hunting is important for the Singapore navy because the city-state is located near the Strait of Malacca, one of the world's busiest shipping lanes.

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