

Fri, 17 Nov, 2017

(Online)

## Is India developing a 12,000 kms range missile - Surya?

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*India might be developing 'Surya' missile with range of 12,000 km with MIRV technology*

In the last four decades, India has made significant progress in the missile development. From the humble beginning in 1983, when the program to develop surface-to-surface missile Prithvi was launched, India now has a wide variety of missiles capable of thwarting any aggression by the enemy.

If we talk of ballistic missiles, the name of Agni series of missiles immediately comes our mind. Agni series has five missiles with varying strike capabilities and ranges. Agni 1 is a single stage solid fuel missile with a range of 1250 kms while Agni 2, an improvement of Agni 1, is a two-stage missile capable of striking targets 2000 kms away. Agni 3, a two-stage ballistic missile, is believed to have a range of 3,500 kms while Agni 4 can hit targets 4,000 kms away. All the missiles in the Agni series are capable of carrying nuclear warheads.

Debate over Agni 5's range: On 19 April 2012, India made its entry into the Intercontinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) club after the successful test launch of its indigenous Agni V missile. Time and again International defence experts, especially the Chinese, have claimed that India has been understating the range of its intercontinental ballistic missile Agni-5. India initially did not divulge the exact range that the missile can strike but later DRDO hinted that it has the capability to reach 5,000 kms. Chinese experts say that the missile actually has the potential to reach targets 8,000 kilometres away and that the Indian government had deliberately downplayed the missile's capability in order to avoid causing concern to other countries.

ICBM Surya: A mere speculation or reality?

Well, there is no confirmation from DRDO as of now but many are speculating that India is working on a long-range ICBM capable of striking targets 12,000 kms away. Some say that it could be called Agni-6 while others say it might be named Surya. It is likely to be a three-stage missile with first stage being borrowed from ISRO's PSLV. If this is true, then it is sure to send shivers down enemy's spine.

A leading defence website states that Surya Missile will be a road-mobile intercontinental ballistic missile, which is in the development phase. Speculations are that Surya Missile will be a four-stage intercontinental ballistic missile capable of carrying three-tonne warhead, which is thrice the weight of the one-tonne warheads that Agni missiles are capable of carrying. Surya is also likely to be capable of carrying multiple warhead capable of striking a different target. This technology is called MIRV or Multiple Independently Targetable Re-entry Warheads.