

## India's ballistic missile shield ready, IAF & DRDO to seek govt nod to protect Delhi

*BMD programme envisaged for Delhi. This, along with the Russian S-400 Triumph air defence system, aims to secure India from all kinds of incoming missiles*

*By Snehash Alex Philip*

New Delhi: India's indigenous Ballistic Missile Defence (BMD) programme is complete, and the Indian Air Force (IAF) and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) are now working on a proposal to seek the government's nod to install the missile shield for the national capital, ThePrint has learnt.

The BMD, along with the Russian S-400 Triumph air defence system, aims to secure the country from all kinds of incoming missiles, including nuclear, and flying objects.

"The BMD programme has been completed. All tests carried so far have been successful, including the radars and missiles. The IAF, which is responsible for the country's air defence, and the DRDO, which has developed the system, will now move a joint proposal for the government's clearance," a top government official told ThePrint.



The official, however, didn't reveal much about other details of the programme.

The successful test of the anti-satellite (A-SAT) missile last March was a big boost to the BMD programme. India's leap in space with the A-SAT test is especially significant because inter-continental ballistic missiles like China's Dongfeng series travel through space before re-entering Earth's atmosphere to hit the target.

### **'BMD is for Delhi'**

Asked whether the Ministry of Defence would be the nodal authority for approving the installation of the missile shield, a government source said the matter comes directly under the Prime Minister's Office.

Once the permission is granted, the source added, it will take three to four years to put the shield in place because production of the required systems would take time.

Asked if the shield is not meant for Mumbai, the country's financial capital, the top government official quoted above said, "BMD is for Delhi. It is up to the government to decide which other cities will get it."

The official added that the BMD programme was envisaged for the national capital only.

### **What this BMD programme is all about**

India's BMD programme was launched in 1999 after Pakistan's maiden nuclear test in 1998 and China's leaps in this sphere.

The BMD works on two levels — endo-atmospheric (within Earth's atmosphere) and exo-atmospheric (the space stretching beyond Earth's atmosphere).

While phase one deals with destroying incoming missiles at endo-atmospheric level, phase two works on the same at exo-atmospheric level.

India's BMD arsenal consists of a Prithvi Air Defence (PAD) missile to intercept incoming missiles at a range of about 80 km in altitude and an Advanced Air Defence (AAD) missile for altitudes of 15-25 km.

Pakistan had last year claimed that it has the capabilities to counter the BMD.

Asked about this, another government source said the BMD is a state-of-the-art defence system with very unique features.

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