

Two key missiles launches this month

If weather permits, two important missile launches are to take place this month.

India's long-range, subsonic cruise missile, Nirbhay, will lift off from the Launch Complex-III of the Integrated Test Range, Balasore, Odisha, on Wednesday.

The redoubtable Agni-V, which can carry nuclear warheads over a distance of about 5,000 km, will be fired from a canister mounted on a massive truck from Wheeler Island, off the Odisha coast, on December 26.

Nirbhay, which has a range of about 1,000 km, has blended missile and aeronautical technologies into a single contraption. It will take off vertically like a missile. A mechanism in its first stage will tilt it horizontally and the first stage with its booster engine will then fall off. The second stage with a turbo-jet engine will cruise horizontally like an aircraft at a subsonic speed of 0.7 Mach.

The missiles will be fired by the Defence Research and Development Organisation, which has conceived, designed and developed them.