

DRDO to test nuclear capable K-4 underwater missile soon

The K-4 missile, touted as India's secretive undersea weapon, is up for another undersea test. The tests, when completed, will pave the way for the completion of the nuclear triad and India's hunt to have a credible minimum nuclear deterrence.

The New Indian Express reports, citing defence sources, that India is planning to test K-4's operational range efficacy between March 7 and March 8. The tests would likely be from a submerged platform off the coast of the Bay of Bengal. The K-4 will be tested for its full missile range of 3,500 km.

The covers of the secrecy surrounding the missile were removed when the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) conducted the missile's first test in March 2014. The initial test was for a range of 3,000 km.

The report noted that this submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) will be undergoing two more developmental tests before it is fired from INS Arihant, the indigenously developed submarine, in 2017.

The missile is reportedly the best in its class. It is manoeuvrable and has an innovative system of "interlacing in three dimensions," which has the ability to cruise when at hypersonic speed, the report added, citing a defence scientist. The missile also boasts of a high accuracy.

The K-4 belongs to the K-series of missiles which are designed to be "faster, lighter and stealthier." The K-4 tests will be important and following the successful completion of INS Arihant's sea trials, the missile will be part of the nuclear weapon inventory of India's Strategic Forces Command.

Currently, there are three missiles from the K-series family:

- K-15 (renamed B-05) with a range of 700 kms.
- K-4 with a range of 3,500 kms.
- K-5 with a range of 5,000 kms.