

## Pakistan tests nuclear capable cruise missile

Pakistan Thursday successfully test fired an air-launched cruise missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads, the military said.

The launch of the Ra'ad missile, which has a range of 350 km, was carried out at an undisclosed location, the military

said, and came a day after India said it successfully test-launched its longest range nuclear-capable missile.

The Ra'ad, developed exclusively for launch from aerial platforms, has enabled Pakistan to achieve a greater strategic standoff capability on land and at sea, a Pakistan military statement said.

Ra'ad, which is Arabic for thunder, is a low altitude, terrain following missile with high maneuverability, the military said.

The missile test is part of a continuing process of validating the design parameters of the weapons system, it said.

It was seventh missile test Pakistan has conducted this year.

Last month, it carried out back-to-back tests of its longest range surface-to-surface ballistic missile, the Hatf-VI (Shaheen-2), which can carry nuclear warheads a distance of 2,000 km.

India's test launch Wednesday of its Agni III surface-to-surface missile, which can reach targets as far as eastern China, was conducted from a military base off the country's eastern coast.

The missile achieved its full range of 3,000 km by reaching a target in the Indian Ocean, Indian defence officials said.

Pakistan's missile development programme is aimed mainly at what it calls maintaining strategic balance with India.

Xinhua added: The state of the art Raad cruise missile has special stealth capabilities,' the army statement said, adding that it was a 'low altitude terrain following missile' with high manoeuvrability, and could deliver all types of warheads with great accuracy.

Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani have congratulated the scientists and engineers on their outstanding success.

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