India to Test Fire Nuclear-Capable Ballistic Missile

Why in news?

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India is about to test launch a K-4 intermediate-range nuclear-capable ballistic missile.

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What are the specificcations?

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- The missile has a range of up to 3,500 km and is capable of carrying a nuclear/conventional payload of more than 2 tonnes.
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- It is powered by solid rocket propellants.
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- It has been designed to be fired from a depth of 50 meters.
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- It uses a Ringer Laser Gyro Inertial navigation system.
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- It is capable of cruising at hypersonic speed.
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- It also features a system of weaving in three dimensions during flight as it approaches its target.
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- Indian scientists claim that the missile is highly accurate with a near zero circular error probability.
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- India last tested the K-4 missile in April 2016 from aboard in the country's first domestically developed nuclear submarine, **the INS Arihant.**
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- Prior to that the missile was test launched from a submerged platform in March of the same year.
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- The K-4 missile deployed aboard boats of the new Arihant-class will give the Indian Navy an undersea nuclear deterrent capability.
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What is the issue?

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- The announcement of the K-4 trial launch follows Pakistan's first-ever test of a nuclear-capable **Babur-3** submarine-launched cruise missile (SLCM), and the surface-to-surface medium-range ballistic missile **Ababeel**.
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- The entire K family of missiles is a series of submarine-launched ballistic missiles (SLBM) developed by India to boost its second-strike capabilities.
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- But one of the major problems for India remains is that its submarine force is too noisy.
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- Therefore it questions the credibility of its second-strike capability even with the new K-4 missile.
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- Also India's nuclear warfare policy is centered on a No First-Use (NFU) doctrine.
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- Ttherefore India keeps nuclear warheads de-mated from missiles, which reduces the nuclear deterrence of the country.
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