

Shourya's success

The recent Shourya ballistic missile tested successfully is the latest feather in the Defence Research and Development Organisation's (DRDO) arsenal. The fact that Indian defence scientists were able to build the Shourya despite the Missile Technology Control Regime sanctions in place, is creditable. Moreover, given the on-going attrition of DRDO's human resources it speaks volumes of our defence scientists' capabilities. Shourya's most critical systems related to control and navigation, on board avionics, materials and launch mechanism are entirely indigenous. Over the years the DRDO has successfully managed to increase its integration with industry, especially the private sector as co-partners in the development of missilery. In a sense, the Shourya demonstrates the capabilities and confidence levels of the industry and defence technologists to develop a sophisticated missile-to-missile system.



The launching of Shourya is a feather in DRDO's cap.

A ballistic missile is a unique weapon system owing to its relatively short flight time; a targeted country's capability to defend against such an attack is not yet comprehensive or completely effective, as proved in the Allied experience during the Gulf War. These missiles hit targets at long distances deep into enemy territory without the problem of 'body bags' and therefore gain greater acceptability, politically and militarily. Otherwise the introduction of new ballistic missiles assumes importance like any other weapon system because it tends to change the strategic equilibrium in a particular region.

The Shourya is uniquely configured for Indo-centric security requirements. It can either be used in ground launched or mobile launched versions. As a tactical ballistic missile, the Shourya is especially light for its 600 km range and therefore easily transportable. It adds to the array of missiles which include the Agni series, Prithvi, Sagarika and others that lend the much needed technological prowess for the fighting forces. In contemporary warfare, ballistic missiles contribute considerably to conventional war-fighting capabilities along with the other components namely: the defence industrial base and arms imports of a nation state. While India's strategic missile programme has certainly matured with the Agni series, the Shourya is one more step towards maturity in tactical ballistic missiles.