



Armed to the Hilt

Indian Navy's Anti-Ship Missiles

The Indian Navy's strategic prowess with missiles has been acknowledged ever since *Operations Trident* and *Python* during the 1971 War, which rendered the Pakistani Navy nearly inoperable and dislocated fuel and military supplies at the main port of Karachi. These tactical offensives represented the first use of anti-ship missiles (AShMs) – the Soviet-made P-15 Termit (SS-N-2 Styx) – in combat in the region, and only the second worldwide, after the sinking in 1967 of the Israeli Navy's INS *Eilat*, a former Z-class destroyer of the Royal Navy, off Port Said by Egyptian missile boats, also firing the Styx missile.

These milestones of modern naval warfare have induced smaller navies over the years to arm their platforms with AShMs and land-attack surface-to-surface missiles (SSMs). Leading the campaign for the missiles in India had been a band of Soviet-trained officers of the Indian Navy, nicknamed 'The Killers,' most of whom had been trained with the Soviet Pacific Fleet headquarters at Vladivostok in the late 1960s. These early beginnings led the Indian Navy to induct some very effective SSM systems over the years, and also initiated the indigenous development of crucial missile systems, aligned with the Navy's blue water mission.

The Indian Navy's maritime battlefield has of late been revolutionised in recent years by induction of the PJ-10 BrahMos, the world's first operational supersonic anti-ship cruise missile that has become the Navy's prime strike weapon. The versatile two-stage BrahMos, with a solid propellant booster and a liquid propellant ramjet system, is the result of an Indo-Russian agreement of 1998, its name representing the two great rivers Brahmaputra and Moskva. The joint venture firm, BrahMos Aerospace Private Limited (BAPL), is headquartered in New Delhi with its production facilities in Hyderabad.