

## India Develops Agni-5 "Bunker Buster" Missile to Bolster Deep-Strike Capability



India is developing a new variant of its Agni-5 missile, a powerful "bunker buster" designed to destroy heavily fortified underground targets. The new missile, which is a conventionally armed version of the intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM), is intended to fill a strategic gap in India's military capabilities by providing a deep-strike option without the need for a strategic bomber fleet. The missile is being developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and is a significant step in enhancing India's conventional deterrence.

The Agni-5 bunker buster is designed to carry a massive conventional warhead of up to 8,000 kg, making it one of the most powerful non-nuclear deep-penetration weapons in the world. Its primary purpose is to penetrate and destroy enemy facilities buried deep underground, such as command and control centers, missile silos, and nuclear storage sites. Reports indicate the missile is capable of burrowing up to 100 meters into the ground before detonating, ensuring the complete destruction of hardened subterranean structures.

To accommodate this heavy payload, the missile's range has been reduced from the standard Agni-5's over 5,000 km to a more tactical range of approximately 2,500 km. This range is considered sufficient to address regional security threats. The missile is also designed to be a hypersonic weapon, with speeds ranging from Mach 8 to Mach 20, which would make it extremely difficult to intercept by enemy missile defense systems.

This new variant is a strategic response to the military's long-standing need for a powerful deep-strike capability. While countries like the United States rely on expensive strategic bombers, such as the B-2, to deploy massive bunker-buster bombs, India's missile-based approach offers a more cost-effective and flexible solution. The Agni-5's canister-launched, road-mobile design allows for rapid deployment, making it a highly survivable and responsive weapon. The development of the Agni-5 bunker buster demonstrates India's commitment to building a robust, indigenous defense industrial base and its resolve to modernize its armed forces with advanced, self-reliant technology.