

'BRAHMOS SALE TO PHILIPPINES A BILATERAL DEAL'

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Defence deal:The BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was a joint development between India and Russia. File photo

While the BrahMos supersonic cruise missile was a joint development between India and Russia, the sale of the systems to the Philippines was a transaction between the two countries, and India would be able to move ahead on a "bilateral basis", Indian Ambassador to the Philippines Shambhu Kumaran has said, amid the global developments following the Russian war in Ukraine.

The Philippines was also given a clarification on the accidental BrahMos missile launch recently.

"I did have an opportunity to speak to Philippines Defence Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and our Ministry of Defence has clarified... There was a query and we responded with the fact there was no technical issue as far as we could understand it. There is an inquiry under way, we will have that cleared once the information is available," Mr. Kumaran said.

Stating that the decision to purchase it by Philippines was a high political decision, the Envoy said it was enabled by a combination of factors, but driven by the political understanding between the two countries.

'A frontline system'

Elaborating he said that the first agreement was signed only in March last year, a second agreement in November and the deal was signed this January. "This is a frontline system in the Indian defence forces and the fact that we are willing to share was appreciated by the Philippines," Mr. Kumaran explained. "There is definitely in terms of the Philippines self-defence national security requirements, a clear requirement on the part of their armed force of this capability."

To a question if China may have an issue with the sale, the envoy referred to a Philippines statement that it saw it as a self-defence platform and so he did not see "how this can be a concern in other capitals."

Referring to interest from the Philippines in acquiring other defence equipment, he said discussions were on for systems related to aerospace and Navy. He said Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd. had offered to do a technical briefing on the indigenous Light Combat Aircraft Tejas and there was a "degree of interest" from Manila.

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