

Army satisfied with Akash missile

Blazing a trail: An Akash missile being fired from the Jaisalmer airbase in 2016. File photo

The Army is fully satisfied with the performance of the indigenously developed Akash short-range surface-to-air missile (SR SAM) system and is looking for further performance enhancements in future, Lt. Gen. Parminder Singh S. Jaggi, Director-General, Army Air Defence (AAD), said here on Tuesday.

Last month, the Army carried out the first user trial of the missile system.

Biggest advantage

"We are happy with the Akash system. It is a watershed as far as indigenous systems are concerned. The biggest advantage is it is a home grown system," Lt. Gen. Jaggi said.

The Army's AAD celebrated its 25th year of raising on Tuesday.

The Army currently has two Akash regiments which it began inducting in 2015. Last year, the Defence Ministry cancelled a global tender for additional SR SAMs and approved procurement of two more regiments. Each regiment consists of six launchers with each launcher having three missiles. Officials say Akash has an indigenous content of 96%.

"The first user trial by AAD crew was fully successful. Akash has been validated as it has been conceptualised," Lt. Gen. Jaggi said.

25-km range

Akash has a range of 25 km and can simultaneously engage multiple targets in all weather conditions and has a large operational envelope from a low altitude of 30 metres to a maximum of up to 20 km.

The Army is likely to order more Akash regiments as it is in the process of replacing its legacy systems in service.

Lt. Gen. Jaggi said as more regiments were ordered, there would be additional enhancements in the system as well in performance.

He noted that as AAD celebrated its silver jubilee, there had been a major modernisation drive under way with the induction of a medium-range surface-to-air missile for which contracts had been signed and other deals in progress.

Akash was developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) as part of the Integrated Guided Missile Development Programme initiated in 1984 and is manufactured by Bharat Dynamics Ltd. (BDL).

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