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Pakistan test-fires nuclear-capable cruise missile

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Islamabad - Pakistan on Friday successfully test-fired a medium-range cruise missile capable of carrying nuclear warheads, the military said.

The launch of Hatf-VII, also called Babur after a 16th century Muslim invader of India, was conducted by the military's Strategic Missile Group from an undisclosed location.

'The Babur cruise missile, which can carry strategic and conventional weapons over a distance of 700 kilometres, has stealth capabilities, is a low-flying, terrain-hugging missile with high maneuverability, pinpoint accuracy,' said military spokesman Major General Athar Abbas.

He said that the special feature of test-fire was the validation of a new multi-tube missile launch vehicle, which enhances the targeting and deployment options.

Pakistan's arsenal of missiles is mainly aimed at its neighbour and arch-rival India, which also has missile systems capable of hitting major Pakistani cities.

The two South Asian nuclear countries have fought three wars, two over the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir, since they gained independence from Britain in August 1947.