



Neptune: Anti-ship Cruise Missile

Why in News?

Recently, Ukraine claimed that it has damaged the **Russian [Black Sea Fleet Flagship 'Moskva'](#) by **Neptune Anti-Ship Cruise Missiles.****

What is Neptune?

- The Neptune is a coastal **anti-ship cruise missile** that is capable of the **destruction of naval vessels in a range of 300 km.** [//](#)



- The Missile system was inducted into the **Ukrainian Defence Forces in March 2021** after being in development for six years.
- The cruise missile was developed in haste by the military as the Russian threat to the coastal areas of Ukraine was growing rapidly since the [occupation of Crimea in 2014.](#)
- The design of this missile is based on a **Russian Kh-35** cruise missile which goes by the [North Atlantic Treaty Organization \(NATO\) name of AS-20 Kayak.](#)
- The cruise missile attack was **carried out using TB-2 drones** as decoys along with other measures toward saturation of the cruiser's [Air Defence systems.](#)

What is Moskva?

- Moskva is a **guided missile cruiser** of the Russian Navy named after the city of Moscow.
 - A cruiser is a **large surface warship** built for high speed and great cruising radius, capable of not only defending its own fleet and coastlines but also threatening those of the enemy.
- The Moskva was originally commissioned as the Slava in **1983.**
 - It was **recommissioned in 2000** as the Moskva with refurbished weapon systems and electronics.
- It has a displacement of **12,490 tons.**
- It is the **flagship of the Black Sea Fleet of the Russian Navy** and carries a crew of around 500 personnel.

Key characteristics of ballistic and cruise missiles

Characteristics	Ballistic missiles	Cruise missiles
Range	From low to very high <i>Up to 15 000 km</i>	Mostly around 1 000 km <i>Up to 4 000 km</i>
Altitude	High <i>Easily detectable</i>	Low <i>Hard to detect</i>
Precision	Low – around a few hundred metres <i>Fit for large targets</i>	High – a few metres <i>Fit for small and mobile targets</i>
Speed	Up to 25 000 km/h at impact <i>Very hard to intercept</i>	Around 1 000 km/h <i>Possibility to intercept</i>

UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions (PYQs)

Q. What is “Terminal High Altitude Area Defense (THAAD)”, sometimes seen in the news? (2018)

- (a) An Israeli radar system
- (b) India’s indigenous anti-missile programme
- (c) An American anti-missile system
- (d) A defence collaboration between Japan and South Korea.

Ans: (c)

- **Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD)** is an American anti-missile system designed to intercept and destroy short and medium-range ballistic missiles during their “terminal” phase of flight when they are falling towards the target.

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