

Indonesia could be India's first BrahMos client

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NEW DELHI: India is exploring the possibility of selling the BrahMos cruise missile to Indonesia, and a team from the Indo-Russian joint venture that makes the weapon system visited a state-run shipyard in Surabaya last year to assess the fitting of the missile on Indonesian warships, people familiar with developments said.

Besides the BrahMos, India has offered to supply coastal defence radars and marine grade steel to Indonesia and service the Russian-made Su-30 combat jets flown by the Indonesian Air Force as part of efforts to deepen bilateral defence and military cooperation, the people said.

India has earlier held talks with the Vietnam government for the sale of the BrahMos, a supersonic cruise missile developed by

an Indo-Russian joint venture set up in 1998.

The Indian Navy inducted the missile on its frontline warships in 2005.

Though India and Indonesia have not reached a final agreement on the sale of the BrahMos, the visit of the a team from the Indo-Russian company to the state-run PTPAL shipyard on the sidelines of the Indo Defence 2018 expo late last year was a significant step forward in efforts to sell the weapon system to a foreign country.

"The BrahMos team was invited to visit the state-run shipbuilding enterprise and had a look at the Indonesian platform," a person said.

The inspection of the warships was focused on fitting the BrahMos system on them, the people cited above said.

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BrahMos

Though there has been “some traction” in India’s offer of coastal defence radars to Indonesia, matters were “more advanced in considering” the BrahMos system, the people added. A group of MPs from Indonesia’s lower house of parliament also visited the BrahMos headquarters last year, the people said.

Commodore (retired) C Uday Bhaskar, director of the Society for Policy Studies, said: “It is significant if India is offering the BrahMos missile to Indonesia. It enhances the relevance of India’s military profile as a credible exporter of cruise missile technology.” Besides the BrahMos, India had offered to sell marine grade steel and to service the Indonesian Air Force’s Su-30 combat jets, which are similar to the Su-30 variant flown by the Indian Air Force, the people said.