Chinese state media show, for the first time, a YJ-21 anti-ship ballistic missile launched from a PLA H-6K bomber

Defence · 19 October 2026 · https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/19



News

Footage released by Chinese state media (reported 15–16 Oct 2026) showed, for the first time, a YJ-21 ('Ying Ji' – 'Eagle Strike') anti-ship ballistic missile being launched from a PLA Air Force H-6K bomber. The hypersonic 'carrier-killer' is claimed to cruise above Mach 6 with a terminal speed of about Mach 10; its range is estimated at 1,000–2,000 km. One H-6K can carry up to four YJ-21s. Some outlets describe this as 'eight years' after the missile's unveiling (Zhuhai Airshow 2018), but its widely documented first public appearance was in 2022 (April – launch video from a Type 055 destroyer; November – a YJ-21E model under an H-6K at the Zhuhai Airshow).

Key facts

Missile	YJ-21 ('Ying Ji-21' – Eagle Strike)
Type	Anti-ship ballistic missile (ASBM); hypersonic
Platform	H-6K bomber (Chinese version based on the Soviet Tu-16); Type 055 destroyer
Speed (claimed)	Cruise Mach 6+; terminal ~Mach 10
Range (estimate)	About 1,000–2,000 km

Earlier reveal	Apr 2022 – Type 055 launch video; Nov 2022 – Zhuhai Airshow (YJ-21E)

Background

- Science: a ballistic missile is rocket-powered only in its initial phase and then follows a gravity-driven arc to the target (e.g. Agni). A cruise missile is jet-powered and guided throughout a low flight (e.g. BrahMos). 'Mach number' = an object's speed ÷ the speed of sound in that medium (named after Austrian physicist Ernst Mach); above Mach 5 = hypersonic.
- Strategy: China's anti-ship ballistic missiles (land-based DF-21D, DF-26 and others) are seen as part of its 'anti-access/area-denial' (A2/AD) approach to keep foreign navies away from its coast. Air launch extends the strike reach further.
- India – BrahMos: the India–Russia inter-governmental agreement was signed in Moscow on 12 Feb 1998 (Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam for India, N.V. Mikhailov for Russia). Name = Brahmaputra + Moskva rivers. First test 12 June 2001, Chandipur (Odisha). JV share – India 50.5%, Russia 49.5%.
- India's hypersonic missile: DRDO's Long Range Anti-Ship Hypersonic Missile (LR-AShM) – range about 1,500 km; successfully tested in November 2024; first shown publicly at the 77th Republic Day parade (26 Jan 2026).

Tamil Nadu link: the Indian signatory of the BrahMos agreement was Rameswaram-born 'Missile Man' Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam. The Tamil Nadu Defence Industrial Corridor (TNDIC) was launched at Tiruchirappalli on 20 Jan 2019 by then Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman; nodes: Chennai, Hosur, Salem, Coimbatore, Tiruchirappalli. (There is no verified report of BrahMos production in Tamil Nadu.)

Shanmugam IAS Academy – your next step

- **Courses:** TNPSC Group 1, 2 / 2A (Prelims + Mains), Group 4, UPSC / IAS – Coimbatore · Madurai · Online – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/fees
- **Books (PDF):** TNPSC PYQ books, UPSC books – https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/study-materials
- **Free quiz + daily PDFs:** https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/free-pdf-download · All news of this day: https://www.shanmugamiasacademy.in/current-affairs-english/2026/10/19

Admissions – call / WhatsApp: 99941 46662 · 99944 27714 · www.shanmugamiasacademy.in