

Moscow has more nuclear submarines at sea than US: Russian lawmaker Viktor

MOSCOW, Aug 2 (IANS)

A SENIOR Russian lawmaker has claimed that Russia currently has more nuclear submarines deployed in the world's oceans than the United States, responding sharply to US President Donald Trump's recent statement about dispatching two nuclear subs to "appropriate regions" following remarks made by former Russian President Dmitry Medvedev.

Viktor Vodolatsky, first deputy chairman of the State Duma Committee on CIS Affairs, Eurasian Integration and Relations with Compatriots, said that the ships that Trump ordered to be redirected "to the appropriate regions" have long been under control, and Moscow does not need to respond to the US leader's comment.

"There are significantly more our [nuclear] submarines in the world's oceans, [and they] have the strongest, most powerful weapons. This is why, let [Trump's] two boats float, they have been at gunpoint for a long

time. There can be no answer from us, because we understand perfectly well who Donald Trump is. These last months have shown that he is changing his mind 24 hours a day," Russian state-run news agency 'TASS' quoted Vodolatsky as saying.

Trump announced the move on Friday on his social media platform in response to what he called "highly provocative statements" from Medvedev. "Based on the highly provocative statements of the Former President of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, who is now the Deputy Chairman of the Security Council of the Russian Federation, I have ordered two Nuclear Submarines to be positioned in the appropriate regions, just in case these foolish and inflammatory statements are more than just that. Words are very important, and can often lead to unintended consequences, I hope this will not be one of those instances. Thank you for your attention to this matter," Trump said in a post on Truth Social.

Kharif crops sowing this season may exceed last year's level: ICRA



KOLKATA, Aug 2 (PTI)

RESEARCH firm ICRA said that kharif crops sowing this season may exceed the level of last year by a reasonable margin.

Aided by favourable monsoon, kharif sowing has been completed on 76 per cent of the normal sown area and is up by a rise of four per cent year-on-year as of July 2025, ICRA said in its latest report. Sown during the rainy season months of June and July, the kharif crops are mainly moong, rice and maize.

The IMD forecast of above-normal rainfall during August and September augurs well for

the continued sowing of kharif crops, and the replenishment of reservoirs will favour the sowing during the rabi season from October to March, the report said.

According to the ICRA report, India received above-normal rainfall during July 2025.

The quantum of rainfall during the entire Southwest Monsoon season is estimated to exceed 106 per cent of the long period average (LPA), the report also said.

ICRA estimates the gross value added (GVA) growth of agriculture, forestry and fishing during the first quarter of 2025-26 to be around 4.5 per cent.

Brent crude price may surge to \$80 amid US-Russia tensions: Report

MUMBAI, Aug 2 (IANS)

BRENT crude oil prices are expected to rise to \$80-\$82 per barrel by the end of 2025, as tensions between the United States and Russia threaten to disrupt the global oil supply chain, analysts said on Saturday.

According to analysts, Brent Crude Oil October futures contract has a short-term target of \$76 from \$72.07. By the end of 2025, the Brent crude price could reach \$80-\$82 per barrel. The downside support and cap are at \$69. WTI Crude Oil September futures contract, now at \$69.65, has a short-term target of \$73. By the end of 2025, the WTI crude price could reach \$76-\$79. The downside support and cap are at \$65.

Earlier this week, US President Donald Trump gave Russia 10-12 day deadline to end the war in Ukraine, failing which could result in additional sanctions



and secondary tariffs on countries that trade with Russia, pushing oil prices higher.

Trump had earlier announced that the secondary tariffs could be as high as 500 per cent. Countries dependent on crude oil imports from Russia should now make the trade-off between a discounted price and a high tariff on exports to the US.

“This could lead to a dramatic shift in the oil market by reducing spare production capacity and causing a supply shock, which would diminish the sur-

plus in the market until 2026,” said NS Ramaswamy Head of Commodities and CRM at Ventura Securities.

India’s crude oil imports from Russia have significantly increased since the start of the Ukraine war. Before the war, Russian crude accounted for just 0.2 per cent of India’s oil purchases, which are now between 35 and 40 per cent, making Russia India’s top oil supplier.

Although US President Donald Trump stated that he wants to see lower oil prices,

any significant increases in supply from the US will take time to reach the market. Tapping the proved oil reserves involves labour, capital and infrastructure, Ramaswamy said.

“Support from Saudi Arabia and select OPEC countries to fill this supply gap would also have a time lag, thus resulting in the near-term price rise. The impact of the oil balance would be significant and result in a deficit even if OPEC+ doesn’t go for any additional tranches of supply cuts,” he added.

While the US-European Union trade deal last week has aided the oil market, geopolitical tensions will continue to pose asymmetric upside risks to oil prices. Further, markets weighed on the potential build-up of US inventories and the upcoming interest rate decision, which saw strength in the US dollar putting some pressure on oil prices.

Maldives to mobilise USD 6.48 million India grant aid to expand public ferry network

MALE, Aug 2 (PTI)

MALDIVES is set to mobilise the USD 6.48 million grant aid provided by India to expand the public ferry network, state-run media said on Saturday.

Maldives and India had on May 18 signed 13 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for enhancing ferry services in the archipelagic nation with the grant of MVR 100 million to be

used for enhancing ferry services, expanding maritime connectivity and uplifting community livelihoods.

The projects are to be implemented under the Indian grant assistance scheme, the High Impact Community Development Project (HICDP) Phase III.

The 13 projects launched under this phase amount to a total grant of USD 6.48 million, primarily aimed at enhancing

ferry services in the Maldives, expanding connectivity, and uplifting community livelihoods, state-run Public Service Media (PSM News) said here.

Four ferries are currently being built to be used as back-up ferries on the existing network and more ferries are being built to expand the service to more Atolls, Deputy Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation Ibrahim Yasir told PSM News' 'Raajje Miadhu' programme.

Yasir said the work of commissioning the construction of more ferries is underway.

"The Indian Government has provided a grant aid of USD 6.48 million to build 12 new ferries. The main ferry terminal in Zone 2 and the ferry hub in Ungoofaaru will be built with this assistance," Yasir said, adding, these projects will be mobilised very soon.

The Government has reaffirmed its commitment to

extending the Raajje Transport Link (RTL) service to all remaining atolls before the end of the calendar year, the PSM News added.

When the MoUs were signed in May, Abdulla Khaleel, Minister of Foreign Affairs, had said these projects are more than just infrastructural developments, they are lifelines to communities, designed to address local needs and bring lasting socio-economic benefits.

Op Mahadev: 'Terror will not go unanswered'

ON APRIL 22, 2025, in the quiet town of Pahalgam, 26 innocent lives—including a Nepali citizen—were brutally taken in yet another act of terror. Carried out by The Resistance Front (TRF), a Pakistan-based terror outfit, this attack targeted individuals solely based on their faith. For India, it wasn't just a tragedy; it was a provocation that demanded more than condemnation.

That moment became a turning point.

India responded with precision and purpose in Operation Sindoor on May 7, targeting key terrorist hideouts across Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Jammu & Kashmir. Camps in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, and Bhimber were struck, and so were known strongholds of Jaish-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Taiba deep inside Pakistani territory. For the first time in years, India sent a clear signal: we will no longer absorb

the cost of terror without consequences.

But while the airstrikes disrupted infrastructure and sent a chilling message to the terror networks, one question remained: where were the men who actually pulled the trigger in Pahalgam?

The answer came three months later in the form of Operation Mahadev.

On July 28, Indian security forces neutralised three Pakistani terrorists in the forests near Harwan, on the outskirts of Srinagar. Among them was Suleiman Shah, also known as Hashim Musa—the mastermind behind the Pahalgam massacre. Intelligence agencies, aided by a Chinese communication device the terrorists mistakenly activated, tracked their movements into the dense forests at the foothills of Mahadev Peak, and in a blitzkrieg moment, 4 Para, 24 RR, J&K Police and CRPF located their pinpoint location and neutralised the terrorists with just 6 bullets.

The encounter wasn't just a tactical success—it was a symbolic one. Named after the very peak near where the terrorists were hiding, Operation Mahadev underscored India's evolving counter-terrorism doctrine: intelligence-led, technologically enhanced and uncompromising. The multi-

agency effort involving the Intelligence Bureau, Army, CRPF, and J&K police shows how India is now operating across a unified front to dismantle terror networks at their roots.

BY COL MOHINDER PAL SINGH

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In a briefing to Parliament, Home Minister Amit Shah confirmed the identities of the three Pakistani nationals—Suleiman, Jibran (involved in the 2023 Sonamarg Tunnel attack), and Afghan Bhai. He said that these three were the terrorists involved in the Pahalgam attack and 2 AK 47 and one M9 carbine recovered

from them were used in the attack. These were flown to Chandigarh on a special flight, and a late-night testing of the guns and empty cartridges confirmed the same weapons were used in Pahalgam, he added.

This is not the India of 2008 or even 2016. The era of restrained diplomacy in the face of repeated provocation is over. We are no longer in the business of waiting. We are acting.

Pakistan, meanwhile, continues its double game—harbouring terrorists while projecting a peaceful facade to the world. Its calls for ceasefire come not from a position of peace, but from the mounting pressure of an India that now plays by new rules.

India's policy shift—stating unequivocally that "talks and terror cannot go hand-in-hand"—is not just rhetoric. It's being backed by action. The future-ready force concept being developed by the Indian Army, including new

'Rudra' all-arms brigades and 'Bhairav' light commando battalions, is proof that India is building a sustained response infrastructure, not just reacting in the moment.

But this fight isn't limited to borders. It's ideological. It's about remaining vigilant in every vulnerable district, in every high-risk corridor and through every intelligence channel. India's integration of surveillance drones, AI-driven monitoring and modern air defence is not just a technological upgrade—it's a declaration that the state will always stay one step ahead of those who threaten its citizens.

With Operation Mahadev, India has drawn a line in the sand. The message to terrorist groups and their state sponsors is now unmistakable: you may run, but you will not hide forever.

(The writer is Director at EGROW Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

(Via email)