

Russia holds massive N-drills as Ukraine steps up drone attacks

MOSCOW, May 19 (AP)

RUSSIA on Tuesday began massive maneuvers of its nuclear forces featuring practice launches of nuclear-capable ballistic and cruise missiles in drills that come amid surge in Ukrainian drone strikes.

The three-day exercise will involve 64,000 troops, over 200 missile launchers, more than 140 aircraft, 73 surface warships and 13 submarines, including eight armed with nuclear-tipped intercontinental ballistic missiles, the Defence Ministry said.

The maneuvers will focus on the "preparation and use of nuclear forces under the threat of aggression," the Ministry said.

The drills will also practice



Russia's new Sarmat intercontinental ballistic missile is test launched at an unspecified location in Russia.

cooperation with Belarus, a neighbour and ally that hosts Russian nuclear weapons.

Russian arsenals in Belarus include its latest intermediate range nuclear-capable Oreshnik

missile system.

The maneuvers come as Ukraine has sharply intensified its drone attacks against Russia, including a weekend barrage on Moscow's suburbs that killed three and damaged several buildings and industrial facilities.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has repeatedly reminded the world about Moscow's nuclear arsenals after sending troops into Ukraine in February 2022 to try to deter the West from ramping up support for Kyiv.

The recent attacks have made it harder for officials in the Kremlin to cast the conflict in Ukraine - now in its fifth year - as something so distant that it doesn't affect the daily routines of Russian civilians.

Rajnath meets Vietnamese counterpart to discuss defence, bilateral cooperation

HANOI, May 19 (IANS)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday met with his Vietnamese counterpart, General Phan Van Giang, to review the partnership between their nations and discuss ways to deepen cooperation in maritime security, the defence industry, training, and regional stability.

In a post on X, Singh said, "Held a productive bilateral meeting with Gen. Phan Van Giang, Defence Minister of Vietnam. We reviewed the growing India-Vietnam defence partnership and discussed ways to further deepen cooperation in maritime security, defence industry, training and regional stability."

He said that India remains committed to strengthening its Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership with Vietnam. Both leaders also jointly inaugurated the Language Lab established at Vietnam's Air Force Officers College.

"Glad that both sides also exchanged an MoU in the field of AI and quantum technology, marking another important step in our Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership," Singh added.



Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Vietnamese counterpart General Phan Van Giang during a bilateral meeting in Vietnam. (PTI)

Earlier in the day, Singh paid tributes to Ho Chi Minh, the founding father of Vietnam, at the Mausoleum in Hanoi on the occasion of his 136th birth anniversary. Singh arrived in Hanoi for a two-day visit to Vietnam, marking 10 years of the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership between the two nations, which was upgraded to Enhanced Comprehensive Strategic Partnership during the State visit of Vietnamese President

To Lam earlier this month.

Taking to X, the Defence Minister said, "Paid homage to the founding father of Vietnam, President Ho Chi Minh, at Mausoleum on his 136th birth anniversary." "His vision, leadership and enduring commitment to national liberation and global solidarity continue to inspire generations. India-Vietnam friendship remains rooted in shared values and mutual respect," he added.

Rajnath arrives in Seoul

SEOUL, May 19 (IANS)

DEFENCE Minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Seoul on Tuesday afternoon on a three-day visit as India and South Korea look at deepening strategic military cooperation and further expand the scope of bilateral engagement.

"Landed in Seoul, Republic of Korea, on an official visit aimed at further strengthening India-ROK defence cooperation and strategic partnership. The visit will provide an opportunity to deepen bilateral ties and enhance collaboration in areas of mutual interest," Singh posted on 'X'.

Singh addressed the Indian community in Hanoi and described Operation Sindoor as a testimony to India's transformation into a strong, confident, and capable nation.

Sqn Ldr Saanya becomes IAF's first woman Cat-A qualified flying instructor

NEW DELHI, May 19 (ANI)

SQUADRON Leader Saanya has created history by becoming the first woman officer to achieve the coveted Category-A Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI) qualification, the Indian Air Force (IAF) said on Monday.

In a post on X, the IAF said, "Excellence takes flight. Squadron Leader Saanya achieved a historic first by becoming the first woman officer to earn the coveted Cat-A Qualified Flying Instructor (QFI) qualification."

Highlighting her achievement, the Air Force added, "Her achievement embodies dedication and relentless pursuit of excellence. A proud milestone for the IAF and an inspiration for



Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Amar Preet Singh felicitates Squadron Leader Saanya on becoming the first woman officer to earn the coveted Cat-A QFI qualification, on Monday. (ANI)

aspiring aviators across the nation." Meanwhile, IAF Chief Air Chief Marshal AP Singh on Friday underlined the role of evolving technology in modern warfare, highlighting the role of Unmanned Aerial (UA) systems, which he said are the extensions of Air power. Air Chief Marshal AP Singh said that modern warfare has shifted from concentrated Air power to a decentralised and autonomous way, emphasising the need to adapt.

"This topic of drones and UA systems is very relevant. It is a reality. So, there is no denying that the battlefield has shifted. We are shifting from concentrated Air power to a decentralised and autonomous way. We must understand that the UA systems are extensions of Air power."

US to host G20 Foreign Ministers' meet in Atlanta on Oct 30-31



WASHINGTON, May 19 (PTI)

THE US will host the G20 Foreign Ministers' meeting in Atlanta on October 30-31, with discussions expected to focus on global economic challenges, resilient supply chains and strengthening international cooperation.

The meeting, to be chaired by US Secretary of State Marco Rubio, will bring together Foreign Ministers from the world's leading economies to advance the G20's core mission of promoting global stability and prosperity, the State Department said on Monday. "Discussions will focus on strengthening international cooperation, addressing global economic challenges, and supporting open markets and resilient supply chains," spokesperson Tommy Pigott said in a statement.

President Putin to attend BRICS summit on Sept 12-13 in New Delhi

MOSCOW, May 19 (PTI)

RUSSIAN President Vladimir Putin will attend the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12-13, according to a presidential aide. India, as the chair of the BRICS, will host the annual summit of the grouping in September.

President Putin will take part in the BRICS summit in New Delhi on September 12 and 13, Kremlin aide for international affairs Yury Ushakov was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

He also added that a bilateral meeting between President Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping is planned on the sidelines of the BRICS summit in New Delhi.

President Putin last visited India in December 2025 for the 23rd India-Russia Annual Summit.

Earlier this month, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov attended a two-day conclave of the BRICS member States in New Delhi. BRICS, originally comprising Brazil, Russia, India, China, and South Africa, expanded in 2024 to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, and the United Arab Emirates, with Indonesia joining in 2025.

US to sell support services for Apache, M777A2 howitzers to India for \$198.2 bn

WASHINGTON, May 19 (PTI)

THE US has approved the possible sale of support services and related equipment for Apache helicopters to India for an estimated cost of USD 198.2 billion, the US Department of State said.

The Department of State also approved a possible sale of sustainment support for M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers for an estimated cost of USD 230 million.

The principal contractors for the Apache support services deal will be the Boeing Company and Lockheed Martin, the State Department said. For the howitzers support, the principal contractor will be BAE Systems, located in Cumbria, UK.

The Department of State said



India has requested to buy AH-64E Apache sustainment support services; US Government and contractor engineering, technical, and logistics support services; technical data and publications; personnel training; and other related elements of logistics and program support.

India had also requested to buy long-term sustainment support for M777A2 Ultra-Light Howitzers. The following non-major defence equipment items will be included: ancillary items;



spares; repair and return; training; technical assistance; field service representative; depot capability; and other related elements of logistics and programme support, the Department of State said, referring to the support services for the howitzers.

The possible sale of support services for the helicopters and the howitzers will take place under the Foreign Military Sale channels.