# Russia test-fires 'Bulava' intercontinental missile from a submerged submarine in the Sea of Okhotsk

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## News

Russia's Defence Ministry announced on 28 Oct 2026 that the Pacific Fleet's Borei-A (Project 955A) nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine K-553 'Generalissimus Suvorov' fired a 'Bulava' intercontinental missile from a submerged position in the Sea of Okhotsk. The warheads reached the 'Chizha' test range in Arkhangelsk Region (Arctic) at the expected time. The ministry called it part of the routine 'combat training plan'. In 2022 the same submarine fired from the White Sea to the 'Kura' range in Kamchatka; this time the direction was reversed – from the Far East to the north of European Russia.

## Key facts

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| **Missile** | Bulava (RSM-56 / R-30) – three-stage solid-fuel SLBM; carries multiple independently targetable warheads (MIRV) |
| **Range** | About 8,300 km (CSIS estimate) |
| **Developer** | Moscow Institute of Thermal Technology (also made Topol-M, Yars); first launch 2005; formally in service May 2024 |

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| **Submarine** | K-553 Generalissimus Suvorov – Sevmash yard (Severodvinsk); commissioned 29 Dec 2022; based at Vilyuchinsk, Kamchatka (since Oct 2023) |
| **Load** | Each Borei-class submarine carries 16 Bulava missiles |
| **Path** | Sea of Okhotsk → Chizha test range, Arkhangelsk Region |

## Background

- Nuclear triad: the ability to deliver nuclear weapons from land (missiles), air (bombers) and sea (submarine missiles). A submerged SSBN is the most survivable leg, giving 'second-strike' capability even after an enemy first strike. SSBN – nuclear-powered ballistic-missile submarine; SSN – nuclear-powered attack submarine; SSK – diesel-electric submarine.
- India: SSBNs are built at the Ship Building Centre (SBC), Visakhapatnam, under the Advanced Technology Vessel (ATV) programme. INS Arihant – launched July 2009, commissioned 2016; its first deterrence patrol in Nov 2018 completed India's nuclear triad. INS Arighaat – Aug 2024; the third SSBN, INS Aridhaman – April 2026.
- Indian submarine-launched missiles (DRDO): K-15 'Sagarika' (about 750 km), K-4 (about 3,500 km; tested from INS Arighaat in Nov 2024); the longer-range K-5 is under development. Agni-V is a land-based intercontinental missile.
- Geography: the Sea of Okhotsk is a marginal sea of the Pacific, enclosed by the Kamchatka peninsula, the Kuril Islands, Sakhalin and Japan's Hokkaido. The White Sea is an inlet of the Barents Sea; Arkhangelsk and Severodvinsk lie on it.

**Tamil Nadu link:** the land-based prototype of the pressurised water reactor (PWR) that powers INS Arihant is at Kalpakkam, Chengalpattu district. The Navy's Very Low Frequency (VLF) station 'INS Kattabomman', which communicates with submerged submarines, is at Vijayanarayanam, Tirunelveli district.


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