

## **Russia always seeks political solution to disputes: President Putin**

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**Moscow:** Russia always seeks to settle disputes through political approaches, President Vladimir Putin said on Friday.

"We do not and cannot have any aggressive plans. We are not threatening anyone and we seek to resolve any disputes exclusively by political methods under international laws and considering the interests of other countries," Putin told graduates of military academies, Xinhua news agency reported.

"Russia is a country that is open to the world and willing to strengthen cooperation with all countries that are ready for this," an online official transcript quoted Putin as saying.

During his speech, Putin vowed to further strengthen the development of Russian armed forces and to speed up the structural reforms of military management systems and decision-making mechanisms.

"A strong army equipped with advanced weapons is a guarantee of Russia's sovereignty and territorial integrity, a guarantee of the peaceful and stable life of millions of our fellow citizens," the president said.

Admitting that Russia is facing with various threats along its borders, Putin said all Russian army services are updating armaments to reinforce their combat abilities.

Moscow recently accused the U.S. and its North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) allies of increasing military build-up near Russian borders, amid media reports that NATO plans to deploy heavy weapons in eastern Europe and the Baltic countries.

The Kremlin reiterated that Russia would only react to possible external threats rather than start arms race with the West.

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