

## **Russia to intensify Syria airstrikes against Islamic State**

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**Moscow:** Russia's air forces will intensify airstrikes against the posts of extremist group Islamic State (IS) in Syria, a senior military official has said.

"We will not only continue conducting our airstrikes, but will also increase their intensity," Andrey Kartapolov, deputy chief of the general staff of the Russian Armed Forces told reporters on Saturday.

The primary targets are IS command points, ammunition and explosives depots, communication hubs, workshops to produce weapons and militant training camps, he said, Xinhua news agency reported.

Russia's aircraft have carried out more than 60 missions and destroyed over 50 IS facilities during the round-the-clock airstrikes, he said.

"Over the past 72 hours, we have managed to undermine the material and technical base of terrorists and significantly reduce their combat potential," Interfax news agency quoted Kartapolov as saying.

He added that reconnaissance units obtained information of terrorists leaving districts under their control.

Meanwhile, the official stressed that all relevant countries were informed of Russia's airstrikes in advance, and that the US confirmed to Russian side that there were only terrorists in the airstrike regions.

Moscow started the airstrikes which it said were targeting IS forces and fighting terrorism, but the US leaders are sceptical of that.

Kartapolov called on other countries to coordinate anti-terrorism activities, noting that the information and coordination centre could be used as the sharing channel.

The centre was jointly established by Russia, Syria, Iran and Iraq with its headquarters in the Iraqi capital of Baghdad.

Any useful information about the IS group's facilities on the territory of Syria and Iraq is expected to be shared by any country, Kartapolov said.

"(The centre) remains open to dialogue with all countries concerned and welcomes any constructive contribution," he said.

- IANS