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India's Russian Arms Purchases Hit 'Breakthrough' $14.5Bln, Official Says

September 05, 2019



Nikita Simonov / Moskva News Agency

India has ordered a “breakthrough” $14.5 billion of Russian-made weapons since last year despite sanctions pressure from the United States, Russia’s Federal Service for Military and Technical Cooperation (FSVTS) has said.

India is the largest buyer of Russian military hardware, having signed a $5 billion deal for Russian S-400 surface to air missile systems last year. The U.S. has said countries trading with Russia's defense and intelligence sectors would face automatic sanctions.

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"Last year and today saw the emergence of a tremendous portfolio of contracts in contrast to all previous years, $14.5 billion,” Dmitry Shugayev, the head of FSVTS, told reporters Wednesday. “It’s a real breakthrough.”

In addition to the $5 billion S-400 deal, India and Russia have last year signed deals to deliver project 11356 frigates as well as air force, navy and ground force ammunition, Shugayev was quoted as saying by the state-run TASS news agency.

India and Russia are seeking to boost their current $11 billion annual trade to $30 billion by 2025, India's foreign secretary said at an economic forum in Vladivostok on Wednesday. The two countries announced deals in sectors including energy, defense and shipping after a meeting between Russian President Vladimir Putin and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the forum.

Russia remains the world's second-largest arms exporter after the United States despite five years of declining sales abroad, according to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

Reuters contributed reporting to this article.

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