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Russia Secretly Buying Sensitive Electronics From India – FT

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The Nhava Sheva Port, India. **A.Savin**

Russia has set up a covert trade route to obtain critical electronics from India for its war in Ukraine, the Financial Times reported Thursday, citing leaked government documents and anonymous sources.

The Moscow-based Consortium for Foreign Economic Activity and International Interstate Cooperation in Industry (Ved MMKP) reported to Russia's Industry and Trade Ministry in October 2022 that it could spend 82 billion rupees ($976,650) on components previously bought through Western countries.

These components, including parts for "telecommunication, server and other complex electronic equipment," have both civilian and military applications, making them subject to Western export controls.

Despite Western sanctions cutting off Russia's access to essential foreign-produced electronics, the country's military still relies on these components for missiles, drones and

electronic warfare equipment.

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According to FT, Ved MMKP's report detailed plans to carry out transactions through a "closed payment system between Russian and Indian companies" to evade Western scrutiny. An unnamed Western official described the consortium as a likely "front" for Russian intelligence.

Russia has amassed Indian rupees from booming oil sales to India amid sanctions, with trade between the two nations almost doubling to $65 billion in 2023.

While it is unclear how Russia executed its covert trade plan, customs filings show that Indian exports of sensitive electronics, as listed in the Ved MMKP's report, increased significantly from mid-2022.

An Indian company named Innovio Ventures reportedly supplied at least $4.9 million worth of electronics, including drones, to Russia, and shipped another $600,000 worth of goods to Kyrgyzstan, a Central Asian nation that has become a backchannel for Russia's imports of sanctioned items.

At least one sanctioned Russian company, Testkomplekt, received $568,000 in electronic equipment for use in radio-electronic systems, according to FT.

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