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Russia Postpones S-400 Deliveries to India – Times of India

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EPA / TASS

Russia's delivery of S-400 air defense systems to India will take place three years later than planned, The Times of India reported, citing anonymous sources familiar with Defense Minister Andrei Belousov's meeting with his Indian counterpart Rajnath Singh on Thursday.

The postponement disrupts a $5.4 billion contract signed in 2018, under which Russian state-owned arms exporter Rosoboronexport was to supply five squadrons of the latest S-400 systems to New Delhi by 2024.

Each S-400 division consists of two batteries equipped with a total of 128 missiles capable of intercepting airborne targets at ranges up to 380 kilometers (236 miles). The systems also include radars and all-terrain transport vehicles.

Sources familiar with negotiations between Belousov and Singh told The Times of India that deliveries are now scheduled to be completed in 2027.

The delay, which one source linked to Russia's ongoing war in Ukraine, comes amid weakening defense ties between the two countries.

In April, the Indian Defense Ministry opted to purchase 26 French Rafale fighter jets for $7.4 billion instead of Sukhoi jets from Russia, Reuters reported.

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Negotiations on acquiring Russian Ka-226T helicopters and Su-30MKI fighter jets were suspended in 2023.

Indian military officials in 2022 canceled a purchase of Russian T-72 and T-90 tanks, buying French Leclerc tanks instead. The Indian military command explained that the Russian tanks were not suitable for mountainous terrain and could not be used effectively in border confrontations with China and Pakistan.

And in 2023, India rejected a Russian offer to construct submarines based on the Amur-1650 platform, choosing instead to purchase six submarines from Germany's Thyssenkrupp.

Indian government officials cited by Reuters in 2024 indicated that New Delhi was seeking to distance itself from Russia as an arms supplier.

According to estimates by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia's share of India's defense imports has declined from 72% between 2010 and 2014 to 36% between 2020 and 2024.

"India is shifting its arms supply relations towards Western suppliers, most notably France, Israel and the USA," SIPRI analysts wrote.

"Despite recent public declarations from the two sides that relations between India and Russia remain friendly, the shift is also visible in India's new and planned orders for major arms, most of which will come from Western suppliers," they said.

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