

STA-1 status from U.S. welcome, says India

India has welcomed the decision of the U.S. government to grant it the status of a trading partner equivalent to its closest allies in the NATO. This decision is likely to boost India's defence trade with the U.S. The Ministry of External Affairs, in a statement, said it proved India's responsible record as a defence player.

"We welcome the announcement made by U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross in the Indo-Pacific Business Forum on July 30, 2018, about the U.S. Government's decision to move India into Tier-1 of the Department of Commerce's Strategic Trade Authorisation license exception. It is a logical culmination to India's designation as a Major Defence Partner of the U.S. and a reaffirmation of India's impeccable record as a responsible member of the concerned multilateral export control regimes," the Ministry of External Affairs said on Tuesday.

The decision comes just days before India and the U.S. are scheduled to hold the "2 plus 2" dialogue consisting of the Foreign and Defence Ministers of both sides.

As a result of this move, India will require less number of licences for acquiring U.S. defence exports.

High-tech weaponry

In 2016, the U.S. had recognised India as a "Major Defence Partner" but the STA-1 status will open an entire array of high-tech weaponry that are available to the countries whose security interests are closely linked with American security priorities.

Apart from India, other Asian countries in the STA-1 list are Japan and South Korea.

"This step will further facilitate trade and technology collaboration in defence and high technology areas. We look forward to the U.S. side operationalising the decision at an early date," the MEA said.

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