

'INDIA-RUSSIA DEFENCE TRADE WORTH \$15BN IN 3 YEARS'

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: India - Russia

In the last three years, since 2018, the defence trade between India and Russia was \$15 billion because of some big ticket defence deals, said Victor N. Kladov, Head of International Cooperation and Regional Policy of Rostec state corporation.

The S-400 air defence systems deal, for which deliveries are scheduled to begin in a few months, was on schedule, Mr. Kladov said, while downplaying the threat of U.S. sanctions under CAATSA (Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act).

"Indian government stands very firm in protecting national interests... Since getting S-400 is very important to enhance national air defence, definitely India will continue implementing this contract," Mr. Kladov said in a conversation with *The Hindu* at the ongoing Army 2021 exhibition.

Stating that CAATSA was not targeted against Russia but against third countries cooperating with Russia, Mr. Kladov said it was for the Indian side to decide "how to protect itself".

"When it comes to our side, we are very helpful. For instance, we protect our banking systems by doing payments in national currencies," he said.

Mr. Kladov said they had no problems as far as payments are concerned. "At every stage of the contract, there is an instalment payment. We are moving smoothly because we are getting instalment payments."

As reported by *The Hindu* earlier, deliveries of S-400 long range air defence systems are scheduled to begin by November.

Air Force trained

"One team of Indian Air Force (IAF) officials has been trained in Russia to operate the system and a second team is being trained now," said Vyacheslav K. Dzirkaln, Deputy Director General for foreign economic activities of Almaz Antey, which manufactures the S-400, on the sidelines of Army 2021.

In October 2018, India and Russia signed a \$5.43 billion deal for five S-400 regiments despite objections from the United States. U.S. officials have on several occasions raised concerns over the deal as India deepens its defence cooperation with the U.S. and has acquired several frontline military platforms like transport aircraft, helicopters, artillery and drones.

A few JVs were set up long before the Government of India announced the Make in India initiative like BrahMos, and more were being set up for the manufacture of Ka-226T helicopters and Ak-203 assault rifles, Mr. Kladov said. Russia was ready to kick start production once the deal for Ka-226T utility helicopters was signed, he said. "We lost a few years on localisation issues... By concluding this deal we can further supply to third countries."

END

Downloaded from crackIAS.com

© **Zuccess App** by crackIAS.com

CrackIAS.com