

Indian Ministry of Defense Denies Report of Halting US Arms Talks



The Indian Ministry of Defense has vehemently denied a recent report claiming New Delhi had paused talks for major defense purchases from the United States, labeling the story as "false and fabricated." The ministry's statement on Friday sought to clarify the status of ongoing procurement discussions, which a Reuters report had suggested were on hold due to new US tariffs on Indian goods.

The ministry stated that "the various cases of procurement are being progressed as per the extant procedures," directly contradicting the exclusive report from Reuters. The news agency, citing three anonymous Indian officials, had reported that India's decision to pause the talks was a direct response to a new 25% tariff on Indian exports imposed by US President Donald Trump. This tariff, levied in response to India's continued purchase of Russian oil, raised total duties to 50%, one of the highest for any US trading partner.

The Reuters report also claimed that India's Defense Minister, Rajnath Singh, had canceled a planned trip to Washington, where he was expected to announce several key purchases. These deals reportedly included Stryker combat vehicles from General Dynamics, Javelin anti-tank missiles from Raytheon and Lockheed Martin, and six Boeing P-8I reconnaissance aircraft for the Indian Navy, a deal valued at around \$3.6 billion. The ministry's statement, however, did not specifically address the minister's travel plans.

India, the world's second-largest arms importer, has historically relied on Russia for its military hardware. In recent years, however, it has diversified its suppliers to include Western powers like France, Israel, and the United States. This shift has been driven in part by Russia's military focus on its invasion of Ukraine, which has limited its ability to export arms, and the performance of some Russian weapons on the battlefield. The broader US-India defense partnership, which includes intelligence sharing and joint military exercises, remains unaffected, according to one of the Indian officials cited by Reuters. The Indian government has not provided further details beyond its initial statement.