

Jaitley asks Russia defence sector cos to 'Make in India'

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New Delhi: Defence minister Arun Jaitley on Wednesday invited Russian firms to join hands with Indian companies through joint ventures and other means to develop and produce top-notch military platforms and weapons systems under the "Make in India" framework.

"As India's largest, oldest and most trusted partner in defence hardware and equipment, Russia would have a comparative advantage in partnering with Indian companies for realising the 'Make in India' potential in defence production," said Jaitley, addressing the "Technoprom-2017" conference in Novosibirsk while kicking off his three-day visit to Russia.

Listing out the series of policy and procedural changes initiated by the Modi government to boost India's defence production sector, Jaitley said Russian



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companies can be "natural partners" of Indian companies in the endeavour to create "a large industrial base and supply chains" through joint ventures and technology partnerships.

"For India, relations with Russia are a key foreign policy priority. Our long standing and wide-ranging cooperation with Russia in the field of military technical cooperation has graduated from a simple buyer-seller relationship to one involving joint R&D and production of advanced defence systems," he said.

Jaitley and Russian deputy PM Dmitry Rogozin later co-chaired the first meeting of the bilateral Science Technology Commission, which decided to finalise several cooperation projects in the fields of space, marine technology and deep ocean engineering.

On Friday, Jaitley will co-chair the 17th meeting of the inter-governmental commission on military-technical cooperation with Russian General Sergey Shoygu in Moscow to discuss several bilateral military projects.

As was earlier reported by **TOI**, India and Russia are now working towards finalising deals worth around \$10.5 billion, ranging from the acquisition of five S-400 Triumf advanced air defence missile systems, four Grigorivich-class frigates and 200 Kamov-226T light helicopters as well as the lease of a second nuclear-powered submarine by the Indian Navy after INS Chakra.