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Iran, Russia to Boost Defense Cooperation

TEHRAN (FNA)- Tehran and Moscow are to review ways to enhance military cooperation during an upcoming visit to Russia by Iranian Defense Minister Brigadier General Mostafa Mohammad Najjar.



According to the Iranian defense ministry, Najjar is scheduled to travel to Moscow on Monday to discuss military and technical cooperation and review implementation of agreements already signed by the two countries.

He is also slated to pay a visit to Russian defense industries.

The Iranian defense minister is also due to discuss possibility for more military agreements between Tehran and Moscow in his meetings with Russian officials.

Tehran and Moscow have expanded ties in bilateral, regional and international grounds and Iran is one of Russia's defense products customers.

Iranian defense minister had earlier said that Tehran would elaborate on the potential Russian sale of advanced surface-to-air missiles when the occasion is ripe.

He added that Iran would never hesitate in purchasing any cutting-edge equipment that it deems necessary for its defense, while noting that any new developments in this field would be made public when the time is right.

His remarks came as Washington pressed Russia to end the confusion surrounding the delivery of the strategic S-300 missile system to Iran.

The advanced version of the S-300 missile system, called S-300PMU1 (SA-20 Gargoyle), has a range of over 150 km (over 100 miles) and can intercept ballistic missiles and aircraft at low and high altitudes.

The reports that Russia had started to supply S-300 systems to Iran and the Russian state-run arms exporter Rosoboronexport's confirmation that it is supplying Iran with a number of defensive systems, have raised concerns in the US and Israel which have consistently refused to rule out the possibility of military action against Tehran.

The systems could greatly improve Iranian defenses against any air strike on its strategically important sites, including nuclear facilities.

Iran recently took delivery of 29 Russian-made Tor-M1 air defense missile systems under a \$700-million contract signed in late 2005. Russia has also trained Iranian Tor-M1 specialists, including radar operators and crew commanders.

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