

India signs aircraft pact with sanctioned Russian firm

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Dhaka: India's state-owned Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd (HAL) said on Tuesday (Oct 28) it had signed an agreement with Russia's United Aircraft Corporation (UAC) to jointly manufacture civil passenger aircraft in India, a move that could test New Delhi's ties with its Western partners.

India's Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, in a post on X, hailed "a landmark step for the Indian civil aviation sector" that will create jobs and boost self-reliance.

The United States and some other Western partners have previously criticised India's policy towards Russia since its invasion of Ukraine in 2022, demanding that Delhi comply with their sanctions against Moscow.

India in turn has said it does not subscribe to unilateral sanction

measures.

According to the aircraft deal inked in Moscow, HAL will partner with the Russian United Aircraft Corporation to produce SJ-100 twin-engine, narrow-body planes for domestic customers.

HAL said in a social media post that it would be "the first instance wherein a complete passenger aircraft will be produced in India".

Both HAL and Singh called it a "game-changer for short-haul connectivity".

The deal highlights Delhi's continued defence and energy ties with Moscow, despite mounting scrutiny over its oil purchases from Russia.

In August, US President Donald Trump raised tariffs on Indian exports to 50 percent, with Washington accusing India of fuelling Russia's war in Ukraine.

Trump recently claimed that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had agreed to reduce Russian oil imports as part of a potential trade agreement, but there was no confirmation from Delhi.

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