

## Three killed as civilian aircraft crashes in Russia

- A Monitor Desk Report

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Moscow: A Russian passenger aircraft with only crew on board has crashed near Moscow, the country's emergencies ministry says.

The Sukhoi Superjet 100 went down in a forest and all three crew members are believed to have been killed, it said. There were no passengers on board.

Russia's state-run media report that the plane went down during a test flight following repair works.

Russia's has been developing the Sukhoi Superjet - a regional jet - for some time to replace Western-made aircraft.

Heavily sanctioned over its full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, Russia has struggled to replace its ageing aircraft fleet.

In a short statement on Friday, Russia's emergencies ministry said the

aircraft crashed in the forested area.

"There were no casualties among the population," it said.

Transport prosecutors said the plane went down not far from the town of Kolomna.

The aircraft belonged to Gazprom Avia, the airline of the country's energy giant, the prosecutors added.

A criminal investigation is now under way.

State-owned defence conglomerate Rostech said the aircraft went into service in 2014. It urged people not to "rush with conclusions" on what caused the crash.

It is the third air disaster involving a Sukhoi Superjet 100 since 2012.

Over the years, the Superjet project has been marred by engineering setbacks and delays in production as designers have struggled to replace key Western avionics components.

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