





Russian-Built Nuke Plant Hits Full Capacity

By [The Moscow Times](#)



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The  Moscow Times

Iran's first atomic power plant, a symbol of what the Islamic Republic says is its peaceful nuclear ambition, is now operating at full capacity,  Russia's state nuclear corporation, Rosatom,  said Friday.

The Russian-built 1,000-megawatt reactor near the Gulf city of Bushehr was plugged into Iran's national grid last September, ending years of delays and suspicions that  Moscow  was using the project as a diplomatic lever.

Oil-rich Iran says electricity generation is the main motivation for nuclear work that its adversaries say is really aimed at getting atomic weapons capability.

However, the  Bushehr plant  is not considered a major proliferation threat by nuclear inspectors, whose concern is focused on sites where Iran enriches nuclear fuel, in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions demanding it stop.

Bushehr was started by Germany's Siemens before the 1979 Islamic Revolution and was taken over by Russian engineers in the 1990s.

The United States for years urged Russia to abandon the project, fearing it could help Tehran develop nuclear weapons.

Those concerns were eased by an agreement under which Russia will supply enriched uranium for the reactor and repatriate spent fuel that could be reprocessed into weapons-grade plutonium.

Russia sees Iran as a counterweight to U.S. clout but is a partner of the United States and four other powers in efforts to rein in Tehran's nuclear activities.

The U.N. nuclear agency said this week that Iran, in just a few months, had doubled the number of uranium enrichment centrifuges it has in an underground bunker.

This was seen as a sign that Tehran continued to expand its nuclear program despite Western sanctions and the threat of an Israeli attack.

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