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Russian-Built Nuclear Plant Commissioning Delayed Again

By The Moscow Times

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The commissioning of the Kudankulam nuclear power plant's first unit, built with Russian help in the Indian state of Tamil Nadu, has been delayed once again, this time due to "deficient" four valves.

India's Atomic Energy Regulatory Board did not specify the exact nature of the deficiency, nor is it clear whether the Indians or the Russians or both were to be blamed for it. The AERB also did not indicate how long it would take to solve the problem.

The regulator also noted that it was important that all parties involved in the plant's construction adhere to strictest quality criteria.

"During testing of thousands of valves installed in the plant, the performances of four valves of a particular type were found deficient. Subsequent clearances will be granted by the AERB only after a satisfactory review," the agency said Friday.

The first unit of the Kudankulam plant was to be commissioned about a year ago, but several deadlines for its commissioning have been missed. India had planned to commission the plant on or before December 24, 2012 to coincide with a visit by Russian President Vladimir Putin to India.

Meanwhile, the AERB cleared "initial fuel loading" at the plant as part of the commissioning activities.

The plant's two units have an installed capacity of 1,000 megawatts each.

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