

# Liability Issue Puts Doubt on Rosatom Role in Next Indian Reactors

By [The Moscow Times](#)

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Anti-nuclear protests occur frequently at the site of Kudankulam, where Rosatom is a key technology supplier. **Adnan Abidi**

Russia's further participation in India's multibillion-dollar Kudankulam nuclear power plant looks uncertain as the two sides have failed to resolve liability in the event of an accident, an Indian official said Friday.

Rosatom chief Sergei Kiriienko met India's Atomic Energy Commission chief RK Sinha in Saint Petersburg on the sidelines of International Ministerial Conference on Nuclear Power in the 21st Century at the end of last month. Kudankulam units 3 & 4 were discussed, but the two executives failed to resolve the nuclear liability issue.

Sinha has been quoted in the Indian media as having said that he does not see any contradiction between his country's legislation concerning liability and the 2008 Indo-Russian agreement on the plant, which he said had no specifics about legal recourse. Under

the terms of the agreement, Rosatom is set to provide expertise and technical assistance on the construction of six 1,000 megawatt reactors at Kudankulam. The first two are nearing completion.

An Indian official privy to the discussions said on condition of anonymity, since he was not authorized to speak to the media, that the sticking point for Russia was India's insistence on placing the new reactors under its 2010 Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Act. This law holds the plant operator entirely liable in the event of an accident but gives it a right of recourse against suppliers if the problem is caused by defective equipment.

The Russians refer to the 2008 agreement, which makes the Indian plant operator alone liable for possible damages at Units 3 to 6, to be built at Kudankulam. Rosatom believes that Kudankulam's units 3 & 4 should be out of the scope of the 2010 law, the official said, since the Indo-Russian agreement predates it.

Experts predict that discussions on liability, as well as pricing, will continue at upcoming high-level bi-lateral meetings, including Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Saint Petersburg for the Group of 20 summit in September.

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