

Kyrgyzstan Mulls Building Nuclear Plant With Russian Help

By [AFP](#)

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Kyrgyzstan announced on Wednesday that it was looking into the possibility of building its first nuclear power plant, with Russian help, to tackle frequent energy shortages.

The country's Energy Ministry "signed a cooperation document" with a subsidiary of Russian nuclear agency Rosatom, the ministry said in a statement, raising the prospect of Moscow further growing its influence in Central Asia.

According to the Energy Ministry, the document concerns the "preparation of a feasibility study on the construction of a low-power nuclear power plant in Kyrgyzstan."

The former Soviet republic has remained economically and militarily close to Russia, which accounts for more than a third of the mountainous and landlocked country's imports.

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Moscow is seeking to maintain its influence in Central Asia in the face of the rise of China, Turkey and Western countries.

The conflict in Ukraine has raised increasing concerns in the region over its long-standing ties to Russia, with Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan earlier this month urging the five resource-rich Central Asian nations to ramp up ties with Ankara.

Kyrgyzstan faces regular power cuts, with a network that is antiquated in parts, and relies almost exclusively on hydroelectric power plants, plus a handful of coal-fired power stations.

However, due to a growing shortage of water to run the turbines, Kyrgyzstan has begun looking for other energy sources.

Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan have also signalled their willingness to build nuclear power plants in recent months.

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