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Irkutsk Bans Cryptocurrency Mining in Region's South Until 2031

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Kirill Zykov / Moskva News Agency

Russian authorities banned cryptocurrency mining in the southern part of Siberia's Irkutsk region until 2031, under a decree signed by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin and published Monday.

Previously, crypto mining was prohibited across Irkutsk and much of Siberia only seasonally, from Jan. 1 to March 15. The new measure makes the ban year-round.

Irkutsk region Governor Igor Kobzev said he had requested the extended ban due to the "excessively high load" mining placed on the region's energy system.

"The temporary ban in effect from January to March helped ease the load on the power grid and freed up 320 megawatts of capacity — the equivalent of 146 billion rubles [$1.92 billion] in construction costs for new power generation facilities," Kobzev wrote on Telegram.

The ban covers 21 districts and eight cities, including Irkutsk, but excludes Bratsk — home to

the Bratskaya Hydroelectric Power Plant, a major electricity supplier in the region.

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In late 2024, Dossier Center, an investigative outlet funded by exiled businessman Mikhail Khodorkovsky, linked State Duma Deputy Andrey Lugovoi to a data center in Bratsk involved in crypto mining. The center reportedly received discounted electricity, forcing other customers to pay higher rates to offset the costs, according to a source cited by the outlet.

Cryptocurrency mining is also banned through 2031 in the North Caucasus and Russian-occupied parts of Ukraine. Journalists have described the North Caucasus republic of Dagestan, plagued by long blackouts and aging infrastructure, as Russia's crypto mining "capital."

Russia is the world's second-largest crypto mining hub after the United States, consuming 16 billion kilowatt-hours of electricity annually — about 1.5% of its total energy use — according to the Energy Ministry.

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