The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

Russia Begins Work on Kazakhstan's First Nuclear Power Plant

By AFP

August 08, 2025



Rosatom

Russian engineers have begun work on Kazakhstan's first nuclear power plant as Moscow pushes to maintain its influence in Central Asia, where China and Europe are vying for a foothold in the resource-rich region.

Kazakhstan, the world's largest uranium producer and the third-largest supplier to the European Union, said Friday that Russian and Kazakh nuclear agencies launched engineering surveys to determine the best site and "prepare project documentation" for the plant.

"This project is Kazakhstan's strategic choice and a driver of long-term economic growth for the region and the country as a whole," said Almasadam Satkaliev, head of Kazakhstan's nuclear agency.

The plant will be built near the half-abandoned village of Ulken on Lake Balkhash and is

expected to take several years to complete. Russia's Rosatom said the reactor will have a 60-year lifespan, with the option to extend it by another 20 years.

France and South Korea had also bid for the contract, but Kazakhstan said it selected Russia and China, which will build two additional plants with details to be announced later this year.

Nuclear power remains a sensitive issue in Kazakhstan, where Soviet-era nuclear tests exposed around 1.5 million people to radiation. Yet the country faces persistent power shortages despite its vast energy resources.

Russia is also pushing nuclear projects elsewhere in the region, with plans for a plant in Uzbekistan and a small reactor in Kyrgyzstan.

Original url:
https://www.themoscowtimes.com/2025/08/08/russia-begins-work-on-kazakhstans-first-nuclear-power-plant-a90136