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Russia Signs Agreement to Build First Nuclear Power Plant in Kazakhstan

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Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and Vladimir Putin. **kremlin.ru**

Russia and Kazakhstan signed an agreement on Thursday to construct the first nuclear power plant in the Central Asian republic since the collapse of the Soviet Union.

The deal was finalized during high-level talks between President Vladimir Putin and Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev on the second day of the Russian leader's state visit to Astana.

Tokayev thanked Putin for endorsing plans to build a nuclear power plant in his country. Kazakhstan expects Russia to finance 85% of the plant, which is projected to be commissioned around 2035-2036.

Despite being the world's top uranium producer, Kazakhstan has not produced nuclear energy of its own since decommissioning its Soviet-era reactors three decades ago.

The new plant, approved in a 2024 referendum, will be built near the partially abandoned

village of Ulken by Lake Balkhash. The lake, located in the southeast, is the country's second largest.

A consortium led by Russia's state nuclear corporation Rosatom won the project over competing bids from China National Nuclear Corporation, France's EDF and South Korea's Hydro & Nuclear Power

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On Thursday, Tokayev also hailed the "strategic partnership and allied relations" between Russia and Kazakhstan, which was formalized by a joint statement on the "seven pillars of friendship and good-neighborliness."

Putin noted that he and Tokayev had already addressed "many important and promising areas of our cooperation" on Wednesday evening, the first day of his visit to Kazakhstan.

Putin's delegation includes more than 30 high-ranking officials, among them several cabinet members and Rosatom CEO Alexei Likhachev.

Tokayev estimated that Russia and Kazakhstan are working on 177 joint projects valued at almost $53 billion. According to the Kazakh leader, 122 of those commercial ventures are already fully functioning.

On Friday, the final day of Putin's state visit, Astana will host a meeting of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council.

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