
Armenia Plans Nuclear Plant Near Turkish Border

Zaman - 10/9/2007

A new nuclear power plant being built in Armenia on the site of an existing facility will end up costing about \$2 billion, Armenian Energy Minister Armen Movsisyan has said.

"The project's feasibility study is being carried out by Armenia, Russia, the US and the International Atomic Energy Agency [IAEA]. The old nuclear power plant is to be rebuilt within four-and-a-half years," Movsisyan was quoted as telling the Parliament on Friday. He said the construction of the new plant, located in the town of Metsamor, near the Turkish border, would require a complex refit, including the installation of seismic safeguards.

The Metsamor nuclear reactor, which is composed of two WWER-440-230 units, each with power levels of 408 megawatts, is located not far from the capital of Yerevan, 16 kilometers from the Turkish border. The Armenian government decided to open the second unit in the reactor in 1993, due to high energy needs, and thus the second unit was started up in 1995. The Metsamor reactor provides up to 40 percent of Armenia's electricity needs and is predicted to continue doing so until 2016. Since Yerevan decided upgrade the reactor the Turkish Atomic Energy Agency (TAEK) has been involved in following related developments and taking the necessary precautions from the Turkish side.

Movsisyan also stressed that Armenia must have a permanent source of nuclear power and that the new Armenian nuclear power plant must be operational until alternative sources are found. He said that "many foreign countries now understand that Armenia must have a nuclear power plant." "Only a new Armenian [nuclear power plant] can become an alternative to the one now in use," he said.
