
Russia delivers equipment for Bushehr core operation

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MOSCOW, December 28 () - Russian nuclear fuel producer TVEL has supplied Iran with equipment for the reactor core operations at the Bushehr nuclear power plant, a company spokesperson said on Friday.

The Russian contractor Atomstroyexport has been building the Bushehr NPP in southern Iran under a 1995 agreement.

"Along with the second shipment of nuclear fuel to the Bushehr NPP, we have delivered some equipment necessary for the reactor core operations, including control rods and shim rods," the representative of the state-run corporation said.

Russia has made two initial shipments of nuclear fuel to the plant this month and the deliveries are to continue into February 2008.

The \$1 billion Bushehr came under threat in February when Russia cited payment delays. Iran denied any funding problems and accused Russia of deliberately stalling the project in response to pressure from Western powers.

Russian officials later said the Bushehr project was being carried out under the complete control of the UN's nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). Spent Russian fuel is to be re-exported for reprocessing and storage, according to a Russian-Iranian agreement. In Iran, the nuclear fuel will be under UN control.

Atomstroyexport head Sergei Shmatko earlier said the Bushehr NPP will be put into operation no sooner than late 2008.
