

Armenia and Russia discuss Armenian 2 operating extension, and new nuclear

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Further extending the operating life of the Armenian Nuclear Power Plant's second unit was identified as a priority during a meeting between Rosatom Director General Alexei Likhachev and Armenia's Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.



The talks covered a wide range of cooperation (Image: Armenian PM's office)

During the meeting, in Yerevan, the two "agreed on specific steps for the near future, which will allow the re-extension work to be launched by the end of this year".

According to Rosatom "during the meeting the construction of new nuclear power units in Armenia was also touched upon" and they were "ready to offer Russian-designed nuclear power plants with VVER reactors".

The Prime Minister's office reported that the talks also saw the sides discuss "possible cooperation in the field of nuclear medicine," as well as partnership on decontamination of hazardous waste at the former Nairit chemicals plant. Rosatom said that it had "unique technologies for bringing complex industrial facilities to a safe state" and was ready to tackle the issues at Nairit.

Rosatom signed an agreement with the management of the Armenian nuclear power plant in January last year to look into the possible building of new Russia-designed units on the site of the current plant at Metsamor. Armenia has long been in discussions with Russia about replacing Metsamor, which comprises two Russian-built 376 MWe VVER reactors which started operating in 1976 and 1980, respectively. Both units were taken offline in 1988 due to safety concerns regarding seismic vulnerability. Unit 2 was restarted in 1995, and accounts for some 39% of total electricity generation in the country.

In November 2021 it was announced that the service life of unit 2 had been extended to 2026 after collaboration with Rosatom which saw the unit's emergency cooling system, engine room, turbines, steam generators modernised, and a unique operation carried out to [anneal the reactor pressure vessel](#).

As a result of the modernisation, the station's capacity increased by almost 10% and there are plans for a further 10-year extension to 2036.

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