

Russia and Iran to sign an agreement on the return of spent nuclear fuel.

Tough finances judging the value of the spent fuel and the cost of storage or disposal.

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On Saturday Russia and Iran sign an agreement on the return of spent nuclear fuel from the Bushehr nuclear power plant's first unit, said the head of the Russian Federal Agency for Nuclear Energy, Alexander Rumyantsev upon arrival on an official visit to Iran.

He said the main aim was "to see at site the nuclear power plant's first unit being built." The head of Rosatom stressed the necessity to closely monitor the construction on the part of the leadership to expedite work and prevent difficulties.

"We should say with content that the construction of the unit is nearing completion, and now we are preparing the fuel to be delivered to the NPP," said Mr. Rumyantsev.

"We hope," he said, "that we will sign documents that regulate handling fuel on the Bushehr-1 reactor.

Mr. Rumyantsev said "within the framework of our traditional Russia-Iran relations, we will discuss the prospects of our further cooperation."

Touching upon the negotiating process between Iran and the European Union, as well as the issue of Washington's pressure on Tehran, Rumyantsev said "Iran is implementing its nuclear programs under full control of the IAEA, that's why there are no problems here."

Touching upon the issue of a possible construction by Russian experts of the second unit of the Bushehr nuclear power plant, the head of Rosatom said it was necessary to complete the construction of the first unit and then speak about the second one.

Rumyantsev said once again that "the project of the construction of the first unit of the Bushehr NPP is absolutely peaceful and is under full control of the IAEA."

The facility will be put into operation in late 2005, to be commissioned in the beginning of 2006.