

Russia Sends First Uranium Shipment to Indian Nuclear Plant

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India has received an initial shipment of enriched uranium fuel from Russia for a nuclear power plant in the western state of Maharashtra, the AFP news agency reported.

The first consignment of 20 to 25 tons of uranium has arrived in the country and will be delivered to the Tarapur nuclear power station soon, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. Another consignment of 45 to 40 tons was expected soon, it said Sunday.

"With Russian supply of 60 metric tons of uranium, the plants will have fuel for the next five years and (will) run smoothly," S. Thakur, an officer with the Nuclear Power Corporation of India which runs the Tarapur plant, told the news agency.

Last month Russia announced it would supply a limited amount of uranium for the plant. India last month concluded a landmark nuclear agreement with the United States. This would lift embargos on the transfer of nuclear fuel and technology for civilian purposes.

The deal however is still awaiting the go-ahead from the U.S. Congress and the 45-member Nuclear Suppliers Group that controls the trade in civilian nuclear technology and fuel.

Tarapur was built by U.S. company General Electric in the 1960s but Washington halted uranium supplies after New Delhi staged its first nuclear tests in 1974 and refused to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Since then the plants have received sporadic supplies from Russia and France.