

## Indonesia eyes nuclear power by 2015

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Reuters  
May 15, 2006

Jakarta: Indonesia is considering the construction of nuclear power plants with a capacity of 1,000 megawatts (MW) by 2015 as part of a plan to avoid future electricity shortages, the energy minister said on Monday.

Indonesia, the Asia Pacific's only OPEC member country, is tapping alternative sources of energy such as nuclear, coal and natural gas for power generation to cut its crude oil consumption amid soaring prices and dwindling reserves.

"According to our plan, we should have 1,000 MW by 2015 as part of 4,000 MW (of nuclear power plants) that we plan to build," Energy and Mineral Resources Minister Purnomo Yusgiantoro told reporters.

"We believe nuclear energy will be cheaper compared with coal-fired power generators," Purnomo said. "We are now preparing which technology we will use, whether from France, South Korea, Japan or the US."

An official of Indonesia's state owned electricity company PT Perusahaan Listrik Negara said Indonesia domestic electricity demand growth is around 10 per cent annually.

"We need more electricity power very badly to meet domestic demand and nuclear is one alternative," the official, who declined to be identified, said.

He declined to say where the uranium would come. The Indonesian government has said it plans to speed up the construction of power plants to generate a total of 10,000 MW between 2006 and 2010, as the world's fourth most populous country tries to catch up with rising electricity demand.

PLN operates 21,700 MW capacity currently. Indonesia has a small nuclear reactor for research purposes.