

Russia, Vietnam sign nuclear energy deal

AFP – Russia and Vietnam signed an agreement on nuclear energy on Tuesday during a visit by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin aimed at deepening ties between the two long-standing allies. Vietnam wants to restart nuclear power plans to meet its rapidly expanding energy needs and is hoping that Russia can help.

No details about the agreement were immediately available but Vietnam's science and technology ministry said on Tuesday Alexey Likhachiov, general director of Russia's nuclear giant Rosatom, was "very interested" in cooperating with Vietnam on the Ninh Thuan nuclear power project.

The project – which involves two plants in central Ninh Thuan province with a combined capacity of 4,000 megawatts – was originally to be developed with assistance from Rosatom and the Japanese consortium JINED before plans were scrapped in 2016.

Likhachiov was in Hanoi on Monday to meet Vietnamese Prime Minister Pham Minh Chinh, their third meeting in six months.

The nuclear deal was among seven signed in a range of fields that also included digital technology and electronics.

The trip comes half a year after President Vladimir Putin travelled to Hanoi, where Vietnam's then-president To Lam indicated a desire to boost defence cooperation with Moscow.

Putin told reporters during the visit, which came as Western powers stepped up sanctions aimed at constraining Russia's war in Ukraine, that both sides had "identical or very close" positions on key international issues.

The two nations have been close allies since the days of the

Cold War.

Mishustin met his counterpart Chinh and Lam, now Communist Party general secretary and the country's top leader, on Tuesday.

Russia has been Vietnam's main arms supplier for decades, accounting for more than 80 percent of imports between 1995 and 2023, but orders have dropped off in recent years as international sanctions related to the Ukraine conflict have intensified.

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