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China

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China aims to employ nuclear fusion technology in power generation by 2050

Shanghai. (Interfax-China) - At the 2004 World Engineers' Convention held in Shanghai, Kang Rixin, the general manager of the China National Nuclear Corporation, announced to the media that China would seek to employ nuclear fusion technologies in power generation by 2050.

China will adopt a three-step strategy in its nuclear development, he noted. The first step focuses on sophisticated experiments with thermonuclear reactors; the second step aims to raise the utilization rate of nuclear fuels from the current 1-2% to 60-70%; and third step is the employment of nuclear fusion.

However, a report by Zhongguo Dianli Wang (China Power Net), quoting comments by experts at a seminar on the location of the international thermonuclear experimental reactors (ITER) by International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), says that it is impossible for nuclear fusion technologies to be used in power generation by 2050.

In a conversation with Interfax, Zheng Wenxiang, vice dean of the Nuclear Energy Research Institute of Qinghua University, was more optimistic about the target, and said that the development of nuclear fusion technologies may be accelerated with concerted efforts worldwide.

All existing nuclear power projects use nuclear fission technologies, utilizing energy generated in the fission of uranium. Nuclear fusion technologies, however, are meant to utilize the energy generated in the fusion of hydrogen, as in the explosion of a hydrogen bomb, Zheng noted.

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