

China's fast reactor set for tests in 2010

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China's first experimental fast nuclear reactor that can burn up to 70 percent of uranium fuel is expected to start trials in four years.

The general manager of the China National Nuclear Corp. compared the burn rate in the fast reactor with the conventional reactor which consumes only 0.7 per cent of the uranium it is fed, reports the China Daily.

The far higher uranium utility rate in the fast reactor will go a long way in easing the country's energy shortage, Kang Rixin said.

The report said China started its research into fast nuclear reactor technology in 1995 and invested \$175 million in the construction of the experimental reactor.

Separately, the director of the Southwestern Institute of Physics said the country also has been researching nuclear fusion as an alternative energy source for the last 40 years. The research currently is focusing on the feasibility of using deuterium or heavy hydrogen extracted from seawater to create nuclear fusion. Nuclear fusion is how the Sun produces energy.

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