

Particle collider's Russian supplier bankrupt: report

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A Russian factory producing the crystals used in the world's biggest particle collider is bankrupt, a report said Wednesday, questioning why the government would not bail out the unique facility.

The Bogoroditsk Techno-Chemical Plant, once the pride of the small town in central Russia's Tula region, produced 80,000 lead tungsten crystals used in equipment to measure particle energies at the European Organisation for Nuclear Research's ([CERN](#)) [Large Hadron Collider](#).

But now most employees have been fired and electricity and water cut off as the plant is closing down, weighed down by debts of \$10 million accrued after orders ran thin, Izvestia newspaper reported from the plant.

"The Bogoroditsk plant is submerged in darkness and is empty like a sunken ship," the paper wrote. "There are times when idols perish, but it happens so quickly and senselessly only in the theatre of the absurd."

Bogoroditsk is situated only 200 kilometres south of Moscow, and factory employees have protested and written letters to the Russian leaders for almost a year since a regional arbitration court pronounced the plant bankrupt last September.

After CERN's contract for crystals ran out, the plant invested in solar panel production, but faced little demand and could not pay its creditors, and other investors failed to materialise.

Meanwhile, the government put off signing a crucial agreement to participate in an international project FAIR (Facility for Antiproton and Ion Research in Europe), which would allow the plant to supply crystals to build the new German-based facility, Expert magazine wrote earlier this year.

After the plant's demise, a Shanghai-based institute will dominate crystal production, despite President Dmitry Medvedev's appeals to modernise and innovate the Russian economy, it said.

The Large Hadron Collider is located near Geneva in a deep tunnel beneath Switzerland's border with France and launched in September 2008. The Russian [crystals](#) were used in its electromagnetic calorimeter.

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