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DPM Lawrence Wong speaking to reporters at the Singapore embassy in Paris. Singapore is interested in enhancing its knowledge and capabilities on nuclear power, he says.

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Vital for Singapore to build knowledge on nuclear power, safety: DPM Wong

The city-state has stepped up research around this energy source in recent years

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Paris

IT IS important for Singapore to build know-how on nuclear power and safety, even as the country has yet to decide whether to adopt the energy source, said Deputy Prime Minister Lawrence Wong.

"At some point in time, some countries in the region may decide to have a nuclear power plant. And if they do, I think it's important for us to also understand the implications for Singapore and have some capabilities with regard to nuclear safety," he said on Saturday (Apr 13).

He was speaking to reporters at the Singapore embassy in Paris, as he wrapped up a six-day official visit to Germany and France.

On Thursday, Wong and French President Emmanuel Macron launched the France-Singapore Joint Year of Sustainability (JYOS), a series of events and initiatives from April 2024 to mid-2025, that highlights both countries' cooperation in sustainable development and the green transition.

Asked by *The Business Times* if nuclear energy could be of interest under the JYOS, Wong said: "Nuclear cooperation is certainly on the table. But it's not so much about 'let's identify a nuclear project', because we have not even decided to adopt nuclear power for Singapore."

Instead, Singapore is interested in enhancing its knowledge and capabilities on nuclear power,

he added. "So it's useful for us to learn more about nuclear power, more about the state of play with regard to nuclear technologies, and also enhance our capabilities with regard to nuclear safety," he said.

Wong noted that France has expertise running nuclear power plants and is doing research in advanced nuclear technologies. The country derives about 70 per cent of its electricity from nuclear energy with 56 operable reactors, according to the World Nuclear Association.

Singapore has stepped up research around nuclear energy in recent years. The city-state has been tracking advanced nuclear technologies and aims to train at least 100 nuclear safety experts.

Nuclear power could supply about 10 per cent of Singapore's needs by 2050, said a report commissioned by the Energy Market Authority.

Industry experts said that Singapore is seen as a promising market for a new generation of nuclear reactors, known as small modular reactors. It could also be a research hub for nuclear fusion, a cleaner form of nuclear power still under development.

Singapore is already collaborating with France on nuclear fusion, via the Singapore Alliance with France for Fusion Energy, a joint research centre between the Nanyang Technological University, the French Alternative Energies and Atomic Energy Commission.