

Preparations Moving Forward to Establish India-Japan Cooperation Review Committee

On July 31, the fifth meeting was held of the Atomic Energy Commission (AEC) 's informal panel on international issues, with reports on the current status of exchanges with India delivered by representatives of the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO), the Japan Atomic Industrial Forum (JAIF), and Kyoto University. Among those, JAIF's report mentioned discussions about the establishment of a review committee on cooperation between Japanese and Indian industrial circles, as well as the creation of a India-Japan Atomic Industrial Forum. The latest meeting wrapped up debate about India-related issues, and will shortly produce a report dealing with the current state of international moves toward cooperation with India in the area of nuclear energy.

At the meeting, JAIF Director Nobuo Ishizuka explained how Japan's nuclear industry has basically adopted a cautious stance toward India, adding that the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL), the Atomic Energy Commission of India, the India Atomic Industrial Forum (IAIF), etc., started to pin greater hopes on industrial cooperation with Japan last year or so. As far as the Japanese government is concerned, it understands that its judgment concerning Indian-Japanese cooperation depends on the way the international community handles the issue, such as course of the United States-India agreement for peaceful cooperation on nuclear energy, as well as the endorsement by The Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG). Industrial circles are also exploring ways to cooperate.

For that purpose, preparations are now moving forward to establish the review committee on cooperation between Japanese and Indian industrial circles, which will then discuss the fundamental stance to be taken regarding cooperation by Japan's nuclear industry, as well as the process of cooperation, and what is to be requested of the government. At the same time, it was announced that discussions are proceeding on the completion of a memorandum concerning cooperation by IAIF and JAIF. The memorandum is slated to deal with such themes as regular information exchange, workshops on securing safety, and the acceptance of trainees.

Also giving a report at the meeting was Executive Director Shoji Takashi of WANO Tokyo Center. He said that while Japan has access to both India's and Pakistan's nuclear power plants, neither of those countries has access to Japan's, adding that both countries requested steps be taken to improve that situation.

Prof. Hajimu Yamana of Kyoto University, another speaker at the meeting, explained about India's nuclear-related technologies in his report, saying that it was necessary to conduct a cautious debate on the possibility of "technological contamination" between private and military development there. An important juncture is being reached in fast-breeder reactor (FBR) development, he pointed out, with the construction of the prototype FBR (PFBR), so he said such information would be beneficial for Japan.

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