

Main Nuclear-related News Events of 2007 in Japan

- ◆ The Kashiwazaki Kariwa NPS of the Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) was damaged in the Niigata-Chuetsu Offshore Earthquake of July 16, impacting the supply of electricity. The four units in operation when the earthquake struck were halted. The shaking was observed to have exceeded the standard earthquake motion, causing a fire in the electrical transformer, and leakage of radioactive water. The effects drew the attention of people both in Japan and abroad, heightening concerns the seismic safety of nuclear power facilities.
- ◆ Cases of past data falsification were unearthed during the general inspection of power-generating facilities. Administrative sanctions were imposed on seven facilities, the operators of which were ordered to change their maintenance code. After Hokuriku Electric Power Co. was found to have covered up a criticality incident at Shika-1 NPS, the withdrawal of control rods also became an issue.
- ◆ Although the mayor of Toyo Town in Kochi Prefecture applied for documentary investigations to begin for the town as a candidate site for the construction of a high-level radioactive waste (HLW) disposal facility, the application had to be withdrawn, having failed to get the understanding of the town council and the local residents as well as that of the prefectural government and the surrounding municipalities. In response to that, the national government starts to work more actively toward the selection of a final disposal site.
- ◆ Government-led resource diplomacy picked up pace, with the Minister of Economy, Trade and Industry (METI) making a mission to Kazakhstan, securing uranium mining rights and strengthening industrial cooperation between the two countries.
- ◆ In the lawsuit against the Hamaoka NPS, a judgment was rendered against the plaintiffs, who had sought the halt in the plant's operation. The seismic safety was the focus of the case, and the assertions of the Chubu Electric Power Co. were recognized.
- ◆ Japan's Basic Energy Plan was revised, identifying nuclear power as a core energy source, and urging the promotion of the nuclear fuel cycle.
- ◆ Technology for the fast breeder reactor (FBR) advances, as construction work to remodel the FBR Monju is completed. Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (MHI) was chosen as the central firm to carry out the fundamental design of the demonstration reactor.
- ◆ The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) Agreement took effect. Construction of the facilities located in Japan was begun.
- ◆ International debate about global warming heated up. The role of nuclear technology is now up for discussion as the post-Kyoto protocol era approaches.

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