

# Japan N-plants updates: Niigata, Tomari, Tsuruga, Genkai, Fukushima

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## Contents

- [TEPCO to conduct drill survey](#)
- [Suit Filed to Seek Decommissio](#)
- [Residents seek court order \(...\)](#)
- [Reactivated Genkai nuclear \(...\)](#)
- [90% of Fukushima candidates](#)
- [Issue of nuclear reliance \(...\)](#)
- [27 percent of residents in \(...\)](#)

## **TEPCO to conduct drill survey at Niigata plant for evidence of tsunami**

NIIGATA (Kyodo) — Tokyo Electric Power Co. said Thursday it will conduct a drilling survey around the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa nuclear power plant in Niigata Prefecture for signs of past tsunami, with an eye to reflecting the data collected in its countermeasures against possible tsunami.

The sediment survey will begin next Tuesday and last until around late April, according to the utility known as TEPCO. It is the first time that the company will carry out a drilling survey on the Sea of Japan coast.

The study will cover nine coastal locations in the central Japan prefecture, including areas close to the plant that straddles Kashiwazaki city and Kariwa village, and collect data from before the year 1600, going as far back as around 7,000 years ago, TEPCO said.

In response to the nuclear crisis triggered by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant in Fukushima Prefecture, TEPCO began constructing a levee on Nov. 1 to withstand tsunami waves of up to 15 meters high on the coastal area of the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant.

The company currently anticipates tsunami up to 3.3 meters high could hit the Kashiwazaki-Kariwa plant.

**Kyodo Press**, November 11, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/11/20111111p2g00m0dm020000c.html>

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## **Suit Filed to Seek Decommission of Tomari N-Reactors**

Sapporo, Nov. 11 (Jiji Press)—A total of 612 people filed a lawsuit Friday against Hokkaido Electric Power Co. in order to seek decommission of all three reactors at the power utility's Tomari nuclear power plant.

The plaintiffs, mainly Hokkaido residents, claim that the Tomari plant is not earthquake-proof and that the power company is infringing on personal rights such as safety.

According to lawyers, this is the third lawsuit seeking decommission of nuclear power plants filed after the accident at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, which was badly damaged in the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

According to the plaintiffs, the Tomari plant is not prepared for a major earthquake as quake-resistance measures do not reflect an active fault and plate boundaries that were unknown at the time that the plant was built.

At a press conference, Takeishi Saito, head of the plaintiffs, said that, through the lawsuit, the group wants to publicize the fact that the Tomari plant's location is unsafe.

**Jiji Press**, November. 11, 2011

<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=201111101095>

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## **Residents seek court order not to restart Tsuruga reactors**

OTSU (Kyodo) — A group of some 40 residents filed a suit against Japan Atomic Power Co. on Tuesday seeking a provisional court order not to restart two reactors at its Tsuruga nuclear power plant in the city of Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, facing the Sea of Japan.

In the suit filed with the Otsu District Court, the plaintiffs argue that Lake Biwa, Japan's biggest lake and source of water for the Kansai region centering on Osaka, could be contaminated and residents could be endangered if a nuclear accident occurs at the plant.

Currently the two reactors at the plant, one with output capacity of 357,000 kilowatts and the other with capacity of 1,160,000 kw, have been shut down for regular checkups.

The plaintiffs, mainly residents of Shiga Prefecture just south of Fukui Prefecture, insist that the Tsuruga plant is built on a site with a fault below it and a severe accident could strike it in the event of crustal movements.

They also say the smaller No. 1 reactor has become degraded as more than 40 years have passed since the launch of its operation in 1970 and that only poor measures against tsunami have been taken for the Tsuruga plant.

They also argue that current regular checks are done under the government's present safety and technological standards that have effectively proved insufficient as shown in the ongoing nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant devastated by the March 11 earthquake-tsunami

disaster.

The residents also contend that the two reactors should remain shut down until the government fully investigates the cause of the ongoing Fukushima crisis and they undergo regular checks to be done under fresh safety standards.

Japan Atomic Power declined to comment on the lawsuit, saying it is not aware of details.

According to the company's plan, the No. 1 reactor's checkup is to be completed next March. It began the four-month inspection of the No. 2 reactor in late August.

In August, residents in Shiga Prefecture, where Lake Biwa is located, filed a similar suit with the Otsu District Court seeking a provisional court order not to restart seven reactors operated by Kansai Electric Power Co. in Fukui Prefecture.

Japan Atomic Power is a Tokyo-based power wholesaler owned by nine regional power firms and another wholesaler Electric Power Development Co., known as J-Power. It has two nuclear power plants — one in Tsuruga and one in Tokaimura, Ibaraki Prefecture.

**Kyodo Press**, November 9, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/09/20111109p2g00m0dm007000c.html>

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## **Reactivated Genkai nuclear reactor becomes fully operational**

FUKUOKA (Kyodo) — A nuclear reactor at Kyushu Electric Power Co.'s Genkai power plant in southwestern Japan's Saga Prefecture became fully operational Friday, after it was reactivated earlier in the week following a one-month hiatus caused by a technical glitch, the utility said.

The No. 4 reactor at the plant in the town of Genkai was back to normal operation around 4:20 p.m. with its power output reaching 100 percent of capacity.

The reactor automatically shut down on Oct. 4 as an abnormality emerged in its steam condenser after repairs had been carried out based on a faulty manual.

With its return to normal operation, which has drawn opposition from some local residents, Kyushu Electric's power supply in November will reach 14.2 million kilowatts, bringing the utility's available supply capacity from about 2 percent more than the expected demand to 11 percent, the company said.

It is the first time since the start of the nuclear crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant in March that a utility has reactivated a nuclear reactor that went offline due to a technical problem.

**Kyodo Press**, November 5, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/05/20111105p2g00m0dm012000c.html>

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## **90% of Fukushima candidates want N-reactors scrapped**

Nearly 90 percent of candidates planning to run in the upcoming Fukushima prefectural assembly election think all the reactors at the stricken Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant should be decommissioned, according to a Yomiuri Shimbun survey.

All 87 potential candidates responded to the survey, whose findings suggest radiation decontamination and other nuclear issues will be key points in this campaign—a change from previous prefectural assembly elections.

An official announcement of the election will be made Thursday, and Fukushima Prefecture residents will go to the polls Nov. 20. The election has been postponed due to the March 11 disaster and ensuing nuclear crisis.

According to the survey, 76 candidate, or 87.3 percent, said the Nos. 5 and 6 reactors at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s nuclear plant should be decommissioned. The Nos. 1 to 4 reactors have already been designated for decommissioning.

Regarding the Fukushima No. 2 nuclear power plant, the future of which has not been decided, 72 people, or 82.7 percent, said the plant should be decommissioned. Six respondents said restarting the reactors should be carefully considered.

On Oct. 20, the prefectural assembly adopted a petition calling all 10 reactors in the prefecture to be scrapped.

Measures to compensate for jobs lost due to decommissioning the reactors, however, have not been adequately presented.

***Yomiuri Shimbun*** , November 9, 2011

<http://www.yomiuri.co.jp/dy/national/T111108005264.htm>

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## **Issue of nuclear reliance overshadowed by radiation cleanup pledges in Fukushima election**

As the Nov. 10 launch of campaigning for the Fukushima Prefectural Assembly election approaches, many candidates are focusing on the issue of decontamination rather than questions over whether or not to keep nuclear power.

Backed by the ruling Democratic Party of Japan (DPJ) in the Koriyama electoral district is 56-year-old Toshio Sakuma. Wearing a dosimeter around his neck, Sakuma has been visiting residents' homes and checking for radiation spread by the ongoing crisis at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant.

"I'm here to check radiation levels," he announces as he arrives.

Sakuma's election pledge is to ensure a quick end to the nuclear crisis and thorough implementation of decontamination work.

"All I hear are requests from people saying they want decontamination work to move forward and their lives to be returned to normal," he says, explaining the reason for his pledge.

While Sakuma is a newcomer in the prefectural assembly race, he has served four terms as a Koriyama Municipal Assembly member. He previously worked for Tohoku Electric Power Co. and in previous elections he received support from Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Worker's Unions of Japan.

In the two-seat Futaba district, home to the Fukushima No. 1 and No. 2 nuclear plants, many residents were forced to evacuate their homes as a result of radiation contamination, and many still remain scattered around Japan. A total of five candidates have stepped forward to represent the district. Among them is incumbent DPJ member Eiji Sakamoto, 56. He says voters have not been so interested in whether candidates are for or against nuclear power.

"I don't think there is that much interest in whether our claims are about getting rid of nuclear power or not," Sakamoto says. Last month, the prefectural assembly voted to adopt a petition to decommission all nuclear reactors in Fukushima Prefecture, but five members left before the vote was held and did not reveal whether they supported or opposed the measure. Sakamoto was one of them.

The Futaba electoral district has a population of roughly 68,000. Prefectural figures show that about one-tenth of the population is employed by nuclear power plants or nuclear-power related businesses.

Liberal Democratic Party candidate Eiko Yoshida, who is seeking his third term, is standing on a platform of promoting decontamination. The 47-year-old supported the prefectural assembly's petition, but now he is not necessarily calling for the decommissioning of reactors.

"Even if a party makes an election pledge to abandon nuclear power or decommission reactors, there is no guarantee that residents will be able to return home in half a year's time," Yoshida says.

The Social Democratic Party is backing 61-year-old newcomer Yoko Endo, who has campaigned for the abolishment of nuclear power plants. The reason the party is officially backing a candidate for the first time in five years after a local by-election is to push through its claims in "a constituency representative of the tragedy of the nuclear power crisis."

Endo has visited residents who have evacuated to temporary housing units to listen to what they have to say. She says she has received a certain level of feedback with people saying, "We don't need nuclear power plants any more." However she adds: "I've also heard some harsh opinions, with people saying that they've survived on nuclear power for a long time, so how can they now say they will get rid of nuclear power plants."

**Mainichi Shimbun** , November 8, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/08/20111108p2a00m0na010000c.html>

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## **27 percent of residents in evacuation zones don't want to return to their neighborhoods**

FUKUSHIMA — More than one in four residents of areas designated as evacuation or evacuation preparation zones around the tsunami-hit Fukushima nuclear plant say they have no intention of returning to their neighborhoods, a survey has shown.

Fuminori Tanba, an associate professor at Fukushima University's disaster recovery research institute, surveyed all residents of eight towns and villages in the Futaba district of Fukushima Prefecture designated as no-entry or evacuation preparation zones.

With the cooperation of the eight municipal governments, Tanba sent questionnaires to 28,184 households in September, asking the heads of the households to send their replies. Of them, 13,463, or 47.8 percent responded.

Of all the respondents, 26.9 percent said they have no intention of returning to their neighborhoods. By age, 52.3 percent of those aged up to 34 and 13.1 percent of elderly people aged in their 80s and above said they do not want to go back to their original places of residence.

As for the reasons, many of the respondents expressed grave concern about radiation contamination. The largest percentage, 83.1 percent, pointed out that it is difficult to decontaminate their neighborhoods; 65.7 percent answered they cannot trust the national government's safety declaration; while 61.3 percent said they are pessimistic about the possibility of bringing the crippled power plant under control.

Of those who want to return home, 37.4 percent said they can wait for one to two years. The figure rises to 50.3 percent if those who said they can wait for no more than one year is included.

Only 14.6 percent of all respondents said they can wait as long as they are required to. By age bracket, 24.5 percent of those aged up to 34 chose this answer and the higher the people's ages are, the lower the percentage becomes.

Younger generations are clearly split into those who are prepared to wait over a long period and those who do not want to go back to their neighborhoods.

The survey results have also demonstrated that residents of the evacuation and evacuation preparation zones are frustrated about the uncertainty for their future.

In a multiple-reply question about problems in their daily lives, 57.8 percent of the respondents complained that they do not know how long they have to live as evacuees, while 49.3 percent said they have no prospects for their future housing. Moreover, 47.4 percent cited the effects of radiation on their health.

Some 48.5 percent called for a restoration plan to cover the entire Futaba district while 44.5 percent underscored the need for efforts to vitalize local businesses, including measures to secure jobs for younger generations.

**Mainichi Shimbun** , November 8, 2011

<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/11/08/20111108p2a00m0na017000c.html>

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