

Nobel winner urges Japan to abandon nuclear power

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TOKYO (AP) — Nobel laureate Kenzaburo Oe urged Japan's new prime minister on Tuesday to halt plans to restart nuclear power plants and instead abandon nuclear energy.

Oe cautioned Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda against prioritizing the economy over safety. Noda has said he will allow idled nuclear plants to resume operation when their safety is confirmed.

"The new prime minister seems to think that nuclear power plants are necessary for Japan's economy, and how to resume their operation is one of his key political agendas," Oe said. "We must make a big decision to abolish all nuclear plants."

Oe, who won the Nobel Prize in literature in 1994, said the accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi power plant six months ago caused the Japanese public to want to reduce their dependence on nuclear power, but that feeling seems to be fading.

He spoke at news conference Tuesday about an anti-nuclear petition drive, accompanied by other members of the campaign.

The group, which is demanding that the government decommission aging reactors and promote renewable energy, aims to collect 10 million signatures and submit them to the government next March.

Oe has actively supported pacifist and anti-nuclear campaigns and written books about the U.S. atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

Noda, who took office last Friday, becoming Japan's six prime minister in five years, has said he does not plan to build new nuclear plants and will decommission those that are aged. But he said he plans to restart plants whose safety is confirmed to relieve power shortages and help Japan's economic recovery. More than 30 of the country's 54 reactors are idled, forcing a nationwide conservation effort this summer.

The nuclear accident at the Fukushima Dai-ichi plant was like "a third atomic bombing" that Japan inflicted on itself, Oe said. "We already faced the major threat of radiation from Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Now, many children will have to live with radiation threats for 10, 20 or 30 years from now."

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<http://mdn.mainichi.jp/mdnnews/national/archive/news/2011/09/06/20110906p2g00m0dm101000c.html>

Electric Power Related Industry Worker's Federation on N-Power Policy

Nagoya, Sept. 6 (Jiji Press)—In the wake of the crisis at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, labor union members in Japan's power industry excluded nuclear power promotion from their policies for the first time in 54 years.

Seiichi Taneoka, president of the Federation of Electric Power Related Industry Worker's Union of Japan, said at an annual convention, which began here Tuesday, that it is extremely regrettable that the current situation ensued despite its earnest efforts to make nuclear power safer.

To deal with the government's possible revision of energy policy including nuclear power, the federation has set up a research committee.

The committee plans to draw up new campaign policies by the end of February that will take various perspectives into consideration, including stable power supply, alternative electricity generation methods, cost cuts and global environmental protection.

Currently, nuclear power is necessary for a stable supply of electricity, Taneoka said.

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<http://jen.jiji.com/jc/eng?g=eco&k=2011090600817>
