

Japan-Nagoya: Hamaoka reactor restart in July urged

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NAGOYA – Chubu Electric Power Co. is planning to restart a nuclear reactor of its Hamaoka plant, now subject to regular checkups, in Shizuoka Prefecture in July to continue stable power supply this summer, the utility said Thursday.

The utility is making its earnings forecast for the year through March 2012 on the assumption that it will restart the reactor on the Pacific in Omaezaki, it said.

“We think that it is a precondition to gain understanding of local residents about restarting the reactor,” Akihisa Mizuno, president of Chubu Electric, told a news conference in Nagoya. “We have made our earnings forecast based on the assumption, and it does not mean we will definitely follow our schedule,” he explained. But he also added that if restarting the reactor is delayed beyond July, it will incur additional cost of ¥200 million a day.

But it is uncertain whether the utility can restart the reactor as planned, amid mounting concerns in the local community about its safety after massive amounts of radiation leaked from Tokyo Electric Power Co.’s Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant, triggered by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami.

Chubu Electric, based in Nagoya, had planned at first to restart the reactor in March but suspended the plan after the government called for thorough checks on the safety measures for nuclear plants after the disaster.

Chubu Electric plans to compile safety measures, which are likely to cost ¥30 billion, including building seawalls against big tsunami and installing power generators on the rooftop of the reactor building.

With the measures, the utility hopes to gain local people’s support and restart the reactor as soon as possible. But local opposition is very strong.

On Monday, Shizuoka Gov. Heita Kawakatsu expressed doubts in restarting the reactor.

“It will be difficult to restart the No. 3 reactor unless everyone is sure about its safety,” he told a news conference.

Hajime Mikami, mayor of Kosai, Shizuoka Prefecture, has also said that he does not want to allow the utility to restart the reactor.

Kyodo, Friday, April 29, 2011

* <http://search.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20110429a2.html>

