Japan Safety Commission: Oi Nuclear Reactors 'Safe'

FUKUI, Japan, June 10 (Kyodo) — A local nuclear safety commission on Sunday effectively approved the restart of two idled reactors at the Oi nuclear plant in Fukui Prefecture by endorsing a report prepared by prefectural officials stating that necessary safety measures have been put in place.

The meeting was temporarily disrupted by some members of the public opposed to the restart but the commission later issued its approval, a necessary step before the prefectural governor can accept Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda's call to reactivate the reactors.

Noda said Friday it is necessary to reactivate the Nos. 3 and 4 reactors at the Oi plant to prevent a power crunch this summer in the service area of the plant's operator, Kansai Electric Power Co., in what would be the first restart of idled reactors since the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant last year.

The report examined the central government's probe into the causes of the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Station and responses such as safety tests as well as Kansai Electric Power's safety measures.

The report rated highly the government's new criteria for restarting reactors and said in reference to the reactors in question that "the safety of the power station has been enhanced, and even if an earthquake and tsunami that should be assumed based on the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear accident occurs, necessary measures for ensuring safety have been secured."

The meeting of the prefectural government's safety commission was temporarily suspended due to disruption by some members of the public.

Around 20 people could not enter the conference room, with seating for around 50, due to overcrowding. Some members of the public demanded that the commission allow all of them in as the committee members and briefers from Kansai Electric were waiting for the meeting to begin.

Some members of the public tussled with prefectural government staff, chanting, "This commission should be for the people," and "Pushing it through is an act of violence," while holding fliers opposed to nuclear power plants.

The committee members resumed the meeting after around an hour at a different venue without allowing in members of the public.

Currently, all of Japan's 50 operational commercial reactors are offline amid

heightened public concern over the safety of nuclear power plants following the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi complex triggered by the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami.

Source URL (retrieved on *09/17/2014 - 5:15am*):
http://www.chem.info/news/2012/06/japan-safety-commission-oi-nuclear-reactors-safe?qt-most_popular=1