

# Cutting-edge coal plants planned in Fukushima: report

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Tokyo Electric Power Co's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant pictured in Okuma, Fukushima Prefecture on November 7, 2013

A Japanese utility plans to construct two cutting-edge coal power plants in Fukushima, an area severely hit by the 2011 nuclear disaster, a report said Saturday.

Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO), the cash-strapped operator of the

crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, and three Mitsubishi group companies are seeking to open the new facilities as early as 2020, the leading Nikkei business daily said.

The project is aimed at helping TEPCO reduce its reliance on costly natural gas and create jobs in the area, the Nikkei said.

The firms expect the plants to generate one million kilowatts, the equivalent of one nuclear reactor, as the utility works to decommission the Fukushima Daiichi, which went into meltdown after being struck by a giant tsunami in March 2011.

They estimate the overall cost of the project at 300 billion yen (\$2.96 billion), with the government potentially providing financial assistance, the Nikkei said without naming sources.

Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and Mitsubishi Corp. trading firm will each take a 40-percent-plus stake in a special-purpose company to be set up to run the plants, while Mitsubishi Electric is to own 10 percent, the Nikkei said.

TEPCO will hold a stake of less than 10 percent, it added.

The plants, which will be equipped with cutting-edge technology, are expected to be about 20 percent more efficient than conventional coal-fired facilities, it said.

TEPCO could not immediately confirm details, as a spokesman said the project is still being studied.

More than 18,000 people died after a magnitude 9.0-magnitude quake and ensuing monster tsunami hit Japan on March 11, 2011.

No one is officially recorded as having died as a result of the nuclear meltdown, but it forced a massive evacuation in the area around the plant.

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