



## **EXCLUSIVE: Japan's Energy Policy to Feature Zero N-Power Dependence**

Japan's new energy policy is expected to feature an eventual goal of reducing the nation's dependence on nuclear power generation to zero, government officials told Jiji Press on Saturday.

Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda will announce the new policy after a formal decision expected for early September at a meeting of ministers in charge of energy and related affairs, the officials said.

Under the policy, Japan will seek to reduce its dependence on nuclear energy to 15 pct or even lower as an interim target for 2030, before completely ending the use of nuclear energy in electricity generation, according to the officials.

The government earlier considered the 15 pct dependence as the 2030 target in its new energy policy. But the government now thinks it necessary to make it clear that Japan will pursue a nuclear-free society, after seeing most people favor the zero-dependence option in public hearings and a deliberative opinion poll.

The zero-nuclear power target will be included in innovative energy and environment strategies that will be adopted at the energy-related ministerial meeting, the government officials said.

Under the new energy policy, Japan will check progress with efforts to lower its nuclear energy dependence every five years from 2015.

In the upcoming policy paper, the government will also say that Japan will face a lot of difficulties, such as how to spread the use of renewable energy sources and realize the final disposal of spent nuclear fuel, the officials said.

Noda plans to call on all Japanese people to cooperate in achieving the target at a news conference or by other means, they added.

As for existing nuclear reactors, the paper will say Japan will "strictly apply" the basic rule of decommissioning facilities after 40 years of operations.

The government is considering giving up the commercialization of a fast-breeder reactor and terminating research at the Monju prototype reactor in Tsuruga, Fukui Prefecture, central Japan.

On the nuclear fuel cycle, the government is discussing scaling down the project to reuse spent fuel by reprocessing it in order to maintain the cycle.

Japan started reviewing its energy policy in the wake of the meltdowns in March 2011 at Tokyo Electric Power Co.'s tsunami-crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant.

In July that year, then Prime Minister Naoto Kan said Japan should end its dependence on nuclear energy. Basically following the policy, Noda has presented to the public the three dependence options for 2030 of zero pct, 15 pct and 20-25

pct.

After conducting the public hearings and the deliberative poll, the government has concluded that at least a majority of the public hopes to realize a society free of nuclear energy.

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