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GE chief Immelt says nuclear power plants safe, gas turbines on way

By **KANAKO TAKAHARA**
Staff writer

Visiting General Electric Co. CEO Jeffrey Immelt said Monday that the nuclear power plants it sells worldwide are safe despite the crisis the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant GE built more than 40 years ago is going through.

"This is an industry with an extremely safe track record for more than 40 years," Immelt told reporters after meeting with Banri Kaieda, the minister of economy, trade and industry.

Immelt did not respond to questions about GE's responsibility as the manufacturer of the Fukushima plant, which was crippled when the tsunami flooded the facility and cut power to its critical cooling systems. But Hitachi President Hiroaki Nakanishi, who attended the meeting with Immelt, said the two firms are tackling the nuclear crisis to "fulfill that responsibility."

GE wholly built one of the six reactors at the Fukushima plant that was damaged by the March 11 earthquake and subsequent tsunami. It built two others jointly with Toshiba Corp.

Immelt told Kaieda that GE is ready to provide its utmost support to help resolve the crisis at the plant, including the most urgent matter of restoring the reactors' cooling systems, a METI official told reporters at a briefing.

GE and Hitachi, which are involved in a nuclear power plant joint venture, sent about 1,000 people to the site soon after the crisis began.

Immelt also told Kaieda that GE is ready to support Tokyo Electric Power Co., which is responsible for managing the nuclear power plant and for supplying electricity to the Kanto region, in compensating for the loss of power caused by the crisis.

"We already have gas turbines on a boat being shipped to Japan," Immelt said after the meeting.

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