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23:46 15 March

Talks on Japan's long-term energy plan start with pro-nuclear tone

TOKYO, March 15, Kyodo

A Japanese government panel on Friday started discussions to devise the country's new medium to long-term energy plan after a change of government led to a reversal in a goal to phase out nuclear power by the 2030s.

The refurbished lineup of the panel to discuss the so-called Basic Energy Plan took on a pro-nuclear cast under Economy, Trade and Industry Minister Toshimitsu Motegi, who assumed the ministerial post in December.

Akio Mimura, senior adviser to Nippon Steel & Sumitomo Metal Corp. who heads the panel, suggested that the energy plan may touch on the importance of using nuclear power even after the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant disaster.

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