

## Nuclear panel to give assessment on fault

A Nuclear Regulation Authority experts' panel is taking the unusual approach of compiling circumstantial evidence and making a decision from a safety standpoint on the geological conditions under a nuclear power plant.

The panel will caution the authority that a fault running under the Tsuruga plant in Fukui Prefecture could be active. The government's guidelines prohibit building key nuclear facilities directly over active faults.

The authority was created based on the lessons learned from the 2011 Fukushima Daiichi accident. It is allowed to operate independently, without relying on information from the operating power company.

The panel has been collecting circumstantial as well as concrete evidence on faults the government has identified under nuclear facilities.

Meanwhile, the operating power company has reacted to the panel's findings.

On Tuesday of last week, the Japan Atomic Power Company gave the media a look at a survey site at the plant. The utility said it will prove in an additional survey that the fault is not active. The company had earlier submitted an open list of questions to the nuclear authority.

Governor Issei Nishikawa of Fukui Prefecture, which hosts the plant, has released a request for sufficient scientific evidence.

The authority is expected to include older active faults in the new nuclear safety standards it is considering. The tighter standards on active faults could affect nuclear power stations around the nation.

The authority is being asked to explain in detail how it arrived at its decision on the issue, not only to the utilities and local governments concerned, but also to the public to regain their trust in the county's nuclear administration.

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