

New coal power plant construction launched in Hiroshima

The Associated Press

HIROSHIMA, March 1 (Kyodo) — Chugoku Electric Power Co. and Electric Power Development Co. held a ceremony Friday to launch the construction of a prototype plant for a new coal-fired power generation method in Hiroshima Prefecture.

Through trials due to begin in March 2017 at the facility on Osakikami Island, the two companies will seek to generate more power in a more eco-friendly way than conventional coal-fired power generation.

While the traditional method burns coal directly, the new technology will steam coal and exploit gas extracted in the process. It will also utilize exhaust heat to generate more power.

Power generation efficiency is expected to improve at least 10 percent. The percentage is projected to rise to around 50 percent in the future as fuel cells are used, according to the two companies. The technique will use a wide variety of coal.

"Coal tends to emit more carbon dioxide than other fossil fuels but we will reduce the emissions by enhancing efficiency," Chugoku Electric President Tomohide Karita said.

"This technology that will use coal in a clean, efficient manner is certain to benefit not just Japan but the whole world. So we hope to promote it globally," said Electric Power Development President Masayoshi Kitamura.

The prototype facility with projected power output of 166,000 kilowatts will be operated by Osaki CoolGen Corp, a joint venture between the two partners.

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