

Japan, Hungary foreign ministers to strengthen energy cooperation

The Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Aug. 23 (Kyodo) — Japanese Foreign Minister Fumio Kishida met with his Hungarian counterpart Janos Martonyi in Budapest on Friday to agree to strengthen cooperation in the field of energy including nuclear power.

Japan is aiming to export nuclear power infrastructure to the European country as a way to help boost the Japanese economy, given that Hungary plans to expand its Paks nuclear power plant by building additional reactors.

Through the talks, Kishida hopes to strengthen ties with Eastern Europe as Hungary currently chairs the four-nation Visegrad Group that also includes Poland, the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

Kishida is also scheduled to hold a meeting with Hungarian Prime Minister Victor Orban later in the day to invite the prime minister to visit Japan in November, according to Japanese officials.

Kisida and Martonyi are expected to agree to hold a national security seminar between Japan and the Visegrad Group in Tokyo in February in light of China's growing clout in Eastern Europe.

Kishida is also expected to brief his Hungarian counterpart about the territorial row over the Japanese-controlled Senkaku Islands in the East China Sea that are claimed by Beijing, which refers to them as Diaoyu.

After the talks, the foreign ministers are scheduled to sign a social security accord so Japanese citizens residing in Hungary and Hungarian citizens residing in Japan do not have to pay health insurance and pension premiums in both countries.

The agreement comes in response to the increasing number of Japanese companies operating in Hungary, currently standing at over 130.

On Saturday, Kishida is scheduled to visit a car plant affiliated with Suzuki Motor Corp. in the country before heading to Ukraine, where he will tour Chernobyl, site of the 1986 nuclear disaster, on Sunday.

Source URL (retrieved on 08/02/2014 - 1:11am):

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