

Thursday, 2 May 2013

Report: Japan, France firms win Turkey nuclear contract



Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and France's Areva have won a multi-billion dollar contract to build a nuclear power plant on the Black Sea, Turkey's prime minister has told a Japanese newspaper. In an interview published Thursday in The Nikkei datelined Ankara, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who is to host his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe on Friday, said the group had won the rights to construct four reactors, reportedly worth 2.0 trillion yen (\$20.5 billion). The Japanese-led group will build the nuclear plant at Sinop on the Black Sea coast, Erdogan told the paper on Tuesday. Without using direct quotes, the report said Turkey had faith in the technological prowess of Japan's nuclear industry and believed it had improved since the tsunami-sparked atomic calamity at Fukushima in 2011. "Erdogan said Japan has experience and know-how in coping with earthquakes. He also said that Japan has learned from the Fukushima Daiichi disaster," the paper said. The Sinop plant could lead to more reactor construction in Turkey for Japanese firms, the prime minister said. "Turkey would welcome a Japanese bid on a proposed third [nuclear] plant and is working to select a site, Erdogan said," according to an English-language version of the report. "The country wants to have as many reactors as possible in operation by 2023," he added, according to the report. An earlier Nikkei report said Mitsubishi and Areva will build four pressurized water reactors with a combined output of 4.5 million kilowatts. Construction is to begin in 2017, with the first reactor coming on line by 2023. France's GDF Suez will operate the facility while a joint venture involving Japanese and Turkish companies will sell the power to local utilities, it added. Japanese, Chinese, South Korean and Canadian nuclear reactor makers had been competing for the project. The deal marks Japan's first successful public-private bid for an overseas nuclear plant project since its 2011 nuclear disaster. A huge tsunami crippled cooling systems at the Fukushima, sending reactors into meltdown, and spewing radioactive materials into surrounding areas. Tens of thousands of people remain evacuated from a swathe of land around the plant, with experts warning some settlements could be uninhabitable for decades.