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July 25, 08

Hitachi and GE to Develop Small Advanced Nuclear Reactors

Japan's Hitachi and General Electric are jointly developing a new reactor with an output capacity of up to one million kilowatts for sale in emerging countries, informed sources said Wednesday.

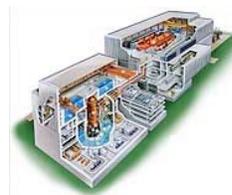
The two companies aim to start accepting orders for the new reactor in Southeast Asia, among other regions, in the early 2010s, the sources said. They intend to capitalize on growing demand for midsize power reactors in emerging countries that do not have extensive electricity transmission networks.

Engaged in the development is Hitachi-GE Nuclear Energy Ltd., a joint venture created last year through the merger of the nuclear power businesses of Hitachi and GE.

Based on their mainstay advanced boiling water reactors with an output capacity of 1.35 million kilowatts, the joint firm is developing a smaller reactor with an output capacity of 600,000-900,000 kilowatts, the sources said.

Adopting the same basic design as the existing large nuclear power reactors allows the new reactor to carry a low price tag and easily pass each country's screening tests.

The new project is expected to further intensify competition in the nuclear reactor industry, where the Hitachi-GE pair is already in a fierce race with Japan's Toshiba Corp., which owns U.S. nuclear power equipment maker Westinghouse Electric Co., and with a team of Japan's Mitsubishi Heavy Industries Ltd. and its French partner Areva Group.



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