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Decision on site for fusion reactor put off again

VIENNA (Kyodo) Japan, the European Union and four other nations failed Friday to forge an accord on whether to build the world's first prototype nuclear fusion reactor in France or Japan.

In a meeting of sub-Cabinet officials from the six parties involved in the International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor project, both Japan and the European Union remained adamant about their proposals to host the reactor, conference sources said.

Japan has proposed that it host the project in Rokkasho, Aomori Prefecture, while the European Union has selected the southern French town of Cadarache as its candidate venue.

China, Russia, South Korea and the United States are the other partners in the ITER project, estimated to require 1.3 trillion yen over 30 years, including reactor construction and operation costs.

The six parties agreed in previous negotiations that the successful bidder will shoulder 48 percent of the reactor's 10-year construction costs estimated at 570 billion yen.

In the Vienna meeting, Japan expressed its readiness to raise the share to 50 percent and also proposed shouldering half of the 92 billion yen construction costs for an ITER-related facility to be hosted by the party failing to host the reactor.

But the EU made similar proposals and the meeting came to a standstill, the sources said.

The Vienna meeting was held after the six parties failed to reach a conclusion on the reactor construction site at their ministerial meeting late last year and a sub-Cabinet meeting in February.

The ITER project is aimed at creating the world's first sustained nuclear fusion reaction, similar to the energy-producing process that takes place in the sun.

The Japan Times: June 20, 2004

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Market Moves
 5 p.m. Fri. in Tokyo

Yen per dollar
109.52-54
 (+ 0.11 from Thur.)

Nikkei average
11,382.08
 (-225.82)

TOPIX
1,149.88
 (-16.90)



Tokyo
 High today: 29 C
 Low tonight: 19 C

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