
Japan funded power plant handed over to Iraq

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The Japan Times Online reported that a large scale thermal power plant, the largest infrastructure project funded by Japanese aid in Iraq was transferred to the Iraqi authorities in a ceremony Monday.

As per report, the 60,000 KW plant, located in the southern city of Samawah, where the Ground Self Defense Force engaged in reconstruction work for more than two years from 2004, had been scheduled for completion in fall 2007 after construction began in February 2006. The work was interrupted several times when the government decided against sending engineers, citing the unstable security situation.

The power plant is expected to meet roughly one-third of the electricity demand for Al-Muthana Province, where power shortages have been a serious problem. The new source of power will likely prove welcome when the mercury shoots to above 50 degrees in summer. It is estimated that 100,000 to 120,000 residents in about 20,000 households will benefit from the plant, for which the Japan provided JPY 12.7 billion in grant aid.

The completion of the plant comes as Japan recently pulled out its troops who were engaged in Iraqi airlift activities. Japan's reconstruction support for Iraq is expected to shift to yen loans and technical cooperation by private sector entities.

Ms Seiko Hashimoto senior vice Foreign Minister of Japan said at the handover ceremony that "We would like to share the joy that has been constructed successfully and power supply has started. Japan will remain committed to Iraqi reconstruction."
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(Sourced from The Japan Times Online)

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