

## Power errors not nuclear disaster

Written by Tsai Ya-ying 蔡雅瑩

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On Tuesday, mistakes by CPC Corp, Taiwan personnel stopped gas supplies to the Datan Power Station in Taoyuan for two minutes, tripping all six generators at the plant. At the same time, generators were offline at Taiwan Power Co's (Taipower, 台電) Taichung and Tongsiao power plants, as well as at Ho-Ping Power Co's plant in Hualien County.

The result was that region after region across Taiwan experienced power outages.

Calls to restore nuclear power were immediately heard, but given the constant problems at power stations, how can anyone have confidence in nuclear power?

The Chernobyl and Three Mile Island nuclear disasters were because of human error.

In Taiwan, oversights during repairs at the Jinshan Nuclear Power Plant's reactor No. 1 in July 2013 caused core cooling to exceed the reactor's embrittlement alert value for more than an hour; in March last year, reactor No. 2 at the same plant was stopped for four days because a switch had been thrown by mistake.

In March 2003, crane cables at the Guosheng Nuclear Power Plant's reactor No. 1 were connected the wrong way, causing fuel bundles to slip and fall; in November 2012, a circuit breaker of reactor No. 2 at the plant was cut by mistake, resulting in a reactor shutdown.

In April 1996, steam leaked at the Ma-anshan Nuclear Power Plant's reactor No. 1 because a valve had not been closed; in May, reactor No. 2 at the plant tripped due to operational error.

In May 2010, equipment at the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant reactor No. 1 burned because the wrong equipment was used during cleaning, which caused an error in a control chip; and in July 2010, false firing caused the wrong signal to be sent, resulting in loss of external power for 28 hours.

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Had the Longmen plant in New Taipei City's Gongliao District (公寮) been operational during the last of those incidents on the list, Taiwan would have experienced a nuclear disaster.

Problems at non-nuclear power stations mean temporary inconveniences; a nuclear disaster could mean life or death for a small nation like Taiwan.

Article 95 of the Electricity Act (電業法) states that "the nuclear-energy-based power-generating facilities shall wholly stop running by 2025."

Continued demands that nuclear plants be kept online ignores the law, and even if the Fourth Nuclear Power Plant — which was plagued by problems during construction — was to become operational and fortune kept it free from accidents, making it operational would not be economically feasible, as it would have to be decommissioned in under eight years.

Tuesday's power outage was not a matter of insufficient power facilities, it was an accident. Fortunately, it was not an accident at a nuclear plant.

Hopefully the government will stick to its guns and make Taiwan a nuclear-free nation.

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Translated by Perry Svensson

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