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<http://www.eco-business.com/news/analysis-nuclear-crisis-highlights-prospects-for-renewables/>

Analysis: Nuclear crisis highlights prospects for renewables

The threat of a meltdown at nuclear reactors in Japan has prompted scrutiny of renewable power options by many nations as growing public unease pushes top consumers to either go slow or halt any immediate expansion in nuclear power.

Japan, one of the world's top nuclear power generators and a key advocate of the technology, plans a review of policy to tap sources such as solar. China too may double its target for photovoltaic capacity over the next five years, and Taiwan is studying cutting nuclear output. Germany and Switzerland are either shutting older reactors or suspending approvals.

Investors are already betting on the change, carrying global benchmark indexes to their highest in 14 months.

The global ... index has spiked more than 8 percent since Japan's earthquake struck on March 11, beating a rise of around 2 percent in the MSCI all-country world stock index. The WilderHill New Energy Global Innovation index of alternative energy stocks has gained around 12 percent.

"If nuclear contributes less, then something has to make up the difference and that could very easily be renewables," ..., president and chief executive of New-York listed global power firm AES Corporation said in Singapore.

Giving a fillip to the sector, China, the world's biggest energy consumer, has already announced plans to raise the price of power generated from renewable sources over the next two years to help encourage investments.

China's renewable energy law obliges grid firms to buy all the renewable electricity produced in their region, even though it is more expensive than coal-fired power, but it also allows them to charge "additional" fees for clean electricity sources.

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