Japan Automakers To Expand Operations

NAGOYA, Aug. 31 (Kyodo) — Toyota Motor Corp. and other major automakers in Japan will restart their operations on Thursdays from September after having to shift them to the weekends due to power shortages triggered by the March 11 earthquake.

The carmakers suspended operations on Thursdays and Fridays in July and August to avoid boosting electricity consumption during busy hours under the initiative of the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association.

But after deeming the demand for electricity has peaked out, they have decided to increase their operating days starting from September to make up for the losses they have suffered from disruptions caused by the disaster.

Toyota will operate its plants in Aichi Prefecture on all five Thursdays in September in place of some of the 10 days they were forced to halt operations due to shortages of parts supplies after the quake, although they will be half-day operations, it said.

The leading automaker will operate on the weekends next month as well, while it said that from October onward the operating days will be Thursdays, Fridays and part of Saturdays, while keeping Sundays off.

Fuji Heavy Industries Ltd. will hold Thursday operations on Sept. 15 and 22, while Hino Motors Ltd. will operate on two or three Thursdays or Fridays in September.

Honda Motor Co. will also operate its plants including the Hamamatsu plant on Thursdays to increase production of auto parts.

Some automakers have operated their plants during summer despite the Japan Automobile Manufacturers Association's call. The industry body has said operation plans are up to each of the association members.

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