

# Oji Paper Resumes Output At China Plant

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SHANGHAI (AP) — A Japanese paper company whose factory in eastern China was targeted last weekend by protesters concerned about pollution resumed production Tuesday.

Authorities in the eastern Chinese city of Qidong dropped plans for a waste water pipeline linked to the factory, which is located in the nearby city of Nantong, after thousands of protesters angry about pollution took to the streets last week.

Such confrontations are common in China given the heavy environmental cost of three decades of rapid economic growth, but are especially sensitive ahead of a once-in-a-decade leadership change planned for later this year.

Qidong residents took to the streets on Saturday, some clashing with police and overturning a patrol car. The protest also appeared to be driven partly by recent tensions with Japan over longstanding territorial issues.

"Once the factory restarted work, it was emitting more waste water," said a spokesman for Oji Paper Group, who gave only his surname, Nakayama.

Oji Paper said earlier in a statement that the proposed pipeline was meant to discharge already treated water fully compliant with government standards.

"The Nantong Oji factory's water quality management system is very strict," the company said. "Our company puts a high priority on protecting the environment."

The water discharge project was part of a planned expansion for the Jiangsu Oji Paper Nantong Mill, which began output in early 2011 with an annual capacity of 400,000 tons, according to the company's website.

It is unclear if the expansion will go ahead now that the sewage pipeline planned for Qidong has been cancelled.

Chinese have become more outspoken about environmentally risky projects in their backyards, with pollution a leading cause of unrest. Earlier this month, Shifang city in the southwestern province of Sichuan scrapped plans for a copper plant after thousands of protesters, including high school students, clashed with riot police.

Such protests reflect the balancing act Chinese leaders are performing between maintaining public stability and pushing economic growth, and between local officials who want to attract industry and residents anxious to prevent still more pollution in their communities.

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