

# **Bridgestone Workers Protest Italy Plant Closure**

The Associated Press

ROMA, March 15 (Kyodo) — About 250 employees of a Bridgestone group company demonstrated Thursday in front of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development against the planned closure of the company's factory in Bari, southern Italy.

In the demonstration lasting about two hours, the employees called for continued operation of the passenger car tire-making factory, which Bridgestone Corp. said earlier this month will close in the first half of 2014 due to deterioration of the facility's profitability and changing market conditions.

Italian Economic Development Minister Corrado Passera also urged Bridgestone to cancel its plant closure plan during a meeting with the company's officials Thursday. They are expected to meet again in early April.

The tire maker's decision drew backlash from the local community and political circles, with a boycott of Bridgestone products beginning in some areas.

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