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Current Affairs in Earthquake Prediction in Japan

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Abstract

As of mid-2014, the main organizations of the earthquake (EQ hereafter) prediction program, including the Seismological Society of Japan (SSJ), the MEXT Headquarters for EQ Research Promotion, hold the official position that they neither can nor want to make any short-term prediction. It is an extraordinary stance of responsible authorities when the nation, after the devastating 2011 M9 Tohoku EQ, most urgently needs whatever information that may exist on forthcoming EQs. Japan's national project for EQ prediction started in 1965, but it has made no success. The main reason for no success is the failure to capture precursors. After the 1995 Kobe disaster, the project decided to give up short-term prediction and this stance has been further fortified by the 2011 M9 Tohoku Mega-quake. This paper tries to explain how this situation came about and suggest that it may in fact be

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