

## National archive to compile 300,000 items related to 3/11 quake

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By SATOSHI DAIGUJI/ Staff Writer

With the mountain of photos, videos, documents and records related to the Great East Japan Earthquake still fresh, the government wants to compile them into a central database for easy access and preservation.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs and Communications, jointly with the National Diet Library, on Jan. 10 will start tests of a “Great East Japan Earthquake Archive,” an integrated data management system for more than 100,000 items related to the earthquake and tsunami of March 11, 2011.

It plans to complete the system in early March and increase the number of items to more than 300,000, including related data.

The archive will collectively manage data that is currently kept by local governments affected by the disaster, the news media, universities, nonprofit organizations, private companies and others.

The new system will allow users to locate photos taken in devastated areas and interviews conducted there, proceedings of investigatory committees on the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant accident and other data through a National Diet Library website.

Some of the photos and videos will be offered with information on the locations where they were taken, which will be shown on a map.

A wide range of pictures and videos were taken following the 2011 disaster by groups and individuals and posted on the Internet. However, online data is prone to frequent updates and often become unavailable when their URLs--addresses on the Internet--expire.

The ministry has studied ways to enable permanent preservation, said a senior ministry official.

By attaching common tags, such as locations and dates, to data, the archive will enable searches across databases.

Some of the data will be kept in a dedicated server, for the National Diet Library to maintain over a long period. The ministry intends to enhance comprehensive listing functions of the data to use it for disaster prevention measures and education.

The ministry will release a prototype of the archive on Jan. 10, and complete the system in early March after verifying copyright issues and other terms of use.

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