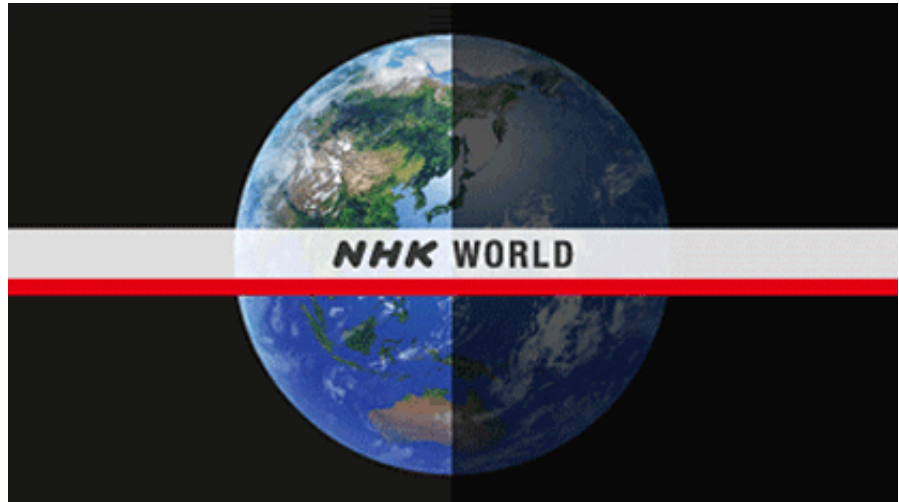


Panel to look into TEPCO's alleged falsifications

The operator of the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant has launched a third-party committee to look into alleged false explanations by the company of conditions inside one of the reactors.

The move follows accusations by a former Diet panel member that the company's explanation was aimed at blocking an on-site probe at the plant.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, set up the committee on Monday. It is led by a former judge, Yasuhisa Tanaka.



Earlier this month former panel member Mitsuhiro Tanaka accused TEPCO of having lied in February of last year about the state of the plant's number one reactor. The Diet panel was planning an on-site survey at the time.

Mitsuhiro Tanaka says the panel had to give up the survey because the TEPCO officials said it was too dangerous to work inside the reactor, which they described as pitch-dark. He is demanding that the Diet look into the matter.

TEPCO denies that the officials handling the matter lied, saying rather that their perception of the situation was wrong.

The new panel will determine whether or not the officials lied and how TEPCO responded to the call for the survey. TEPCO says the company will not become involved in the panel's investigation but will cooperate with it. The company says it will make public the findings of the investigation as soon as possible.

The Nuclear Regulation Authority says it wants to meet former panel member Tanaka's request for a survey of the reactor, but has as yet made no plan to do so due to high radiation levels.

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