

JAPAN NEWS AND DISCUSSION

- HOME NATIONAL CRIME ENTERTAINMENT POLITICS BUSINESS TECH SPORTS WORLD FEATURES CAREERS Search

38
 Tweet
 2

Spent fuel cooling system back up at Fukushima No. 3 reactor

NATIONAL APR. 05, 2013 - 09:15PM JST (25) [Recommend](#) 34

TOKYO — One of the systems keeping spent nuclear fuel cool at the Fukushima nuclear plant temporarily failed on Friday, the second outage in a matter of weeks, underlining the precarious fix at the plant.

Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) said an alarm sounded at the facility at 2:27 p.m., and technicians soon confirmed that the cooling system for the pool attached to the No. 3 reactor was not working.

Nuclear fuel, even after use, has to be kept cool to prevent it from overheating and beginning a self-sustaining atomic reaction that could lead to meltdown.

The problem, which was fixed in about three hours, occurred as work crew placed a metal mesh around a switchboard in a bid to prevent small animals from touching it, a TEPCO spokesman told a press conference.

The measures were taken after a rat got inside the switchboard last month, causing a short-circuit that knocked out power for sections of the crippled plant and stopped cooling systems for four storage pools.

That time, it took nearly 30 hours for TEPCO to fully fix the problem.

The TEPCO spokesman said a wire or the mesh might have touched the ground while crews put the mesh in place, unintentionally grounding the equipment and knocking it offline.

TEPCO apologized for the problem, but stressed that it had not posed any immediate danger.

However, the incident served as a reminder of the precarious state of the Fukushima plant, more than two years after it was hit by the giant tsunami of March 2011, and critics were quick to jump on the fault.

“Rather than TEPCO assuring us there is no safety threat, both the company and government officials must now follow up with robust and effective action,” Greenpeace International energy campaign team leader Jan Beranek said.

“Japan needs to focus its efforts and capacities on maintaining the troubled reactors, instead of rushing to restart other risky nuclear plants,” Beranek said.

TEPCO and the government said in December 2011 that the reactors were “in a state of cold shutdown”—a phrase carefully chosen, commentators said, to imply normality in units so broken that standard descriptions did not apply.

Authorities insist they are getting on top of the problem and the reactors are not leaking significant amounts of radiation.

But the plant, which TEPCO and the government plan to dismantle over the next four decades, is kept stable only with makeshift systems to supply power, cool reactors and clean radioactive materials from water used as coolant.

The temperature inside the pool affected by the latest glitch reached 15.1 degrees Celsius (59.18 Fahrenheit), well below the safety limit of 65 degrees Celsius (149 degrees Fahrenheit), TEPCO said.

Equipment measuring radioactivity, placed in and around the plant, has shown no new

MORE IN NATIONAL

Japan blames sabotage for record low whaling haul
 APR. 05, 2013 - 05:30PM JST (44)

Record number of travelers predicted for Golden Week
 APR. 05, 2013 - 03:00PM JST (1)

Japan on alert as China mobilizes to fight deadly new bird flu
 APR. 05, 2013 - 10:50AM JST (9)

Retractable tsunami wall being tested off coast of Wakayama
 APR. 05, 2013 - 06:55AM JST (13)

Nuclear Regulation Authority changes 'safety standards' to 'guidelines'
 APR. 04, 2013 - 04:10PM JST (19)

[View all](#)

MOST POPULAR

RECENT COMMENTS

- 20 words of English origin that Japanese people often mistake for real thing 89
- Japan blames sabotage for record low whaling haul 44
- Police bust Vietnamese cannabis operation in Gunma 39
- Spent fuel cooling system back up at Fukushima No. 3 reactor 25
- U.S. says it is taking necessary precautions on N Korea 22

[View all](#)

CAREERS

REGISTER

MORE JOBS



Reservations and Operations Executive
 Destination Asia Japan, 東京都
 Salary: 月給 8万円 ~ 12万5000円



Account Manager - MICE
 Destination Asia Japan, 東京都
 Salary: 年収 350万円 ~ 450万円



Reservations and Operations Executive
 Destination Asia Japan, 東京都
 Salary: 年収 200万円 ~ 300万円



社長秘書
 ハーマンインターナショナル株式会社, 東京都
 Salary: 年収 500万円 ~ 600万円 相談可



技術スタッフ / **Architect**
 株式会社 ホンカ・ジャパン HONKA Japan,
 東京都
 Salary: 年収 360万円 ~ 600万円 相談可

abnormality related to the latest trouble, the company added.

© 2013 AFP

[Back to top](#)

25 Comments (LOGIN TO COMMENT)

[Order by Time](#)

[Order by Popularity](#)



NZ2011 APR. 05, 2013 - 03:38PM JST

comedy of error as per usual.

2



johnnyG APR. 05, 2013 - 03:57PM JST

Deja vu: I think I'll still be reading articles like the 25 years from now...

3



smithinjapan APR. 05, 2013 - 04:01PM JST

But hey, let's change 'safety standards' to 'guidelines' and get those other reactors built more than 20 years ago on fault lines up and running!

6



marcelito APR. 05, 2013 - 04:03PM JST

The news just keeps on coming doesn't it.

0



sasukene APR. 05, 2013 - 04:06PM JST

Forget about loopy North Korea, this is the "clear and present danger" to all in Japan.

5



Ewan Huzarmy APR. 05, 2013 - 04:06PM JST

Nuclear power the gift that never stops giving (sigh).

3



sakurala APR. 05, 2013 - 04:10PM JST

What is it this time? Last time was rats... When are they just going to face the fact that they are unable to deal with the situation and ask for help from someone reliable?

4



kurisupisu APR. 05, 2013 - 04:17PM JST

Isn't it dangerous to have systems that keep breaking down?

Where is the plan to enclose the ruined reactors?

2



JeffLee APR. 05, 2013 - 04:17PM JST

What is it this time? Last time was rats.

My guess is raccoons.

-3



Ian Duncan APR. 05, 2013 - 04:21PM JST

"We have no information at hand about the cause," the TEPCO spokesman said.

Translation: The rat story didn't work as well as we thought, give us some time to think up something you'll like.

He then put on his big shoes and red nose, and tried balancing a bucket of water on a stick.

3



SauloJpn APR. 05, 2013 - 04:31PM JST

I feel so much better that TEPCO is handling this (Irony 100%) They lied about almost every aspect of the meltdown (they actually took a very long time to admit to a meltdown) Now that we don't believe when Tepco come out with facts and numbers we are (should be) skeptical! 15C, I wonder what the real number is!!! Did anyone believe the rat comment???

3



Disillusioned APR. 05, 2013 - 04:58PM JST

Recommendations



20 words of English origin that Japanese people often mistake for real thing
149 people recommend this.



Woman puts skeletonised brother in trash after realizing he's dead
91 people recommend this.



Pro-Korean, anti-Korean forces face off in Shin-Okubo
58 people recommend this.



<http://www.japantoday.com/smartphone/vie-words-of-english-origin-that-japanese-people-often-mistake-for-real-thing>
10 people recommend this.

Facebook social plugin



Ah, rats! Let's hope they do have it restored by this evening, shall we? I wonder how long it would take to evacuate Tokyo.

1



smithinjapan APR. 05, 2013 - 05:42PM JST

Disillusioned: "I wonder how long it would take to evacuate Tokyo."

The 'rats' (ahem, politicians) or the people? I seriously wonder if it ever became so tragic that the most populated capital city in the world had to be evacuated due to the inability of a company to do its job, would Japan FINALLY prosecute them? Is that about what it would take?

3



Farmboy APR. 05, 2013 - 05:45PM JST

I can still remember all that "cold shutdown condition," as opposed to "cold shutdown" doubletalk from Tepco, but here is a refresher course: <http://safetyfirst.nei.org/ask-an-expert/question-what-is-cold-shutdown/>

I also remember that when they say things like, "the reactors are not leaking significant amounts of radiation," it means that the reactors are leaking radiation, and what is significant to one person isn't significant to another.

Since they "have no information at hand about the cause," I can't imagine how they would know how they could make a reliable estimate about when it will be fixed, but hey, Friday is good. Let's hope they're right this time.

3



CH3CHO APR. 05, 2013 - 05:47PM JST

sakurala,

When are they just going to face the fact that they are unable to deal with the situation and ask for help from someone reliable?

Who do you mean by "someone reliable"? I think no company in the world has enough knowledge in handling brown up nuclear reactor.

-3



Tamarama APR. 05, 2013 - 05:51PM JST

Tanukis.

Big, glowing, green Tanukis.

0



Knox Harrington APR. 05, 2013 - 05:56PM JST

"It's OK. We have it under control now."

-2



SeriouslyCreamy APR. 05, 2013 - 05:59PM JST

Associated Press is reporting that the cooling system is running again.

They also said this...

Work to put up nets to keep out rats and other animals at Fukushima Dai-ichi plant in northeastern Japan inadvertently caused the power outage, TEPCO spokesman Akitsuka Kobayashi said. Details were not clear, and the outage was still under investigation.

0



Cricky APR. 05, 2013 - 06:08PM JST

Guys it's Friday afternoon, of course it's fixed! If it wasn't they would have to work all weekend. Besides everyone will have forgotten by Monday.

1



club25ranger APR. 05, 2013 - 06:09PM JST

problem fixed!,but im staying here in Osaka for a little longer until i go there for a holiday thanks

0



JeffLee APR. 05, 2013 - 06:35PM JST

@CH3CHO

I think no company in the world has enough knowledge in handling brown up nuclear reactor.

I think no company in the world, apart from a Japanese EPCO, would install a power supply for a nuclear power plant that can immobilized by a single rat.

1



smithinjapan APR. 05, 2013 - 08:08PM JST

SeriouslyCreamy: So, not only can rats cause the power outs, the company can't properly put up preventative measures to stop them from happening?

0



Tigerta9 APR. 05, 2013 - 08:31PM JST

It's amazing they are able to keep it going as well as they do all things considered. Given that the disaster should have probably eclipsed Chernobyl X10 speaks volumes as to how well they've managed this given all that people still do not know.

-1



smithinjapan APR. 05, 2013 - 09:25PM JST

Tigerta9: "Given that the disaster should have probably eclipsed Chernobyl X10 speaks volumes as to how well they've managed this given all that people still do not know."

1

No kidding! The management running on the drop of a dime despite the demands of the current PM, the management who take over covering everything up and claiming it's all good despite proof of the opposite. The management denying an actual investigative committee access to verify their claims. The management finally admitting they are to blame (err... in the past tense, none of them should be held accountable now). The management letting mice shut down their reactors when they demand higher prices after 'cold shutdown'. The management hiring nuclear gypsies through the yakuza. The management unable to put up tents to prevent rats from stopping necessary systems shutting down the necessary systems..... yeah.... 'amazing' is a pretty good word.



Open Minded APR. 05, 2013 - 10:43PM JST

This running show will last at least as long as *Sesame Street*.

0

[Back to top](#)

LOGIN TO LEAVE A COMMENT

Facebook users

Use your Facebook account to login or register with JapanToday.

[Facebook connect](#)

OR

Login with your JapanToday account

Email

Password

Remember Me [> Forgot Password?](#)

LOGIN

[NEW USER REGISTRATION](#)



[HOME](#) | [NATIONAL](#) | [CRIME](#) | [ENTERTAINMENT](#) | [POLITICS](#) | [BUSINESS](#) | [TECH](#) | [SPORTS](#) | [WORLD](#) | [FEATURES](#) | [CAREERS](#) | [EVENTS](#)
[LIFESTYLE](#) | [ARTS & CULTURE](#) | [KUCHIKOMI](#) | [NEW PRODUCTS](#) | [HEALTH](#) | [FOOD](#) | [TRAVEL](#) | [EXECUTIVE IMPACT](#) | [COMMENTARY](#) | [OPINIONS](#)

© 2013 GPlusMedia Co., Ltd. [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Service](#) | [Moderation Policy](#) | [広告掲載/Advertise with us](#) | [総合案内/About us](#) | [編集部/Contact us](#) |