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TEPCO makes room to store spent nuclear fuel from damaged Fukushima reactor building

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THE ASAHI SHIMBUN

Workers at Tokyo Electric Power Co. removed spent nuclear fuel housed in a common storage pool at the Fukushima power plant and moved it to a temporary storage depot on the plant site, TEPCO said April 4.

It was the first time for spent fuel in the common storage pool to be relocated since the onset of the nuclear disaster set off by the Great East Japan Earthquake two years ago.

TEPCO said the spent fuel was moved to make room for more spent fuel assemblies during decommissioning work. The emptied space will receive fuel assemblies from the No. 1 through No. 4 reactors.

TEPCO said most of the fuel in the common storage pool had been moved there from spent fuel storage pools provided in the individual nuclear reactor buildings before the triple meltdowns at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant in March 2011.

For the April 4 removal operation, the spent fuel was packed into a receptacle that can hold 37 spent nuclear fuel assemblies, called a dry cask, and placed into a temporary reinforced-concrete cask depot built on the east part of an athletic field on the plant site, the utility said, adding that fuel removal from the common storage pool will continue.

TEPCO said the fuel assemblies in the common storage pool generate relatively small amounts of heat.

TEPCO said it plans to start removing nuclear fuel from the spent fuel storage pool of the No. 4 reactor building into the common storage pool as early as November.

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