

Wednesday, April 6, 2011

## Tepco plans to pay partial compensation

### ¥20 million outlays also given to nine towns; seen as token

Kyodo News

Tokyo Electric Power Co. plans to pay provisional compensation by the end of the month to residents and farmers living around the crippled Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant as their livelihoods have been heavily impacted by the emergency, Tepco officials said Tuesday.

The utility will make tentative estimates of the amount to be paid in consultation with the government so compensation can be made quickly, the officials said.

The nuclear crisis, triggered by the March 11 earthquake and tsunami, is expected to drag on.

Banri Kaieda, minister of economy, trade and industry, told reporters the government ordered Tepco to pay the provisional compensation.

"Certain sums of money must be paid out whenever it becomes possible," he said.

Some 80,000 residents near the power plant have had to evacuate, and farmers in and outside Fukushima Prefecture have faced government-imposed shipment restrictions following the detection of radioactive substances in various produce.

Tepco will reimburse them for their medical fees, lost income due to their evacuations and living costs in line with guidelines set by a government dispute settlement panel.

The utility began paying relief money last Thursday in ¥20 million installments to nine municipalities where residents have been ordered out because of the nuclear crisis, company officials said. All nine towns and villages are located within the 20-km evacuation zone.

However, the municipal government of Namie, Fukushima Prefecture, north of the Tepco plant, has refused to take the money, saying damages payments to residents should be made first, according to Kosei Negishi, a Namie official.

Negishi said the town has a population of about 26,000, so each resident would receive only ¥2,000 if the ¥20 million from Tepco was distributed equally.

"We can't receive (the money) when compensation for each resident has not been decided. Compensation for residents, whose evacuation is prolonged, should come first," the official said.

The Fukushima town of Naraha has taken the ¥20 million.

"(The money) is a matter of course. Per capita money is small, but we'd like to use it in a meaningful way," a town official said.

Residents of areas within 20 km of the crippled plant and a 10-km radius from Tepco's Fukushima No. 2 nuclear plant some 10 km to the south have been ordered to evacuate to avoid radiation exposure.

Takashi Kobayashi, an official in Iitate, a village outside the 20-km zone, said compensation money should be paid to residents depending on the impact from



the nuclear crisis, not simply by distance from the plant.

Farmers in Iitate are deeply worried as they soon need to plant rice and leaf tobacco, he said.

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