

Earthquake Report - JAIF

We have been reporting a status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station by summarizing news aired by NHK, which is Japanese national broadcasting company. We regard it as most credible news among many news sources and we are happy to say that NHK's English website has gotten enriched and now you can see movies and English scripts at <http://www3.nhk.or.jp/daily/english/society.html>. Given this situation, we decide to simply place these scripts as it is for the record in case that it will be deleted from the website later, rather than summarizing news as we did.

No. 53: 20:00, April 15

NHK news regarding status of Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station yesterday and today.

●TEPCO monitoring wastewater at No.2 reactor

Tokyo Electric Power Company says the level of radioactive water is increasing in a tunnel at the No.2 reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The large amount of contaminated water in basements and tunnels is hampering operations to restore the plant's cooling systems.

On Wednesday, TEPCO finished transferring some of the wastewater -- about 660 tons -- from the No.2 reactor tunnel to a condenser in a turbine building.

It says the water level in the tunnel dropped 8 centimeters after the transfer, but had returned to its previous level by Friday morning.

Earlier this month, TEPCO found highly radioactive water leaking into the sea from a pit near the No.2 reactor.

The utility suspects that plugging the leak has trapped radioactive water from the No.2 reactor in the tunnel.

TEPCO says there are at least 50,000 tons of contaminated water at the plant. It will use a waste-processing facility, makeshift storage tanks and a floating tank to store the radioactive water.

The company is also preparing for a possible shutdown of external power sources, as major aftershocks continue. It plans to finish moving emergency diesel power generators to higher ground on Friday to protect them from tsunami.

Friday, April 15, 2011 12:18 +0900 (JST)

●Radiation levels in underground water rise

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says radiation levels in underground water gathered in so-called sub-drain pits rose by up to 38 times during the past week.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, is working to remove contaminated water from the basements of the turbine buildings and tunnels. The contaminated water is hindering efforts to restore the reactors' cooling systems.

TEPCO said that in its monitoring on Wednesday, it found 400 becquerels of iodine-131 and 53 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic centimeter in the No. 1 reactor's sub-drain pit. These levels are 6 times and 38 times higher than a week ago respectively.

In the No.2 reactor's pit, 610 becquerels of iodine-131 and 7.9 becquerels of

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cesium-134 per cubic centimeter were detected. These levels are 17 times and 8 times higher than a week ago respectively.

TEPCO says the sub-drain pits of the 2 reactors are connected by a pipe and that the highly radioactive water in the No. 2 reactor could be leaking underground.

TEPCO is to increase its radiation readings to 3 times per week from Saturday on the instructions of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency.

Friday, April 15, 2011 10:43 +0900 (JST)

●US lifts voluntary evacuation advisory for Japan

The United States has lifted its voluntary evacuation advisory for families of government employees in Tokyo and other Japanese cities.

The US State Department had issued the advisory due to the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant. It had also recommended that US citizens should avoid travel within an 80-kilometer radius of the plant.

The department said on Thursday that the situation is dramatically different now than it was on March 16th when there were significant releases of radioactivity and the loss of effective measures to cool the reactor cores and spent fuel.

It said the cooling efforts are ongoing and successful, and that power and water supplies have been partially or fully restored.

The department said the health and safety risks for areas outside the 80-kilometer radius of the plant, including Tokyo and Nagoya, are low and do not pose significant risks to US citizens.

It said it will maintain the recommendation to avoid travel within the 80-kilometer zone, saying the situation there remains serious.

Friday, April 15, 2011 16:02 +0900 (JST)

●More time needed to build tanks to hold wastewater

It is still difficult for the Tokyo Electric Power Company to determine when the work to restore reactor cooling systems at the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power facility will begin. The company says more time is needed to install makeshift water tanks in order to contain the highly radioactive water used to cool the reactors.

The contaminated water has pooled inside turbine buildings and tunnels, hampering efforts to restore reactor cooling systems. Removal of the wastewater is necessary before restoration work can begin.

TEPCO collected wastewater samples from the No.1 and No.2 reactors on Wednesday, and found that radioactivity levels had increased dramatically during the past week.

According to TEPCO, 400 becquerels of iodine-131 and 53 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic centimeter were detected in the wastewater of the No.1 reactor. These levels are 6 times and 38 times higher than a week ago respectively. In the No.2 reactor, 610 becquerels of iodine-131 and 7.9 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic centimeter were detected. These levels are 17 times and

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8 times higher than a week ago respectively.

On Wednesday, the power company completed the transfer of roughly 660 tons of wastewater from the Number 2 reactor tunnel to a turbine condenser.

However, the work to transfer contaminated wastewater from other reactors has not started yet because there are not enough facilities available.

TEPCO plans to use makeshift storage tanks and a steel mega float to hold most of the highly radioactive water.

On Thursday, the company completed the installation of makeshift tanks in the compound of the nuclear plant, which can contain 1000 tons of water.

However, TEPCO plans to build more tanks to hold 27-thousand tons of wastewater by the end of May.

Friday, April 15, 2011 07:46 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima Daiichi prepares for aftershocks

Work is underway at the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to ensure that multiple backup power supplies keep its reactors cool in the event of another strong earthquake and tsunami.

The Tokyo Electric Power Company said workers on Thursday relocated emergency diesel generators and pumps for injecting water into the plant's No. 1 to 3 reactors to higher ground, about 23 meters above sea level.

On Friday, backup power trucks and fire engines are to be brought to the plant to be used if a tsunami washes the pumps away.

Work is also in progress to rewire 2 grid power lines to 4 reactors to avoid a total blackout.

The firm says it is also considering setting up a second system for pumping water into the reactors.

On March 11th, the plant was overcome by 15-meter-high tsunami waves following the huge earthquake.

Thursday, April 14, 2011 20:46 +0900 (JST)

●Stabilizing nuclear fuel could take long

Japanese nuclear scientists say if a cooling system can be put in place at the Fukushima Daiichi plant, stabilizing its nuclear fuel could take another 3 months. The deputy head of the Atomic Energy Society of Japan, Takashi Sawada, released the projection by an informal group of 11 society members on Thursday. He said data published by Tokyo Electric Power Company shows that parts of the fuel rods in reactors 1 and 3 have melted and settled at the bottom of the pressure vessels.

He said if the ongoing water injections continue, the current situation can be maintained.

He said Tepco's most important task is to remove all the contaminated water and rebuild a cooling water circulation system.

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He said once these jobs are done, stabilizing the nuclear fuels could take 2 to 3 months, if not longer.

But he warned that the situation could deteriorate if another strong earthquake knocks out power to the plant and makes it impossible to keep the nuclear fuel cool for 2 or 3 days. That would destabilize temperatures and pressures inside the reactors, and the situation would become extremely unpredictable again.

Thursday, April 14, 2011 19:34 +0900 (JST)

End