

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. 59: 20:00, April 21

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

●Evacuees visit their home

Evacuees from near the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant drove to their homes on Thursday before a no-entry zone covering their areas goes into operation at midnight on Thursday.

Police checked the driving licenses of car drivers at a checkpoint about 20 kilometers from the power plant and asked where they are going.

A 61-year old company worker said he wants to pick up his health insurance and pension document from his home in Naraha Town, which will be within the 20-kilometer no-entry zone.

He said he had thought such a restriction would be imposed from the weekend. He said he took a day off work to make the visit.

In the afternoon, people carrying clothes, appliances and other goods from their homes were seen driving through the checkpoint on their way back to evacuation centers.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 18:35 +0900 (JST)

●Radioactive water transfer continues

Work to remove highly radioactive water near a reactor to a storage facility is underway at the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power complex.

Work to pump out 25,000 tons of contaminated water from the Number 2 reactor turbine house and tunnels began on Tuesday.

Plant operator the Tokyo Electric Power Company says that as of Thursday morning, 450 tons of water had been moved to the waste processing facility.

Tokyo Electric says there have been no leaks or other problems so far and that the water level in the tunnel is down three centimeters since work began.

Tokyo Electric says it plans to continue pumping water at the current rate of 10 tons per hour for around 10 more days, and then add more pumps if things go well. The firm says it will transfer a total of 10,000 tons by mid-May.

But water around the Number 2 reactor is only part of the 67,500 tons of radioactive water that Tokyo Electric estimates to have accumulated at the plant.

The utility says radioactive water in the tunnel of the Number 3 reactor facility has been rising by several centimeters a day for the past week, and is soon likely to reach one-meter below ground level.

Tokyo Electric is also closely monitoring rising water levels in the turbine

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buildings of the Number 5 and 6 reactors. It says ground water could be seeping in.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 12:55 +0900 (JST)

●Govt to enforce no-go zone

The Japanese government is legally enforcing a no-entry zone within 20 kilometers of the damaged Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant from midnight Thursday.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano made the announcement on Thursday morning. The legally-controlled off-limits zone covers about 27,000 households in 9 municipalities.

The government had already instructed residents within the area to evacuate.

Edano said the no-entry zone is aimed at protecting the health and safety of local residents, some of whom have been returning home without sufficient radiation safety measures.

From Thursday midnight, anyone entering the banned area could be subject to fines.

The government also said it would allow one member of each household to temporarily return to their homes in the off-limits zone. But it has decided not to allow visits for residents living within 3 kilometers of the nuclear plant.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 12:24 +0900 (JST)

●High radioactive levels detected in reactors

Robots have detected high levels of radioactivity inside the reactor buildings of the crippled Fukushima nuclear plant. The plant operator says the radioactivity must be reduced to allow work inside the buildings to bring the crisis under control.

Tokyo Electric Power Company surveyed the interiors of 3 reactor buildings on Sunday and Monday using robots equipped with dosimeters and cameras.

TEPCO says that over 50 minutes the robots found 18.9 millisieverts of radioactivity in reactor Number 1 and 6.46 millisieverts in Number 2. The levels are hazardous to humans even over a short period. Levels of radioactivity were not available in the Number 3 reactor.

Video footage also suggests various difficulties that could hamper operations inside the buildings.

Footage of the Number 3 reactor shows steel plates and other debris scattered on the floor following the hydrogen explosion of March 14th. The doors of the circuit box were open, raising fears that the power system has been damaged.

TEPCO says humidity inside the Number 2 reactor was 94 to 99 percent, fogging up the robot's camera lens.

The company says the humidity indicates that radioactive steam leaked into the building. It says it will need to install air conditioners to ventilate and clean the air of radioactivity before people can work there.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 06:08 +0900 (JST)

●Levels of radioactive water rising despite efforts

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Plant continues to

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transfer highly radioactive water near a reactor to a storage facility.

Tokyo Electric Power Company says work has been underway since Tuesday to move 10,000 tons of highly contaminated water accumulated in the turbine building of the Number 2 reactor to an on-site waste processing facility. The water has been pumped into the facility at a rate of 10 tons per hour.

TEPCO says the toxic water level in a tunnel near the turbine building was 2 centimeters lower as of 6 PM on Wednesday. But it says because there was no change in the water level in the basement of the turbine building, the leaking of toxic water into the basement appears to be continuing.

The utility company also says the water level in a tunnel linked to the Number 3 reactor has been rising several centimeters a day for the past week. The water is expected to rise to about one meter below the ground level soon.

The company says water levels are also rising in the Number 5 and 6 turbine buildings.

TEPCO says an estimated 67,500 tons of contaminated water are now in the Number 1, 2 and 3 reactors alone, hampering efforts to restore the reactors' cooling systems.

The utility says at the Number 1 reactor, some cooling water poured in has likely evaporated.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 06:08 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima accident likely caused by blackouts

A Japanese nuclear safety official says the crisis at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant was likely caused by electricity blackouts as a result of tsunami and not by shock of the earthquake.

National Nuclear Safety Commissioner Osamu Oyamada made the remark at a news conference on Wednesday in the city of Fukushima after inspecting the plant.

Referring to accounts of the accident by the plant manager and workers, Oyamada said the reactors were apparently shut down without any hitch.

He said the reactors and their buildings did not likely incur serious damage caused by the quake itself and that they were intact immediately after it.

But he said there are no gauge readings or other data available to prove this assumption.

Thursday, April 21, 2011 00:34 +0900 (JST)

●Power loss drill at nuclear plant in Aomori Pref.

Tohoku Electric Power Company has conducted a drill at one of its nuclear plants in northeastern Japan to prepare for a potential total loss of external power to one of its reactors in an emergency.

The company's Higashidori nuclear power station in Aomori Prefecture lost all its external power supply in an aftershock on April 7th. An emergency diesel backup generator began cooling the reactor, but the generator failed shortly after external power was restored.

Wednesday's drill was held based on the scenario that both the external power and the backup generator had been lost.

Workers confirmed the procedures for starting up an emergency power truck,

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which was deployed late last month, and connecting its cables to the plant's facilities.

Tohoku Electric Power Company says the power truck works for only 2-and-a-half hours before it needs to be refueled with light oil. The plant has some fuel in stock, but the company says it needs to reinforce the fuel stock.

Plant chief Shun Tsubata pledged to address these issues and improve the plant's safety.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 18:34 +0900 (JST)

End