

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. 149: 12:00, July 21

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

(Fukushima NPP Site)

- **Tokyo Electric's lax worker management found**
- **Cleanup rate at Fukushima plant remains low**
- **Expert: Risks remain at Fukushima Daiichi plant**

(Other news)

- **High levels of radioactivity found extensively**
- **Contaminated rice straw found in 10 prefectures**
- **Two of 18 active reactors to be shut down**
- **Priority placed on radioactivity checks on beef**
- **US safety rule maybe prevented Fukushima crisis**
- **Farmers demand govt action to dispel consumer fear**
- **Fukushima farmers ask minister to check all cattle**

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●Tokyo Electric's lax worker management found

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has failed to confirm the whereabouts of 198 workers who are believed to have worked at the plant since the nuclear disaster started.

Criticizing the operator's lax personnel management, the health ministry has instructed Tokyo Electric Power Company to identify the workers and have those workers

checked for radiation exposure tests by next Friday.

In a report submitted to the ministry on Wednesday, the company admits that it has failed so far to confirm the whereabouts of the 198 workers, who are on the name-list of workers at the plant between March and April.

The company also reports that it has conducted radiation exposure tests on 8,338 workers, but still has to test more than 1,500 workers, including the 198.

The utility had reported last Wednesday that the number of missing was 132.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency is also investigating the case because if it is proven that some of these workers were hired by the company without their identities being confirmed, it could constitute a violation of anti-terrorism legislation.

Thursday, July 21, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

●Cleanup rate at Fukushima plant remains low

A system to decontaminate radioactive water at the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant continues to work below its target capacity.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company, has found that the system's decontamination rate was about 53 percent during the past week, compared with the target rate of 70 percent. It has been unable to reach the target rate for 3 consecutive weeks.

The utility says the system's low performance rate is due to water leaks as well as the fact that its capacity to remove radioactive materials is 30 percent lower than the catalog states.

TEPCO says the system's performance has not improved even after its piping was changed, and that the cause of the problem is still unknown.

At the troubled plant, water used to cool down reactors has become radioactive and has been accumulating in the basements of the reactor buildings.

TEPCO has operated the cyclical system since late last month, using the water to cool down the reactors after decontaminating it.

On Tuesday, the utility company and the government said that the reactors are being cooled down in a stable manner. However, the system to recycle cooling water is not working well.

At the Number 1 reactor building, the level of polluted water in the basement at 7 AM on Wednesday was 13 centimeters higher than the previous day. TEPCO says a tropical storm has raised the water levels.

Wednesday, July 20, 2011 21:14 +0900 (JST)

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●Expert: Risks remain at Fukushima Daiichi plant

An expert says that radiation could be released from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant in about 2 and half days if the injection of cooling water into reactors is halted for any reason.

Masanori Naito, director in charge of nuclear safety analysis at the Institute of Applied Energy, was speaking to NHK about the revised plan to bring the troubled plant under control. The Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company, the plant's operator, announced the plan on Tuesday.

The government and TEPCO said in a joint assessment that the target of the first stage of the original plan ---- to steadily reduce the level of radiation being released from the plant ---- has been met over the past 3 months.

They said the amount of radioactive substances spewing from the No.1 to No.3 reactors has been cut to one 2-millionth of the peak recorded just after the nuclear accident in March.

The effort to stabilize the nuclear facility now shifts to the second stage, when workers will focus on further cutting the release of radioactive substances over the next 6 months. Emphasis will be on reactor cooling systems that recycle contaminated water. The goal is to achieve cold shutdown by reducing reactor water temperatures to below 100 degrees Celsius.

Naito says nuclear fuel levels at the plant have dropped below one-tenth of what they were immediately after the accident, but warns of remaining risks.

He says the government and TEPCO should explain these risks to nearby residents and whether the existing measures will be sufficient.

Wednesday, July 20, 2011 10:26 +0900 (JST)

●High levels of radioactivity found extensively

Japan's science ministry says air above the ground about 150 kilometers from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant is as radioactive as areas 50 kilometers from the source of radioactivity.

The ministry on Wednesday released a map showing radiation levels at locations one meter above the ground in Miyagi Prefecture, north of Fukushima, based on the results of an aerial survey from June 22nd through 30th.

Radioactivity levels are highlighted in different colors.

Some parts of Kurihara City, about 150 kilometers north of the plant are light blue, indicating that the air there was 0.2 to 0.5 microsieverts per hour.

That's similar to areas close to the crippled plant, such as Iwaki City in Fukushima Prefecture, about 50 kilometers from the radioactive source.

Radioactive cesium far above the government standard was detected in rice straw for cattle feed collected by a supplier in Kurihara City.

Thursday, July 21, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

●Contaminated rice straw found in 10 prefectures

The Japanese government says rice straw used for cattle feed contaminated with radioactive cesium has been found in 10 prefectures across the country. Beef produced from cattle fed the contaminated straw and shipped out from farms has already been distributed to almost all prefectures.

Inspectors on Wednesday detected 7 times the government-set maximum

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standard level of radioactive cesium in rice straw used by a farm in Shizuoka Prefecture. This pushes the number of prefectures where cattle were fed with contaminated straw to 10.

Most of the rice straw in question was shipped from companies in Miyagi Prefecture, north of Fukushima, where the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, responsible for the contamination, is located.

On Tuesday, the government suspended shipments of beef cattle from Fukushima Prefecture after high levels of radioactive cesium were detected in beef shipped from the prefecture. One beef sample contained radioactive cesium in amounts 9 times the government standard.

Thursday, July 21, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

●Two of 18 active reactors to be shut down

Two of the 18 nuclear reactors now operating in Japan are due to be shut down shortly for regular inspections with no prospect of restarting.

Kansai Electric Power Company says it plans to begin turning off the power of the No.4 reactor at its power plant in Takahama, Fukui Prefecture on Thursday.

The utility also plans to shut down another reactor at Ohi nuclear plant in the same prefecture for regular checkups on Friday.

But the Fukui prefectural government has decided not to approve the resumption of nuclear reactors there until the central government draws up new safety standards for reactors after the nuclear disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

In Japan, 18 of the country's 54 nuclear reactors are currently in operation.

Thursday, July 21, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

●Priority placed on radioactivity checks on beef

Japan's health ministry has called on local governments across the country to prioritize checks for radioactive substances on beef over other food products.

The ministry issued the instruction after it found that at least 1,200 head of beef cattle fed with rice straw contaminated with higher radioactive cesium than the government-set standard were shipped nationwide.

Beef shipped from farms in Fukushima Prefecture was found to contain radioactive cesium in amounts higher than the government standard.

The ministry is asking local governments to promptly check radioactivity levels in the meat products because contaminated beef could possibly be held at wholesalers or retailers.

The ministry says it will take all possible measures to ease the anxiety of consumers over the contaminated beef.

Thursday, July 21, 2011 08:07 +0900 (JST)

●US safety rule maybe prevented Fukushima crisis

The chief of a US nuclear watchdog says that if Japan had adopted safety rules similar to those of the United States, damage at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant could have been smaller.

Nuclear Regulatory Commission Chairman Gregory Jaczko made the remark to NHK on Tuesday.

The United States introduced nuclear plant safety rules after the terrorist attacks

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of September 11th, 2001 to deal with emergencies such as external power outages caused by terrorism or other factors.

Jaczko indicated that such safety measures will be taken more thoroughly in the United States, and that nuclear safety will be strengthened globally through sharing of information among Japan and other countries.

Wednesday, July 20, 2011 17:35 +0900 (JST)

●Farmers demand govt action to dispel consumer fear

Japanese cattle growers have demanded that the government take steps to dispel consumer fears, after it suspended all beef cattle shipments from Fukushima Prefecture.

The government ordered the ban on Tuesday, after radioactive cesium exceeding government safety levels was detected in cattle shipped from the prefecture.

On Wednesday, about 100 cattle farmers and meat distributors attended a briefing at the agriculture ministry.

Distributors noted that prices of beef other than that from Fukushima Prefecture are falling, and expressed concern that more and more consumers might start avoiding beef altogether.

They called for tougher inspections and other steps to eliminate consumer concerns.

An agriculture ministry official said they would consider such measures to convince consumers that domestic beef on the market is safe.

A distributor from Fukuoka Prefecture expressed hope that the government would step up inspections and ensure that only safe beef is made available to consumers.

Wednesday, July 20, 2011 18:53 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima farmers ask minister to check all cattle

Cattle breeders from Fukushima Prefecture have asked Japan's agriculture minister to check all cattle in the prefecture for radiation.

The government on Tuesday suspended all beef cattle shipment from Fukushima Prefecture after radioactive cesium exceeding government safety levels was detected in straw used to feed the animals.

On Wednesday, about 30 representatives of farmers' and cattle breeders' groups from the prefecture visited government agencies in Tokyo to demand the state buy up beef cattle that had been banned from being shipped.

They asked agriculture minister Michihiko Kano to inspect all cattle in the prefecture, as well as all beef that had already been shipped, to regain consumer trust.

The government has said it would check all cattle only in areas designated for evacuation.

Kano expressed regret over the government's failure to inform cattle breeders about the risks of rice straw, and said only that he wants to be able to say for sure that beef on the market is safe. He reportedly did not say clearly whether he would instruct all cattle to be inspected.

The head of the prefectural federation of farmers' cooperatives, Tokuichi Shojo,

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later told reporters that thorough inspections are essential to regain the credibility of Fukushima farm products and livestock.

He said he wants the government to consider how it will check all cattle, based on its experience with outbreaks of BSE, or mad cow disease, and foot-and-mouth disease.

Wednesday, July 20, 2011 18:44 +0900 (JST)

End