

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. 84 : 18:00, May 17

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

(Fukushima NPP site)

- **Nuclear plant cooling system manually shut down**
- **Transfer of radioactive water to begin Tuesday**
- **Generator trucks proved useless at Fukushima plant**
- **"Mega float" arrives at port near Fukushima plant**
- **Back-up cooling systems at Fukushima failed**
- **TEPCO to announce revised reactor cool-down**
- **TEPCO to move radioactive water from No.3 reactor**

(Other News)

- **Tea growers in Ibaraki halt shipments**
- **US halts 24-hour Fukushima monitoring**
- **Govt admits nuclear role, pledges support**
- **Govt spokesman seeks clarifications**
- **Disposing of tainted tea leaves**
- **Gov't to announce evacuee support plan**
- **Fukushima companies want nuke plant scrapped**
- **Governors' nuclear demands**

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●Nuclear plant cooling system manually shut down

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says workers may have manually shut down the No.1 reactor's emergency cooling system in order to prevent damage to the reactor. It says pressure inside the reactor had dropped sharply after the earthquake struck the plant on March 11th.

Tokyo Electric Power Company on Monday disclosed records of its operations at the plant.

They show that the reactor automatically halted operations after the earthquake.

The emergency cooling system was automatically activated but stopped about 10 minutes later and remained off for about 3 hours until after the tsunami arrived.

TEPCO says plant workers may have manually shut down the cooling system because pressure inside the reactor had dropped sharply from 70 to 45 atmospheres.

The system is designed to cool the reactor even if all external sources of power are lost, but the move to shut it down temporarily means that it did not fully function.

TEPCO says the decision may have been made based on a manual to prevent damage to the reactor.

It says if the system had worked, it may have had more time until the meltdown, so it will investigate developments leading up to the decision to turn it off and whether the move was correct.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 13:18 +0900 (JST)

●Transfer of radioactive water to begin Tuesday

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant will start transferring highly radioactive water from the No.3 reactor to a temporary storage facility on Tuesday.

Tokyo Electric Power Company estimates that there is about 22,000 tons of highly radioactive water in the reactor's turbine building and a connecting tunnel.

The utility says water in the basement of the turbine building was about 1.44 meters high as of 7 AM Tuesday, a rise of more than 20 centimeters over the past 2 weeks. Some of the water leaked into the sea last week.

Starting Tuesday afternoon, TEPCO will pump highly contaminated water to a temporary storage facility at the plant, where radioactive water from the No.2 reactor is already being transferred.

TEPCO says it will move 12 tons of contaminated water per hour over about 2 weeks for a total of about 4,000 tons.

In the No. 3 reactor, the temperature at the bottom of the reactor basement rose to 144 degrees Celsius two weeks ago, leading TEPCO to increase the amount of water injected from 7 to 9 tons per hour. As a result, it says, the temperature had fallen to 130 degrees as of 7 AM Tuesday.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 12:28 +0900 (JST)

●Generator trucks proved useless at Fukushima plant

The operator of the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant says dozens of power-generating trucks brought to the plant just after the March 11th disaster mostly proved to be useless.

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About 70 generator trucks from the Self-Defense Forces and other entities headed to the plant after the quake knocked out external power and the tsunami disabled the facility's backup generators.

But plant operator TEPCO says debris strewn across the compound and flooded switchboards hampered the trucks' set up.

The utility says a switchboard for the No.2 reactor was finally wired to one of the generator trucks about 24 hours after the disaster.

But moments later, a hydrogen explosion at the neighboring No.1 reactor fried the wiring and cut off the power supply from the truck.

Another hydrogen explosion 2 days later at the No.3 reactor damaged generator vehicles with chunks of flying concrete.

Electricity was finally restored to the plant through the regular power grid on March 21st --- 10 days after the quake and tsunami.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 09:59 +0900 (JST)

● "Mega float" arrives at port near Fukushima plant

A giant storage barge that will be used to hold radioactive water has arrived at a port near the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The steel mega-float, 136 meters long and 46 meters wide, can store up to 10,000 tons of water. It has been provided to Tokyo Electric Power Company from Shizuoka City in central Japan, where it had been used as a fishing park.

The floating structure entered the Onahama port in Iwaki City, south of the nuclear plant, on Tuesday morning.

After some final checks, it will move to a wharf at the stricken nuclear plant on Friday.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 09:36 +0900 (JST)

● Back-up cooling systems at Fukushima failed

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant has admitted that the reactors' back-up cooling systems failed to function after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami.

Tokyo Electric Power Company on Monday revealed the plant's operation records for the period following the disaster on March 11th.

An emergency condenser system at the Number 1 reactor functioned for less than 10 minutes after the earthquake. The failure lasted for 3 hours.

The utility suspects that workers manually shut down the system as pressure inside the reactor became so low that they were afraid of damage.

Another type of back-up cooling system at the No. 1 and 2 reactors lost power when the tsunami engulfed batteries.

TEPCO is still analyzing the data to assess the failure's impact on fuel rods.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

● TEPCO to announce revised reactor cool-down

The operator of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant will announce on Tuesday a revision of its plan to cool down the plant's reactors.

The revision comes one month after the original plan was announced.

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Tokyo Electric Power Company says it needs to change its plan to pour water into the reactors after confirming that the fuel rods have melted and may have burned holes in the pressure vessel of the Number 1 reactor.

Radioactive water is likely to be flowing out from the containment vessel to the basement.

TEPCO says it suspects a similar situation is happening in the No. 2 and 3 reactors.

The firm says it is considering pumping water out of the containment vessels and circulating it back into the reactors after cooling it with heat exchangers.

It is also considering pumping water from the basement back into the reactors.

TEPCO is expected to keep to its original schedule of stabilizing the reactors within 6 to 9 months.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 05:17 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO to move radioactive water from No.3 reactor

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says it will start transferring highly radioactive water from the No.3 reactor building to a temporary storage facility as early as Tuesday.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, estimates that there is about 22,000 tons of highly radioactive water in the reactor's turbine building and in a connecting tunnel.

The utility says the water in the basement of the turbine building was about 1.4 meters high as of Monday morning, a rise of more than 20 centimeters over the past 2 weeks. Part of the water leaked into the sea last week.

TEPCO says it will move about 4,000 tons of the contaminated water to the waste processing facility. The pace of the transfer will be 10 tons per hour.

The company says it took steps to make the waste facility more watertight, and received approval from the government's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency.

Monday, May 16, 2011 19:49 +0900 (JST)

●Tea growers in Ibaraki halt shipments

Tea growers in Ibaraki Prefecture have voluntarily halted shipments of tea leaves, after radioactive contamination was detected in their products.

On Monday, the prefectural government asked two municipalities and their cooperatives to halt all shipments of tea. Daigo town is about 100 kilometers from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant and Sakai Town is 180 kilometers away.

Daigo Town is home to some 300 tea growers and 37 tea processing plants. This is the most important season for them, as the harvesting of tea leaves usually begins in May.

The leader of the cooperative, Toshimitsu Yoshinari, said the Japanese government should first investigate the situation and find ways to remove any radioactive materials.

He said he will request compensation from the government and the Tokyo Electric Power Company.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 16:08 +0900 (JST)

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●US halts 24-hour Fukushima monitoring

The US Nuclear Regulatory Commission says it has halted 24-hour monitoring of Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant as conditions are slowly stabilizing there.

The commission announced on Monday that it was adjusting its response as Japan continues to implement its shutdown plan. But it said the US team of experts in Japan will remain in place and it will continue to support them and coordinate response efforts with federal and industry partners.

Meanwhile, the State Department is continuing to recommend that US citizens avoid travel within a 50-mile, or 80-kilometer, radius of the Fukushima plant. But it said based on studies, it believes it is safe to use the railway and expressway to transit through the area.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 13:56 +0900 (JST)

●Govt admits nuclear role, pledges support

The Japanese government will on Tuesday announce its policies for supporting people and businesses affected by the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

According to the draft documents, the government admits that promoting nuclear energy has been a state policy and promises to deal responsibly with all victims of the nuclear accident until the very end of reconstruction.

Under the planned timeline, 24,000 temporary housing units will be secured by mid August for people evacuating areas near the nuclear plant.

Starting in late May, the evacuees will be allowed to retrieve their vehicles from within the 20-kilometer no-entry zone. They will also be allowed to make more temporary visits home.

The government promises to monitor residents' health even after the nuclear disaster is resolved, and also to offer consultations and radiation checks for people outside Fukushima to ease their anxieties.

Special zero-interest long-term loans are planned for small- and medium-sized companies, while soil in the affected areas will be decontaminated and refined.

The policies and timeline will be formally adopted by the government's nuclear disaster taskforce on Tuesday afternoon.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 12:32 +0900 (JST)

●Govt spokesman seeks clarifications

Japan's top government spokesman has demanded TEPCO to present a detailed report on how workers manually shutdown the reactor's emergency cooling system before the tsunami struck.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano told reporters on Tuesday that he learned about the manual shutdown in morning news reports. He said the government's nuclear safety agency has asked TEPCO to explain the matter.

Edano said the utility should first present a detailed account of the facts and developments, so that an assessment can be done. He said the company will be asked to publicize all findings.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 11:59 +0900 (JST)

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●Disposing of tainted tea leaves

Farmers in Kanagawa Prefecture have begun disposing of tea leaves that were tainted by radioactive material from the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, more than 250 kilometers away.

Radioactive cesium above the designated safety limit was detected earlier this month in tea leaves harvested in 6 municipalities in Kanagawa, neighboring Tokyo.

The prefectural government asked the municipalities and local farmers' cooperatives to voluntarily halt shipments of tea leaves.

Farmers in Kiyokawa Village began stripping their tea trees of leaves following the announcement.

The prefectural government has asked farmers to place the harvested leaves as far as possible from the trees until it decides with the central government how to dispose of them.

One farmer says he wants to get rid of the contaminated leaves as soon as possible to protect the entire plantation.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 08:25 +0900 (JST)

●Gov't to announce evacuee support plan

The Japanese government will announce a plan on Tuesday containing measures to support evacuees from around the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The plan will contain the first official schedule for assisting evacuees.

The government is expected to allow evacuees to re-enter the 20-kilometer exclusion zone to collect their cars from late this month.

Residents of the extended evacuation zone will be asked to complete their evacuation by the end of the month. The government is expected to announce measures to support their employment and business operations.

The government plans to decide when to lift the evacuation orders once the nuclear reactors have stabilized. Tokyo Electric Power Company hopes to stabilize the reactors within 9 months.

The government has drafted a bill to assist TEPCO with compensation for evacuees. The utility has agreed to make provisional payouts while the bill passes through the Diet.

Tuesday, May 17, 2011 07:31 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima companies want nuke plant scrapped

Companies operating near the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant have demanded that its operator permanently shut down the damaged facility as its radiation leaks are harming their business.

About 120 business people attended a briefing by Tokyo Electric Power Company in Iwaki City on Monday to hear how the utility is addressing the accident at the plant.

Iwaki is more than 30 kilometers away from the nuclear plant and so outside the evacuation zone.

But manufacturers in the city say clients are demanding radiation checks for their

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products. Sales of local farm produce have fallen.

TEPCO officials said the utility will have to revise its strategy to stabilize Reactor No. 1, where nuclear fuel rods are believed to have melted.

But they said the initial plan for stabilizing the No.1 and other reactors by January next year remains unchanged.

The officials declined to say when the plant will be decommissioned, on the grounds that TEPCO does not know what is taking place inside the reactors and so cannot give timelines.

Monday, May 16, 2011 19:49 +0900 (JST)

●Governors' nuclear demands

Prefectures hosting nuclear power plants have agreed to demand that the central government establish clearer nuclear safety standards.

The governors of 14 prefectures met in Tokyo on Monday.

They discussed ways to ease residents' concerns over nuclear safety in the wake of the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant caused by the March 11th earthquake and tsunami.

Aomori Governor Shingo Mimura, who chairs the group, said the Fukushima accident will likely have a variety of impacts on prefectures hosting nuclear facilities.

The prefectural leaders agreed to ask the central government to fully investigate the Fukushima nuclear accident. They also want a rational explanation of Prime Minister Naoto Kan's request to shut down the Hamaoka power plant in central Japan. They are demanding that the government set clearer standards and conditions for nuclear safety.

Currently 35 reactors, or two-thirds of Japan's total, are shut down. Some were stopped after the March disaster while others remain down after routine inspections.

Monday, May 16, 2011 19:49 +0900 (JST)

End