

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. 58: 20:00, April 20

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

●Robots face difficulties at Fukushima plant

Tokyo Electric Power Company says radioactive debris and high humidity are hampering the investigation by robots at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

The company began using remote-controlled robots to explore the first three reactor buildings on Sunday and Monday.

At the Number 2 reactor building, the robot's camera lens was instantly clouded by high humidity.

TEPCO officials think that the steam is coming from the damaged section of the reactor's suppression pool.

But they have not found a way to resolve the problem as the steam could be highly toxic.

Robots entered the Number 3 reactor building through the southern entrance, but their path was blocked by debris. The firm is considering using another robot that can remove obstacles weighing up to 100 kilograms.

At the first reactor building, robots were able to advance 40 meters along the northern side wall.

The use of robots is aimed at paving the way for staff to work inside the contaminated buildings to stabilize the reactors, but the prospects of success remain unclear.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 07:41 +0900 (JST)

●Highly contaminated water level falls slightly

Tokyo Electric Power Company says the amount of highly radioactive water at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is slightly lower now. TEPCO began moving the water to an on-site waste processing facility one day ago.

The utility company says the level of contaminated water in a tunnel linked to the No.2 reactor is one centimeter lower than the previous day as of 7 AM on Wednesday.

That amounts to a reduction of 210 tons of the water in the tunnel, pumped out at a rate of 10 tons per hour.

TEPCO is aiming to remove a total of 25,000 tons of the contaminated water out of the No. 2 turbine building basement and connecting tunnel to the nearby

Earthquake Report - JAIF

processing facility.

The utility says it will monitor the current pumping rate for 10 days or more and then add more pumps, to move 10,000 tons of the radiated water by mid-May.

TEPCO says contaminated water levels are also rising in the basements of reactors No.5 and 6, and in tunnels connected to reactors No.3 and 4.

It says it will transfer about 100 tons of contaminated water from the No.5 and No.6 reactors to condensers, to assess how much water is accumulating. It says groundwater may have been seeping into the reactors' turbine buildings.

TEPCO estimates a total of 67,500 tons of radioactive water has accumulated at the nuclear plant, which is hampering efforts to restore cooling systems.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 12:55 +0900 (JST)

●French company to decontaminate Daiichi water

French nuclear reactor maker Areva says it has agreed with the Tokyo Electric Power Company to build a facility to decontaminate radioactive water at the compound of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

CEO Anne Lauvergeon told reporters in Tokyo on Tuesday that Areva -- one of the world's largest nuclear energy firms -- will build the facility to remove radioactive substances from the contaminated water.

The facility is to use chemical agents to remove radioactive iodine and cesium from contaminated water. The concentration of the radioactive substances is to be reduced to one-one thousandth to one-ten thousandth of the current level. A similar system is already in place in France.

Lauvergeon said it is most important to decontaminate the water at the plant, and that her company will try to do this in every possible way.

TEPCO told reporters on the same day that it has adopted Areva's proposal. The company says it will first transfer the contaminated water into a waste processing facility at the plant, and then decontaminate 1,200 tons of the water per day. It hopes to use decontaminated water to cool the reactors.

TEPCO hopes to start operating the decontamination facility in June.

Tuesday, April 19, 2011 21:47 +0900 (JST)

●Govt to bar entry to nuclear evacuation zone

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano says the government is preparing to forbid entry into the 20-kilometer evacuation zone around the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Edano on Wednesday told reporters the stiffer measure is aimed at securing the safety and health of local residents, as the situation at the nuclear plant remains unstable. He said the government is in final talks with local municipalities to enforce the measure.

At present, citizens are merely advised to stay outside the 20-kilometer zone, and most residents have followed the instruction and left.

Edano said the government is considering allowing evacuees to return home

Earthquake Report - JAIF

briefly to gather their belongings, just before the zone becomes off-limits.
Wednesday, April 20, 2011 13:46 +0900 (JST)

●Govt suspends shipment of Fukushima sand lances

The government has instructed Fukushima Prefecture to suspend shipments of a small fish caught off its coasts found to have radioactive contamination, and to warn people not to eat them.

The restrictions announced on Wednesday are being applied to marine products for the first time, amid ongoing troubles at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The instruction follows a health ministry report that the fish called sand lance caught on Monday near Iwaki city, south of the plant, was found to contain 14,400 becquerels per kilogram of radioactive cesium. That's 29 times the safe limit.

Ministry testing also found 3,900 becquerels, or twice the limit, of radioactive iodine in the fish.

Excessive amounts of radioactive cesium were detected in sand lances caught in the same area on April the 7th and 13th.

The government says the fish are not on the market, as fishery cooperatives in Fukushima are not operating.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 14:18 +0900 (JST)

●Gov't to set up study group on tap water safety

Japan's health ministry is to set up a panel of experts to discuss ways to safeguard tap water from radioactive contamination.

The move comes after radioactive iodine at levels higher than national limits was detected temporarily in tap water in parts of Fukushima and Ibaraki prefectures amid the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

The ministry on Tuesday held a meeting of advisors including environment experts and water utility industry representatives to discuss countermeasures.

Some participants asked that tap water safety be promoted publicly whenever radiation levels are low. Others said water in rivers and reservoirs should also be tested for radiation.

The advisors agreed that a panel of radioactivity experts should be set up to discuss effective ways to prevent radioactive contamination of tap water through rainfall and other routes. The panel is also to discuss a long-term inspection system for tap water.

The panel is to start discussions next week and come up with a report on specific measures by around June.

Advisory council leader Sinichiro Ogaki, who heads the National Institute for Environmental Studies, says radioactive levels in tap water have stabilized. But he says he hopes to see the panel work out effective prevention measures and a proper inspection system so that everyone, from babies to adults, can safely drink

Earthquake Report - JAIF

tap water.

Some municipalities of Fukushima and Ibaraki prefectures advised against tap water consumption by infants after radioactive iodine-131 at levels higher than 100 becquerels per liter was detected at water purification plants.

Such advisories were also issued in Tokyo and neighboring prefectures after iodine levels at water purification facilities were found to exceed the safety limit for infants. But the advisories were all lifted by the end of March.

Tuesday, April 19, 2011 18:10 +0900 (JST)

●IAEA to send fact-finding team to Japan

The UN nuclear watchdog says it will send a team of experts to Japan to investigate the cause of the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

The Deputy Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Denis Flory, held a news conference at the organization's headquarters in Vienna on Tuesday.

He said a team of experts will investigate the cause of the accident and the safety measures that were taken after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami that crippled the plant.

The IAEA will consult with the Japanese government to decide when to conduct the investigation. It hopes to release the results at a ministerial-level meeting in June.

Flory expressed the IAEA's hope that the fact-finding team will make proposals to improve the situation so that people evacuating from the exclusion zone can return home as soon as possible.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 07:56 +0900 (JST)

●FM official: Fukushima less serious than Chernobyl

A senior official of Japan's Foreign Ministry says that although the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant is ranked at the highest level of severity, it is less serious than the 1986 Chernobyl disaster.

State Secretary for Foreign Affairs Chiaki Takahashi made the remark at an international conference on nuclear safety that opened on Tuesday in the Ukrainian capital, Kiev. The meeting is being held to mark the 25th anniversary of the Chernobyl accident on April 26th.

The Japanese government recently raised the severity level of the Fukushima accident to the maximum of 7 on the International Nuclear and Radiological Event Scale.

This is the same ranking as the Chernobyl disaster.

Takahashi denied that the government's move signifies a deterioration of the situation at the Fukushima plant.

He said the government raised the severity level after it had gathered enough data to estimate the entire amount of radioactive emissions from the plant.

Earthquake Report - JAIF

He said nuclear reactors have not exploded and no one has died of radiation exposure.

Takahashi said he hopes other nations will have confidence in the information and respond calmly based on the facts. He said the Japanese government will swiftly provide the correct information to the international community with the maximum transparency.

Wednesday, April 20, 2011 07:46 +0900 (JST)

End