

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. 176: 12:00, August 17

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

(Fukushima NPP Site)

- **TEPCO to use desalinating devices in pools**
- **TEPCO tests Japan-made decontamination unit**
- **New decontamination plan for nuclear plant**

(Other news)

- **Radioactive sludge piling up**
- **Kyoto Daimonji held with March 11 messages**
- **Science teachers to cover radiation in class**

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●TEPCO to use desalinating devices in pools

Tokyo Electric Power Company is planning to use devices to remove salt from spent nuclear fuel pools at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The operator fears that saltwater used to cool reactors 2 - 4 after the March 11 disaster could corrode stainless steel pipes and pool walls.

The new devices will arrive on 5 trucks and use special membranes and electricity to desalinate water.

TEPCO plans to first use the machinery by the end of this week at the number 4 reactor, which contains the most spent fuel. The concentration of salt is expected to be reduced by 96 percent in 2 months.

It will then follow up in reactors 2 and 3.

Water temperatures at all 4 reactor pools have been relatively stable since the installation of a circulating cooling system was completed on August 10th.

Reactor facilities to purify wastewater have all been equipped with desalinating filters.

Another device that uses the mineral, zeolite, to remove radioactive substances from circulating water has been installed in the cooling system of the number 2 to 4 reactors.

Through such measures, TEPCO hopes to stably operate the plant over the long-term until all the spent fuel is removed.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011 12:23 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO tests Japan-made decontamination unit

Tokyo Electric Power Company is conducting a trial run of a Japan-built water decontamination unit at its troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

TEPCO started testing the performance of the new equipment shortly past noon on Tuesday.

The domestic-made unit uses 14 cylindrical tanks, each 3.5 meters high and 1.4 meters across, that contain minerals to absorb radioactive materials.

The utility plans to continue the trial until Wednesday night, before starting full-fledged operations.

Since late June, TEPCO has been decontaminating highly radioactive wastewater from the reactors and then injecting the cleaned water back into the reactors to cool them.

But the decontamination system --- the key part of the water circulation process -- has been plagued with trouble and its foreign-made components have repeatedly stopped operating. TEPCO says it has been running at 66 percent of capacity, failing to meet the initial target of 90 percent.

The power company hopes the new, Japan-built decontamination unit will help achieve stable circulation for cooling.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011 16:50 +0900 (JST)

Earthquake Report - JAIF

●New decontamination plan for nuclear plant

The Japanese government and operator of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant say they will try to reduce radioactive releases from the plant by directly treating contaminated gas in the reactors.

The government and TEPCO say the gas would be sucked from the reactors' containment vessels through existing pipes, and then filtered to remove cesium and other radioactive substances.

The plan would be added to another project underway to fully cover the Number One reactor building with polyester sheets.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency says multiple measures are needed to reduce the radioactive substances being released from the plant.

The amount has decreased substantially since right after the accident, but the plant is still believed to be leaking radiation at a rate of about one billion becquerels per hour.

Some of the radioactivity is likely escaping from gaps created by explosions in the reactors' containment vessels.

The government and TEPCO's timetable aims for steep cuts in the release of radioactive material by January 2012.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 09:52 +0900 (JST)

●Radioactive sludge piling up

Radioactive sludge from sewage facilities across Japan has been piling up in storage facilities, despite the government's plan to bury it.

NHK asked local governments in 17 prefectures in northeastern to central Japan how they are coping with sludge that's been contaminated by radioactive material from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

Contaminated sludge from sewage facilities now totals more than 54,400 tons. 75 percent of it contains less than 8,000 becquerels per kilogram of radioactive cesium, the government-set limit for disposal by burial.

Despite this, some 27,700 tons of sludge --- 51 percent of the total --- remains in storage at water treatment plants.

Local governments say some burial projects have been rejected by residents near proposed sites.

In addition, 7 storage facilities in 4 prefectures have had to set up "no entry zones" where radiation levels have gotten too high.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011 22:51 +0900 (JST)

Earthquake Report - JAIF

●Kyoto Daimonji held with March 11 messages

An annual bonfire festival has been held in Kyoto with messages from survivors of the March 11 disaster inscribed on local firewood.

The city government originally planned to use the firewood from trees swept away by the March 11 tsunami. But the plan was cancelled after radioactive cesium was detected in wood sent from the hard-hit town of Rikuzentakata, Iwate Prefecture.

Instead, event organizers used local wood and copied the survivors' eulogies or messages on them.

On Tuesday evening, the first fire was lit in the shape of the Chinese character "Dai", meaning large, followed by silent prayers for the disaster victims.

As Buddhist monks chanted sutras, four other fires were lit in a variety of shapes such as a boat and shrine gate, on the slopes of adjacent mountains.

The display illuminated the night sky above the ancient capital.

It is believed the bonfires help send off the souls of ancestors that have briefly returned home during the Buddhist Bon festival in mid-August.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 06:33 +0900 (JST)

●Science teachers to cover radiation in class

Science teachers of Japanese junior high schools have discussed how to teach about radiation before the subject becomes compulsory from the next school year.

Japan's education ministry requires in its new curriculum guidelines that radiation be covered in junior high science classes starting in April. This is the first time in 30 years for the ministry to set such a requirement.

About 150 science teachers from schools in Tokyo attended a seminar on Monday.

An expert at the meeting explained features of radiation, how it is put to practical use, and its impact on the human body. The lecturer said it's important to have accurate knowledge about radiation rather than unduly fear it.

The participants then conducted an experiment in which traces of radiation were visualized by using a radioactive mineral ore and dry ice. In another experiment, the participants measured radiation levels in paints and rocks.

The teachers concluded the seminar by discussing how to teach about radiation in class. One participant said he should tell students about the nuclear accident at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, but added that there's a lot he still doesn't know about the issue.

A 28-year-old teacher said she didn't study radiation in school and that she wants to learn about it before teaching the subject.

Tuesday, August 16, 2011 22:51 +0900 (JST)

End