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. 64: 20:00, April 26

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

●School topsoil to be removed in Fukushima

The city of Koriyama in Fukushima Prefecture plans to remove radiation-tainted topsoil from school grounds to allow children to resume outdoor activities.
Koriyama City, some 50 kilometers west of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, will start taking away the top one to 2 centimeters of topsoil from schoolyards this weekend. The institutions subject to the measure are 15 elementary and junior high schools and 13 nursery schools.
The city plans to allow these schools to restart using their grounds for up to one hour daily after confirming their safety by measuring radiation.
The city has restricted outdoor activities at public schools since the central government announced its radiation safety limit for schools last week.
Tuesday, April 26, 2011 14:27 +0900 (JST)

●Radioactive water level unchanged at No.2 reactor

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says the level of radioactive water in a tunnel at the No.2 reactor is unchanged.
Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, has prioritized the operation to transport water from the No.2 reactor. The level of radiation there is especially high and the contaminated water is hampering other work to bring the crisis under control.
TEPCO says the water was 89 centimeters below the top of the tunnel at 7 AM on Tuesday. The level has been about the same for the past few days.
TEPCO also says the contaminated water levels are rising in the tunnels at the No.3 and No.4 reactors.
It says water was 98 centimeters below the top of the tunnel at the No.3 reactor, a rise of 3 centimeters in 24 hours. TEPCO has set one meter as the standard level at which it should begin removing the contaminated water.
At reactor No.4, the water was 115 centimeters from the top of the tunnel, a rise of 5 centimeters in 24 hours.
But TEPCO has not found a location to store contaminated water from these 2 reactors. It will continue to carefully monitor the situation.
Tuesday, April 26, 2011 12:50 +0900 (JST)

●Official: Fukushima radiation release falling

Japan's Nuclear Safety Commission estimates the amount of radioactive release from the Fukushima Daiichi power plant at around 1 terabecquerels per hour as of Sunday. A government advisor says he thinks the amount is gradually falling.

The commission announced its latest estimate on Monday, and compared the level to the 154 terabecquerels per day on April 5th.

Kenkichi Hirose, a Cabinet Office advisor in charge of the Nuclear Safety Commission, told reporters that he believes the amount of radioactive release has been declining judging from the current conditions of the plant.

Radioactivity is measured in becquerels, and a trillion becquerels is a terabecquerel.

A huge amount of becquerels does not automatically translate into a similar level of sieverts, which is a unit for measuring the likely medical impact of the radiation on an individual.

When Japan raised the severity rating of the Fukushima nuclear disaster on April 12th, the commission announced its estimate that 630,000 terabecquerels of radiation had been released into the atmosphere from March 11th till April 5th.

At that time, the Japanese Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency offered its own calculation of 370,000 terabecquerels.

The agency said its estimate is about one-tenth of what was released in the 10 days following the Chernobyl accident on April 26th, 1986, and the Nuclear Safety Commission's estimate is even higher.

The figures for Fukushima involve radioactive iodine 131 and cesium 137.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 12:50 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO prepares to fill No.1 reactor with water

Remote-controlled robots are being used to look inside one of the disabled reactor buildings at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, before workers begin pumping more water into the reactor.

Tokyo Electric Power Company is planning to fill the No.1 reactor and then its container with water by mid July, to submerge the fuel rods and cool them down stably.

To prepare for the operation, TEPCO sent robots inside the reactor building on Tuesday morning to check for leakage and other damage.

If no problems are found, the utility plans to increase the amount of water being fed into the reactor on Wednesday, on an experimental basis.

The water feed is due to be increased from the current 6 tons per hour to a maximum of 14 tons.

Workers will monitor changes in temperature and pressure, to see whether the reactor container can safely hold the water.

Robots will then enter the building again, to check for signs of seepage.

The government's nuclear safety agency says TEPCO also needs to determine whether a water-filled reactor container can withstand strong aftershocks.

TEPCO hopes to fill up the No.1 and No.3 reactor containers by mid-July, as part of its recently announced schedule for containing the nuclear accident.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 12:49 +0900 (JST)

●Govt was unaware of hydrogen explosion risk

An advisor to Prime Minister Naoto Kan says no one in the government knew of the risk of a hydrogen explosion in the initial stages of the emergency at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

The disclosure was made on Monday by Goshi Hosono, who is a governing party lawmaker and senior member of the government's nuclear taskforce.

Hosono referred to a hydrogen blast that shattered the No.1 reactor building one day after the March 11th earthquake and tsunami. The blast occurred after workers began venting air from the reactor containment vessel to reduce pressure inside.

Hosono said he was not aware of a single nuclear expert who warned of the risk of a hydrogen blast following the venting operation. He said nitrogen inside the reactor container was supposed to prevent such explosions.

Plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Company also told reporters that hydrogen is supposed to be processed within the containment vessel, and that such an explosion is not assumed in a reactor building.

Large amounts of radioactive substances were released into the environment as a result of the hydrogen blast.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 10:45 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima Daiichi plant rewired

Tokyo Electric Power Company has rewired the power grid at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to secure a supply of electricity in case of another strong quake.

The company completed work to connect the cables for the No.1 and No.2 reactors to the grid for the No.5 and No.6 reactors on Monday evening. The plant's 6 reactors had been supplied with electricity in pairs from external power sources.

The work is aimed at ensuring that if any one of the 3 outside sources is cut off, the others can be used to cool the reactors.

During the work, external power to the No.1, No.2 and No.5 reactors was suspended for a few hours, but there were no problems.

TEPCO decided to rewire the power grids after all 13 of the plant's emergency generators were disabled when a tsunami hit the plant on March 11th. The blackout led to 4 of the 6 reactors overheating.

In addition, a major aftershock on April 11th temporarily cut off the external power supply, causing the pumping of water into the 4 reactors to stop for about 50 minutes.

The company already finished connecting the cables for the No.1 and No.2 reactors to the grid for the No.3 and No.4 reactors on Tuesday of last week.

With the completion of Monday's work, all the reactors are now able to get electricity from external power sources if their own supply lines break down.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 07:54 +0900 (JST)

●Radioactive water in No.3 and 4 reactors rises

The operator of the disaster-hit Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says the level of radioactive water has risen in the Number 3 and Number 4 reactors.

The levels of radioactive water in the power plant are hampering efforts to restore its functions. Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, is moving highly radioactive water from the tunnel of the No. 2 reactor to a temporary storage facility.

The utility company says the water level in the tunnel of the No. 3 reactor rose to 99 centimeters below the surface as of 6 PM on Monday. That passes the level at which TEPCO plans to remove the water, but it has yet to secure storage space.

The water level in the basement of the No.3 reactor's turbine building also rose by 10 centimeters over 3 days.

TEPCO says a survey last Thursday found an increase in the density of radioactive substances in the water in the basement of the No. 4 reactor's turbine building.

The company says the levels of cesium-134 and 137 increased about 250-fold and iodine-131 increased about 12 times compared with one month ago.

TEPCO says contamination of this level requires them to prioritize the transfer or disposal of the water.

The water level in the No. 4 reactor's turbine building rose by 20 centimeters in 10 days.

TEPCO says water used to cool the No. 3 reactor could be leaking into No. 4 as their turbine buildings are connected.

Tuesday, April 26, 2011 07:54 +0900 (JST)

●First all-out search near Fukushima plant

Police conducted their first full-scale search for victims of the March 11th disaster in Futaba Town in Fukushima Prefecture, where part of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant is located.

The search was of the town's Nakano District, four and a half kilometers north of the plant. Police began searching for missing people in the off-limits area within a 20-kilometer radius of the plant at the beginning of this month. But Futaba Town was left almost untouched.

On Monday morning, about 120 police officers from Fukushima and Tokyo prefectures entered the coastal areas wearing protective gear. An NHK crew was allowed to join them in the afternoon. During the search, the officers used heavy machinery to remove debris from destroyed buildings and checked the roadsides the tsunami reached.

One of the smokestacks of the nuclear plant is visible above a forest, and houses dot the fields. Cars, furniture, and other household articles are strewn around the houses destroyed by the tsunami.

Futaba Town is entirely located within the 20-kilometer no-entry zone. The town hall has been moved to Saitama Prefecture, near Tokyo. All the town's residents appear to have evacuated their homes and are now staying in other parts of Fukushima, Saitama, and other prefectures.

There are no signs of people, but dogs and cats, once pets, can be spotted now and then. Some houses have laundry hanging outside, in testimony to how hastily

the residents fled.
Police say many missing people could still be in areas surrounding the Fukushima Daiichi plant and that they will redouble their efforts.
Monday, April 25, 2011 20:57 +0900 (JST)

●Panel to study better ways to check radiation

A health ministry panel is studying more effective ways to measure radiation levels in tap water to ensure its safety.
The panel held a meeting on Monday to discuss how to improve radiation checks.
Radioactive iodine higher than the safety limits was found in drinking water in some parts of Tokyo and surrounding areas in late March following the accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.
A radiation expert told the panel that radioactive materials released from the power plant are brought to wide areas by the wind, fall onto the ground or rivers with rain and contaminate water sources.
The expert said winds from the direction of the power plant and rain had been observed shortly before the radiation levels in tap water peaked.
The expert said it is necessary to analyze wind direction and rainfall more thoroughly in order to establish better ways to monitor radiation levels.
The panel plans to wrap up its discussions in June at the earliest.
Monday, April 25, 2011 17:30 +0900 (JST)

End