

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. 230: 12:00, October 10

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

(Fukushima NPP Site)

- Hydrogen level falls at Fukushima plant

(Other news)

- Stress tests not likely nuclear safety criteria
- Nuclear stress test survey
- Hosono: transparent stress tests
- IAEA team visits
- Thyroid checkups begin for Fukushima children

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● Hydrogen level falls at Fukushima plant

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says the level of hydrogen in a pipe at the No. 1 reactor has become low enough to make an explosion unlikely.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, on Sunday finished removing hydrogen from inside a pipe connected to the reactor's containment vessel. The utility had been injecting nitrogen into the pipe to remove hydrogen since Saturday.

Last month, the hydrogen levels inside the pipe were found to account for between 61 and 63 percent of the total gas present, posing a risk of explosion. TEPCO says the hydrogen level is now low enough and even if it were to rise again, it would not exceed 4 percent -- the lowest level that poses a risk of explosion.

On Sunday evening, TEPCO cut 2 points of the pipe to allow the installation of a device that filters radioactive substances inside the containment vessel.

The cutting operation was about 2 weeks behind the schedule the company set for its plan to contain the nuclear accident at the plant.

TEPCO says it wants to install and start operating the device as early as possible.

Monday, October 10, 2011 06:28 +0900 (JST)

● Stress tests not likely nuclear safety criteria

An NHK survey shows that nearly 60 percent of the country's prefectures and municipalities hosting nuclear plants say it is important to gain the understanding of local communities to permit the resumption of idle reactors. But less than 20 percent say they will put priority on the results of the government's stress tests on nuclear reactors.

NHK received survey replies in late September from all 29 prefectures and their municipalities that host nuclear power plants. Fukushima Prefecture was not included in the survey.

41 percent approved of the stress tests, while 14 percent disapproved. 45 percent were undecided.

Even among those that approved, many said the government abruptly introduced the tests and that their contents have not been made clear.

Answering multiple-choice questions on what factors they consider important in deciding on restarting reactors, 59 percent cited local consent and 45 percent said explanations from the government. Only 17 percent said the results of the stress test will be important.

In July, the central government decided to carry out the new safety assessment in an effort to reassure residents.

Yoshinori Moriyama of the government's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency said his agency wants to make the testing process more open and explain the situation to local residents.

Monday, October 10, 2011 06:28 +0900 (JST)

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● Nuclear stress test survey

An NHK survey shows that more than 40 percent of the country's prefectures and municipalities hosting nuclear power plants approve of the government's stress tests to confirm the safety of idle nuclear reactors. But nearly 80 percent were cautious about resuming their operation.

NHK received survey replies from all 29 prefectures and their municipalities that host nuclear power plants, excluding Fukushima Prefecture, in late September. 41 percent of them approved of the tests, while 14 percent disapproved. 45 percent were undecided.

But 79 percent of the prefectures and municipalities said they want to be careful about the timing of resuming operations at their idle reactors.

The results are similar to a survey taken in June before the introduction of the stress tests, indicating that the tests have not helped to win the public's understanding toward resuming operations.

Meanwhile, 2 villages said they want to resume operations at their nuclear reactors as soon as possible. These were part of the 21 percent in favor of continuing nuclear power generation.

A Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency official said nuclear experts will examine the stress-test results and publish the information. The official added that he will make sincere efforts to explain the tests to local residents.

Sunday, October 09, 2011 22:37 +0900 (JST)

● Hosono: transparent stress tests

Japan's minister in charge of the nuclear disaster says the results of the government's stress tests on nuclear reactors will be fully disclosed.

In a speech in Sanjo City, Niigata Prefecture, on Sunday, Goshi Hosono said he told IAEA Director General Yukiya Amano in Vienna that he would like the agency to observe the tests.

He said that although the Japanese government is responsible for securing the safety of the nation's nuclear plants, he also wants international evaluations. Hosono said he will disclose the results of the tests to the municipalities and residents concerned, and make the testing process highly transparent.

Sunday, October 09, 2011 22:37 +0900 (JST)

● IAEA team visits

A team of radiation experts from the International Atomic Energy Agency has visited Minami Soma City, Fukushima Prefecture, to inspect efforts to remove radioactive materials.

The 12-member team has been in Japan since Friday at the request of Environment Minister Goshi Hosono to offer advice on ways to effectively clear

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away radioactive substances.

After exchanging views with members of the government task force in Fukushima City, the IAEA experts visited a facility in Minami Soma City where the government is carrying out decontamination work as a model for other areas. The effects of decontamination on buildings, roads, parking lots and forests are being studied at the 30,000-square-meter facility.

The visitors were briefed by a member of the Japan Atomic Energy Agency, which is carrying out the experiment. They asked questions about the area being cleaned and wanted to know what measures were being taken to protect workers. When hearing that fresh, fertile soil was being placed in the forest where contaminated soil had been removed, the IAEA experts said this was a good idea. Team leader Juan Carlos Lentijo said the situation is interesting, and that the exchange of opinions will be helpful to his team when compiling their report. An observer who lives nearby said he wants the latest techniques that were tested after the 1986 Chernobyl accident to be used to make the area into a safe place for children.

The inspection team will visit Date City and Iitate Village on Monday to inspect an elementary school and some farmland that have been decontaminated.

Sunday, October 09, 2011 22:37 +0900 (JST)

●Thyroid checkups begin for Fukushima children

The Fukushima prefectural government has begun thyroid examinations for children in an effort to assess the health impact of the nuclear accident.

The examinations will cover around 360,000 youths aged 18 or younger as of April 1st.

Their health will be monitored for their lifetime. Radioactive iodine released from the damaged nuclear plant could accumulate in children's thyroid glands, raising the possibility of cancer.

On Sunday, 150 children from some municipalities in the government-designated evacuation zone, such as Iitate Village and the Yamakiya district of Kawamata town, underwent ultrasound examinations for tumors or other problems at Fukushima Medical University.

The results are expected to be mailed to them in about a month.

The prefectural government says it plans to have all the children examined by 2014.

After that, it says the children will undergo a thyroid check every 2 years until they turn 20, and will be examined once every 5 years after that age.

Sunday, October 09, 2011 12:49 +0900 (JST)

End