

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. 50: 20:00, April 12

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

●Japan puts priority on public health

Japan's top government spokesman says he feels very sorry for troubling the Japanese people and international community due to the unfortunate accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano made the remark at a news conference on Tuesday, in reference to the nuclear safety agency's raising of the crisis level of the accident from 5 to 7 -- the most dangerous ranking.

Edano said the agency's move indicates the seriousness of the accident.

However, he said that unlike the Chernobyl disaster in 1986, the Fukushima case has caused no direct health problems and that Japan's government will put top priority on protecting public health.

Edano said the scale of the accident at Fukushima is evaluated at the same rank as the Chernobyl disaster but that the 2 cases are quite different in many ways.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 15:11 +0900 (JST)

●Fukushima radiation measurement program

The Fukushima prefectural government has begun a program to measure radiation levels at more than 2700 locations across the region.

In response to residents' concerns, on Tuesday officials began examining radiation levels at 2,757 sites in 55 municipalities around the prefecture.

However, they plan to exclude the area within a 20-kilometer radius of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, where residents have been instructed to evacuate.

In front of the Iwaki railway station, officials measured radiation levels at 1 centimeter and 1 meter above the ground.

A local resident said he is concerned about the level of radiation where he lives and wants the authorities to provide the public with accurate information.

The prefectural survey will continue through Friday and include levels of iodine and cesium in the soil.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 15:11 +0900 (JST)

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●Much of radiation leaked on Mar.15,16

Japan's Nuclear Safety Commission says that abnormalities in a reactor suppression pool were to blame for the release of large amounts of radioactive substances at the Fukushima nuclear power plant.

It said much of the radiation was released during the 2 days after the suppression pool, connected to the No. 2 reactor, began showing problems at 6 AM on March 15.

The commission said that radiation is still escaping and the amount is rising marginally, but that the volume has dropped considerably since the crisis began.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 14:39 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO to resume removing contaminated water

The operator of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant expects to resume the removal of highly radioactive water as early as Tuesday, after a one-day delay due to a strong aftershock.

Tokyo Electric Power Company will begin pumping contaminated water from the Number 2 reactor and transferring it to a condenser, after checking the safety of equipment.

The radioactive water has been hampering work to restore cooling functions in the damaged reactors.

TEPCO says it also resumed injecting nitrogen into the containment vessel of the No.1 reactor late on Monday night.

The work is aimed at preventing further hydrogen explosions. It was suspended because of the strong quake earlier in the day.

TEPCO now suspects a possible leakage of gas from the containment vessel, as its internal pressure has barely risen over the past few days despite the injection of nitrogen.

Radiation levels around in the area have not changed, however, and the utility plans to continue the injection while monitoring the situation closely.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 13:12 +0900 (JST)

●Nuclear accident level raised to maximum

Japan's nuclear safety agency has raised the crisis level at the stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to 7, from the current 5.

The agency told reporters on Tuesday that large volumes of radioactive substances that could affect human health and the environment are being released in a wide area.

Level 7 is the highest rank on an international standard and equivalent to the severity recorded after the Chernobyl disaster in 1986.

But the agency said the volume of radiation from Fukushima is one-tenth that at Chernobyl.

The agency said its calculations show that 370-thousand terabecquerels of radioactive iodine 131 and cesium 137 have been released from the plant.

The nuclear safety commission, in a joint press conference with the agency, put the estimated leak at 630-thousand terabecquerels of both substances.

One terabecquerel is equivalent to one trillion becquerels. Both organizations say

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the leak constitutes a level-7 crisis.

Senior agency official Hidehiko Nishiyama said 29 people died of acute radiation exposure at Chernobyl but there are no fatal radiation casualties at Fukushima.

He added that at Chernobyl the nuclear reactor itself exploded in contrast to the Fukushima plant, which was damaged by hydrogen explosions. He said the reactors themselves retain their shape.

Nishiyama also said the upgrade does not affect the existing evacuation plan, which was made on the basis of the same radiation evaluation.

The agency is required to announce the severity of a crisis at a nuclear facility based on the international standard from zero up to 7 set by the International Nuclear Event Scale.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 13:09 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO issues apology

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, says it is taking the Nuclear Safety Agency's decision seriously and is deeply sorry for causing trouble and concern.

TEPCO official Junichi Matsumoto acknowledged that a level-7 disaster means a massive release of radiation.

Matsumoto said he offers his sincerest apologies to people living near the nuclear plant, the residents of Fukushima Prefecture, and all members of the public. He said TEPCO will do all it can to bring the situation under control.

Matsumoto stopped short of releasing details on the exact volume of radiation from the plant, because the utility is still assessing all relevant data.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 12:56 +0900 (JST)

●Radiation levels in parts of Fukushima over limit

The Japanese government says the radiation accumulated over a 25-day period at some locations in Fukushima Prefecture has exceeded the permissible level set for a full year.

The government announced the findings on Monday. The calculation is based on data collected from 53 locations, up to 60 kilometers from the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, from the day following the March 11th disasters through April 5th.

34 millisieverts of radiation had accumulated over that period at one location in Namie Town, about 24 kilometers northwest of the plant. This equates to about 314 millisieverts per year, more than 3 times the permissible level of 100 millisieverts.

On Monday, the government expanded its 20-kilometer evacuation zone to include towns where annual exposure is expected to top 20 millisieverts. It asked residents to evacuate within about a month.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 08:52 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO receives total \$24 bil. emergency loans

Tokyo Electric Power Company has received a combined 2 trillion yen, or nearly 24 billion dollars, in emergency loans from major banks.

The Development Bank of Japan on Monday offered the power company about

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1.2 billion dollars in loans. The bank says it will consider further loans if the power company needs them.

At the end of last month, Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation, Mizuho Corporate, Tokyo-Mitsubishi UFJ, Mitsubishi UFJ Trust and Banking and other trust banks lent the utility firm a total of about 22.5 billion dollars.

Tokyo Electric sought the funds to cope with the crisis at the quake-stricken Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

The loans will also be used to repair and boost the company's thermal power generation facilities to address expected power shortages.

Tuesday, April 12, 2011 01:26 +0900 (JST)

●Water radiation levels down

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says radiation levels in the seawater near the plant have dropped.

Tokyo Electric Power Company said it detected 200 becquerels of radioactive iodine-131 per cubic centimeter in seawater samples taken around the water intake of the No.2 reactor on Sunday.

The figure is 5,000 times the maximum allowed under government standards, but much lower than the 7.5 million times the standard that was detected at the same spot on April 2nd.

On Wednesday of last week, the company stopped a leak of radioactive water from a concrete pit outside the No.2 reactor after pouring a hardening agent into a layer of gravel around the pit.

In another effort to contain the nuclear trouble at the plant, the utility released 1,320 tons of relatively low-level radioactive water from the plant into the Pacific Ocean outside reactors No.5 and 6 between Monday and Saturday of last week.

TEPCO on Sunday detected 11 becquerels of iodine-131 per cubic centimeter in seawater samples collected 30 meters from outlets in the northern part of the complex. The figure was 280 times the government standard.

Measurements at the same spot were 2,800 times the standard last Thursday.

Monday, April 11, 2011 21:55 +0900 (JST)

●Radiation levels exceed permissible limit

The science ministry says the amount of radiation accumulated over about half a month in some areas of Fukushima Prefecture has exceeded the permissible level for a whole year.

Since March 23rd, the ministry has been measuring radiation levels in 15 locations more than 20 kilometers away from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

At one location, in Namie Town about 30 kilometers northwest of the plant, 14,480 microsieverts of radiation had accumulated over the 17-day period to Sunday.

8,440 microsieverts of radiation were observed in Iitate Village.

In another location in Namie, the amount reached 6,430 microsieverts.

People would be exposed to this accumulated amount of radiation if they had stayed outdoors throughout the entire period.

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The level at one location was more than 14 times the 1,000 microsieverts that the International Commission on Radiological Protection recommends as the long-term annual reference level for people. The recommended level of 1,000 microsieverts excludes radiation from the natural environment and medical devices.

Hiroshima University Professor Kiyoshi Shizuma says most of the radiation observed in Fukushima is believed to be radioactive cesium that has fallen to the ground.

Shizuma advises residents to wear masks to avoid inhaling radioactive substances mixed with dust.

He points to the need to take samples both from the air and the ground for detailed analyses in order to assess any possible impact on human health.

Monday, April 11, 2011 21:20 +0900 (JST)

● Water injection resumes at Fukushima plant

The operator of the Fukushima nuclear plant says water pumping to cool 3 crippled reactors was briefly disrupted after external power sources were knocked out by a strong aftershock on Monday evening.

Tokyo Electric Power Company said external power was cut to reactors 1, 2 and 3 at 5:16 PM, just after the magnitude 7.0 quake. Water injection was resumed after a suspension of about 50 minutes.

The government's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency is checking the situation at the site, but assumes the interruption in cooling had no major impact. The Agency added that TEPCO is considering installing emergency power sources that automatically kick in when power is cut.

At the time of the latest earthquake, TEPCO instructed workers outside reactors No.1 to No.4 to evacuate. No one was injured. The utility lifted the evacuation order at 6:48 PM.

The company halted the pumping of high-level radioactive water from the No.2 reactor to a nuclear waste processing facility.

It also stopped injecting nitrogen into the containment vessel of the No.1 reactor to prevent a possible hydrogen explosion. The company plans to resume the work immediately after confirming safety at the unit.

TEPCO said no new abnormalities have been detected in radiation readings around the plant.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency says no irregularities have been found in external power lines and radiation readings at Onagawa nuclear power plant in Miyagi Prefecture.

The agency says outside power sources are also maintained at the Tokai Daini nuclear plant in Ibaraki Prefecture and a nuclear fuel reprocessing plant in Aomori Prefecture.

Monday, April 11, 2011 21:20 +0900 (JST)

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●Fukushima evacuation zone expanded

The Japanese government has expanded its current 20-kilometer evacuation zone around the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant due to the risks associated with long-term radiation exposure.

Chief Cabinet Secretary Yukio Edano told reporters on Monday that residents in the expanded zone have been asked to evacuate within about a month.

Edano said annual exposure in the zone is expected to be above 20 millisieverts. The worldwide average exposure from the natural environment is 2.4 millisieverts.

The expanded zone includes Katsurao Village, Namie Town, Iitate Village and some parts of Kawamata Town and Minami Soma City.

Edano added that the government will consult with local municipalities. The residents do not have to evacuate immediately.

People in the areas between 20 and 30 kilometers from the plant are now asked to stay indoors or voluntarily evacuate.

Edano said that residents in other areas of the 30-kilometer zone will be asked to prepare for an emergency evacuation. He also said they will need to evacuate on their own. Vulnerable people, such as the handicapped, should be prepared for any contingency.

Edano urged that children, pregnant women, nursing care recipients and inpatients stay away from the areas, adding that kindergartens, elementary and junior high schools in the area will remain closed.

Monday, April 11, 2011 20:13 +0900 (JST)

End