

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. 177: 12:00, August 18

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

(Fukushima NPP Site)

- **Fukushima plant chief apologizes over the accident**
- **Radioactivity down to one-fifth of July levels**
- **Cooling stoppage unknown to plant chief**
- **TEPCO never expected hydrogen explosions: report**
- **Govt, TEPCO to train radiation experts**

(Other news)

- **Hokkaido nuclear reactor resumes operation**
- **Hokkaido governor approves reactor restart**

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●Fukushima plant chief apologizes over the accident

The head of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station has apologized for the nuclear accident at his plant.

The operator of the plant, Tokyo Electric Power Company, released footage of workers at the facility on Wednesday, exactly one month after the utility entered stage 2 of its timetable toward ending the nuclear crisis.

The plant chief, Masao Yoshida, apologized to all Japanese people for causing the trouble, and said that with the help from people in Japan and from around the world, his plant has cleared the first stage of the timetable.

Yoshida said efforts are being made to achieve the goals required for the second stage so that evacuees will be able to return home as soon as possible.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 22:26 +0900 (JST)

●Radioactivity down to one-fifth of July levels

The Japanese government and Tokyo Electric Power Company say the amount of radioactive material being emitted from the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant has dropped to one-fifth that of a month ago.

The government and TEPCO said on Wednesday that maximum radiation levels around the plant during the past 2 weeks were 200 million becquerels per hour.

This is one-fifth the levels detected in July, and one-10 millionth the levels in mid-March, shortly after the troubles began at the plant.

The state minister in charge of the nuclear crisis, Goshi Hosono, said the maximum reading of 200 million becquerels is just an estimate because the exact emission levels cannot be accurately measured.

He pledged to seek methods for making precise measurements and for containing radioactivity inside the plant.

The government and TEPCO said there is no major change in their timetable for bringing the plant under control, and that their goal continues to be to achieve cold shutdown of the reactors while processing contaminated wastewater and reducing radioactive emissions.

The government said it will draw up a plan for decontaminating the current evacuation zone by the end of August, and it will launch a model decontamination project early next month.

Experts say that before the government allows residents to return to the evacuation zone, it will be necessary to prevent new leakage of radioactive material, as well as decontaminate material already leaked and dispose of mud and sludge generated by the decontamination process.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 22:23 +0900 (JST)

●Cooling stoppage unknown to plant chief

Government investigators have found that the chief of the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant did not know that a backup cooling system for one of the plant's reactors was manually shut down on March 11th, the day of the quake and tsunami.

The investigators learned that Masao Yoshida was unaware that a worker stopped the system to prevent it from being damaged. The worker told the investigators that the system appeared to be operating at boiling temperature but was not

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producing steam.

Yoshida reportedly said it was a major error that he and other leaders did not immediately know such important safety information.

The plant's operator, TEPCO, says a fuel meltdown took place at the reactor 5 hours after the quake, generating large amounts of hydrogen that caused an explosion on the following day.

University of Tokyo Professor Koji Okamoto said the reactor lost all cooling functions due to the stoppage, and that the reactor's core should have been cooled by all possible means.

Okamoto said the failure of communication may have worsened the situation by delaying orders for water injections and government evacuations of nearby residents.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 22:20 +0900 (JST)

●TEPCO never expected hydrogen explosions: report

A government investigation has found that no one at the utility operating the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant had expected hydrogen explosions to occur at the plant.

The committee investigating the accident has been hearing the testimony of officials from government and the utility, the Tokyo Electric Power Company.

It has learned that Tokyo Electric officials discussed the hydrogen explosion that occurred at the No. 1 reactor building on March 12th, one day after the quake and tsunami.

The utility officials said nobody had expected such an explosion, and that attention was focused on the state of the reactors' cores and containment vessels.

They said they discussed ways to prevent similar explosions after the blast. But they were unable to implement them due to high levels of radiation at the site resulting in a 2nd explosion at the No. 3 reactor building on March 14th.

The reactors were deprived of their cooling functions after the quake and tsunami, causing damage to the reactor cores. It is believed this caused a massive buildup of hydrogen in the containment vessels resulting in the explosions.

TEPCO officials say they were aware that a core meltdown could cause a hydrogen explosion, but had never considered the possibility of a blast outside a reactor.

This finding exposes the utility's underestimation of the potential dangers at the plant.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 13:36 +0900 (JST)

●Govt, TEPCO to train radiation experts

The government and the operator of the crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant plan to secure more experts on radiation management by training existing employees and new recruits.

The government and Tokyo Electric power Company recently reviewed a 2-stage plan to bring the nuclear plant under control.

The first stage of the plan to achieve stable cooling of the reactors was completed on schedule in July. The utility and the government are now tackling the 2nd stage, which aims to implement cold shutdown of the reactors by January.

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But concern is growing that an increasing number of workers could be exposed to unsafe levels of radiation during the work.

The government will train 250 workers in radiation measurement and control techniques. A system to hire more workers will also be introduced through relevant industrial bodies.

Keeping workers safe from excessive exposure to radiation will remain a pressing issue as work to decommission the reactors is expected to take years.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 12:13 +0900 (JST)

●Hokkaido nuclear reactor resumes operation

A nuclear reactor in Hokkaido has become the first in Japan to resume commercial operations since the March 11th disaster.

The Number 3 reactor at the Tomari nuclear power plant had been in test-run mode for 5 months following a routine checkup. Test runs usually last about a month.

The government's Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency carried out final inspections on the reactor last week, opening the way for the resumption of commercial operations.

But the Hokkaido prefectural government had criticized the plant's operator, Hokkaido Electric Power Company, for conducting final tests on the reactor before it had reached its own decision about the restart.

Following Governor Harumi Takahashi's granting of official approval on Wednesday, the nuclear safety agency issued a certificate to the utility.

39 of Japan's 54 nuclear reactors are out of operation due to inspections or other reasons. The government has ordered all of them to undergo stress tests before they can be restarted.

The Tomari reactor had been generating electricity before the March 11th tsunami and accident at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 22:23 +0900 (JST)

●Hokkaido governor approves reactor restart

The governor of Hokkaido, Harumi Takahashi, has agreed to resume commercial operation of a nuclear reactor in the prefecture.

The Number 3 reactor at Tomari nuclear power plant in Hokkaido has been in test-run mode for 5 months following a routine check-up.

Takahashi said on Wednesday she has no objection to the central government's process for giving final go-ahead to resume operation of the reactor.

She said she supports the government's effort to have the reactor checked, both by the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency and the Nuclear Safety Commission, followed by a stress test to reaffirm its safety.

The Hokkaido governor's approval makes the Tomari Number 3 reactor the first to resume full operation since the nuclear accident at Fukushima Daiichi power plant.

Wednesday, August 17, 2011 15:54 +0900 (JST)

End