

# 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. 321: 12:00, January 18**

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

(Fukushima NPP Site)

● **Preparations going on for reactor endoscopy**

(Other news)

● **Govt to allow 20-yr extension to nuke plants**

● **Evaluation of "stress tests" to be disclosed**

● **Tokyo Electric to hike corporate user fees by 17%**

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## ●Govt to allow 20-yr extension to nuke plants

The Japanese government has said that the lifespan of nuclear power plants can be extended up to 20 years beyond the currently proposed 40-year limit.

Some experts are criticizing the plan as having no scientific basis.

The proposal was announced by a taskforce within the Cabinet Secretariat, which says extensions would be granted on a one-time-only basis.

Earlier this month, nuclear crisis minister Goshi Hosono proposed a 40-year limit to the lifespan of nuclear power plants as part of a review of safety regulations following the disaster at the Fukushima Daiichi plant.

Hosono said the 40-year limit and any extensions would be strictly enforced by law.

A professor of nuclear engineering at Kyushu University, Kazuhiko Kudo, questioned the extension plan, saying he has difficulty understanding why the lifespan of nuclear reactors was set at 40 years in the first place.

Kudo said the government should clarify the scientific basis of its decisions, adding that officials should first address the problems of operating aging reactors and other points that need improvement.

The taskforce says the extension plan is in line with global standards. It adds that the plan would be subject to strict safety rules.

The government plans to submit a draft of the legislation to the Diet by the end of January, ahead of the planned launch of a new nuclear safety agency in April.

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 09:52 +0900 (JST)

## ●Evaluation of "stress tests" to be disclosed

Japan's nuclear safety agency will announce on Wednesday that the safety tests for two nuclear reactors were appropriate.

This will be the first step in the resumption of the country's halted nuclear plants, although getting approval from local municipalities will be another issue.

Ninety percent of Japan's 54 nuclear reactors are halted due to concerns they could be vulnerable to major earthquakes and tsunami.

The government ordered the computer-simulated stress tests to be carried out before the idle reactors could be restarted. The nuclear safety body has received the results for 14 reactors so far.

The agency's experts will meet on Wednesday to give their assessment of the tests for 2 reactors at the Ohi nuclear plant in Fukui Prefecture, central Japan.

The operator, Kansai Electric, had submitted a report that 2 reactors could withstand an earthquake 1.8 times the intensity and a tsunami 4 times the height of the estimated maximums for the area.

The experts are expected to conclude that an appropriate method was used for the tests. They will report their evaluations to the government after seeking advice from the International Atomic Energy Agency.

The government of Fukui Prefecture has criticized the stress tests, saying they do not take account of the lessons of the Fukushima Daiichi accident.

Wednesday, January 18, 2012 07:06 +0900 (JST)

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## ●Preparations going on for reactor endoscopy

Preparations are under way to use an endoscope to examine the inside of a containment vessel of the damaged No. 2 reactor at the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant.

At the No.1, 2, and 3 reactors of the plant, the nuclear fuel has melted down, but the exact state of the fuel and details of the inside of the containment vessels are yet to be confirmed. This is causing a big problem for the operator, Tokyo Electric Power Company, in its continued efforts to stabilize the cooling of the reactors and its plans to decommission them. The reactors were damaged by the March 11th earthquake and tsunami.

On Tuesday, 10 groups of 4 workers each entered the first floor of the No.2 reactor building from the northwestern side. The workers drilled a hole in the containment vessel to insert an endoscope. An industrial endoscope that can withstand high levels of radiation will be used.

The utility says the workers were exposed to up to 3 millisieverts of radiation. The company says the workers had rehearsed the job at the No. 5 reactor, the same type as the No.2, in order to minimize their exposure.

TEPCO says Tuesday's operation went smoothly and it will insert the endoscope on Thursday as scheduled. It hopes to gain the first internal view of one of the damaged reactors since the accident.

Tuesday, January 17, 2012 20:26 +0900 (JST)

## ●Tokyo Electric to hike corporate user fees by 17%

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, has announced that it will raise electricity rates by an average 17 percent for corporate users, starting in April.

Company president Toshio Nishizawa said at a news conference on Tuesday that corporate users with contracts of 50 kilowatts and above will be asked to pay an extra 2.6 yen, or about 3 cents, per kilowatt hour. This applies to as many as 240,000 businesses.

Most high-voltage users, such as department stores and large office buildings, will see their electricity bills go up by 18.1 percent, while most small and medium-size supermarkets and offices will see a raise of 13.4 percent.

TEPCO expects fuel costs for thermal power plants to surge by more than 10 billion dollars in the current fiscal year that closes at the end of March, because it's not known when its nuclear power plants can be restarted.

The utility says a raise in electricity rates is inevitable, despite efforts to streamline management and cut costs.

The company is also considering a new discount service for corporate users, such as lower fees for those that save electricity when demand peaks in the summer.

TEPCO has yet to raise home electricity rates, which would require government approval.

Nishizawa said the company will wait until after the government's review of the electricity bill system, and discussions on a comprehensive business plan to be drawn up by the end of March.

Tuesday, January 17, 2012 19:04 +0900 (JST)

End