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Wastewater level at No.2 reactor tunnel rising

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says the level of highly radioactive water in a tunnel of the No. 2 reactor has been rising.

Contaminated water in the plant's facilities is hampering efforts to restore reactor cooling systems. Leakages of such water into the ocean and the ground are also raising concern.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, finished transferring part of the wastewater -- about 660 tons -- from the tunnel to a condenser in a turbine building on Wednesday.

The transfer lowered the water level in the tunnel by 8 centimeters, but it began rising again, exceeding the previous level by 2.5 centimeters as of Saturday morning.

TEPCO says work to fix the leakage of highly radioactive water into the ocean earlier this month may have caused water from the reactor to accumulate in the tunnel.

The company hopes to begin transferring contaminated water to a waste-processing facility by the end of next week. It is now accelerating work to monitor and fix water leaks in the facility.

Highly radioactive water may also be leaking underground.

On Thursday, TEPCO detected higher radiation levels in underground water. The observed level was up to 38 times that of one week ago.

TEPCO began taking radiation readings 3 times per week on Saturday, instead of just once per week.

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