

updated at 8:26 UTC, Apr. 16

Radiation levels in underground water rise

The operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant says radiation levels in underground water gathered in so-called sub-drain pits rose by up to 38 times during the past week.

Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, is working to remove contaminated water from the basements of the turbine buildings and tunnels. The contaminated water is hindering efforts to restore the reactors' cooling systems.

TEPCO said that in its monitoring on Wednesday, it found 400 becquerels of iodine-131 and 53 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic centimeter in the No. 1 reactor's sub-drain pit. These levels are 6 times and 38 times higher than a week ago respectively.

In the No.2 reactor's pit, 610 becquerels of iodine-131 and 7.9 becquerels of cesium-134 per cubic centimeter were detected. These levels are 17 times and 8 times higher than a week ago respectively.

TEPCO says the sub-drain pits of the 2 reactors are connected by a pipe and that the highly radioactive water in the No. 2 reactor could be leaking underground.

TEPCO is to increase its radiation readings to 3 times per week from Saturday on the instructions of the Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency.

Friday, April 15, 2011 10:43 +0900 (JST)

