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Top

Cabinet Lineup

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National

Sports

Business

World

Careers

Features

Photos

Columns

Editorial

Home > National

Weather

TEPCO took 2 months on report

The Yomiuri Shimbun

It took more than two months for Tokyo Electric Power Co. to submit its report to the government on its analysis of what occurred in the Nos. 1, 2 and 3 reactors at its Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant since the March 11 earthquake and tsunami crippled the power station.

Many people have asked why it took so long for TEPCO to submit the report, which reached the agency under the Economy, Trade and Industry Ministry just before the deadline late Monday.

The primary reason for the delay was that the reactors were without power, as their switchboards were submerged in water when the powerful tsunami struck. Most of the data TEPCO used to grasp what had happened in the reactors is normally recorded on computers at the reactors' central control rooms.

But shortly after the tsunami, this recording capacity at the Nos. 1 and 2 reactors was largely disabled. Extremely high radiation levels near the control rooms in the early days of the crisis delayed the utility's ability to retrieve data that had been recorded.

It was not until earlier this month, when radiation levels declined and rubble was cleared from the area, that TEPCO workers were able to enter the control room to collect the data.

Besides electronic data, paper records were also left inside the control rooms, which TEPCO scanned to add to the electronic records.

To fill in the gaps when there was neither electronic nor paper records, the utility interviewed officials who were at the plant at the time, and looked at job sheets and other notes left on whiteboards in the control rooms.

The International Atomic Energy Agency will convene a high-level ministerial conference on nuclear safety June 20-24 in Vienna, where the government will make a report on the Fukushima disaster. The government had asked the utility to submit its report on Monday, and the utility handed it in at 11:30 p.m.

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