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NISA wants measures to stop seawater contamination

Japan's nuclear regulatory agency has instructed the operator of the troubled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant to take additional measures to prevent further leakage of radioactive water into the sea.

The Tokyo Electric Power Company, or TEPCO, found on May 11th that highly radioactive water was flowing into the sea through a pit near a water intake for the plant's No. 3 reactor.

TEPCO estimates that 250 tons of contaminated water was discharged in 41 hours, and that it contained 20 terabecquerels of radioactivity -- about 100 times more than permitted annually at the plant.

In April, contaminated water with about 4,700 terabecquerels -- 20,000 times more than the annual limit -- was discharged into the sea from the No. 2 reactor.

TEPCO is trying to plug pits at the plant with concrete and studying the feasibility of building a system for purifying seawater near the water intake.

The Nuclear and Industrial Safety Agency ordered TEPCO to also survey other places at risk of radioactive leakage and take preventive action.

The agency has also asked TEPCO to wrap up a plan for storing and treating radioactively contaminated water at the plant by June 1st.

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