



## Japan's TEPCO chief 'sick during nuclear crisis'

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**The president of Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO), which runs the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant, was sick and off work for several days during the crisis, local reports said.**

A massive 9.0-magnitude earthquake and tsunami on March 11 knocked out the cooling systems of the Fukushima plant's six reactors, triggering explosions and fires, releasing radiation and sparking global fears of a widening disaster.

TEPCO president Masataka Shimizu, 66, fell sick on March 16 and took a week off from the joint taskforce that had been set up by the government and the company, the Mainichi Shimbun daily said, citing company officials.

"He was not at the taskforce but (was) still collecting information at the headquarters (in Tokyo), giving instructions," a TEPCO spokesman was quoted as saying by the Mainichi daily.

But another TEPCO employee, described as a senior official, said Mr Shimizu had been so sick he had stayed "mostly in bed" in a separate room in the building where the taskforce was meeting, the newspaper said.

He had now recovered and returned to work at the liaison office, Kyodo News said.

Mr Shimizu has not appeared in public since attending a press conference on March 13, leading to local media criticism that he had been irresponsible.

A TEPCO spokesman declined to elaborate on his health condition, but said he did not fall over or require an intravenous drip, Kyodo said.

- AFP

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