

Japan, Fukushima: Fishermen furious over new radioactive water leak

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Fishermen furious over new radioactive water leak at Fukushima nuke plant

FUKUSHIMA — Local fishermen and regional government heads have expressed outrage over a new leak of radioactive water from a storage tank at the Fukushima No. 1 Nuclear Power Plant into the ocean.

“How long is Tokyo Electric Power Co. (TEPCO) going to hold us fishermen back?” Masakazu Yabuki, 76, head of the Iwaki City Fisheries Cooperative Association, said about the repeated tainted water leaks. The association is planning to conduct trial fishing off Fukushima Prefecture on Oct. 10, for the first time since the outbreak of the Fukushima nuclear disaster.

While Prime Minister Shinzo Abe declared during an International Olympic Committee meeting last month that the effects of the contaminated water have been completely blocked within the bay that hosts the plant, the latest water leak has further fueled distrust among fishermen and local government heads against TEPCO and the central government.

Regarding Abe’s remarks, Yabuki said, “He was only referring to the data on radioactive materials after contaminated water was diluted by seawater. Fishery operators are enraged, saying the prime minister is making a fool of them.”

Hiroyuki Sato, 57, head of the Soma-Futaba fisheries cooperative which resumed test fishing at the end of September, said, “We’ve been fishing after confirming the safety of areas through monitor surveys. It’s not like we are conducting test fishing in the belief of the prime minister’s irresponsible remarks that the situation is ‘under control.’”

Mayor Tamotsu Baba of the Fukushima Prefecture town of Namie, who is seeking to revive the town’s Ukedo fishing port, said, “Are they really thinking about the contaminated water issue seriously? Every single incident becomes a matter of life or death for fishery operators, and could lead to harmful rumors.”

Mayor Toshitsuna Watanabe of the Fukushima Prefecture town of Okuma said, “This happened despite now being a crucial time for devising a recovery plan. It just makes us feel ‘Not again’ and discourages us from even making comments.”

Fukushima Gov. Yuhei Sato said at a hastily arranged meeting of managers at the prefectural government, “We have repeatedly demanded TEPCO ensure its risk management. We can only call

the company sloppy.”

The Fukushima Prefectural Government began a sampling survey on seawater near the plant’s southern water discharge outlet on Oct. 3, for analysis of the concentrations of strontium and tritium — radioactive materials that both emit beta rays.

Mainichi Shimbun, October 4, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131004p2a00m0na010000c.html>

Fukushima fisheries to resume trial fishing after samples prove safe

FUKUSHIMA — Fishing operations off the coast of Fukushima Prefecture were set to resume Wednesday, about a month after leaks of contaminated water at the Fukushima No. 1 nuclear plant forced trial operations to be put on hold.

The Fukushima Prefectural Federation of Fisheries Cooperative Associations said Tuesday that “through tests we know the radioactive levels of the fish are not an issue and that they are safe.”

Out of 100 fish and seafood products tested, 95 were clear of radioactive substances and the remaining five contained less than one-tenth of the government’s limit of 100 becquerels for food products, the fishing co-op said.

Operations were to resume at around 2 a.m., starting with the Soma Futaba fisheries cooperative covering the northern part of the prefecture. According to the cooperative, the catch will be put on sale as early as Thursday, with part of it to be distributed outside of Fukushima.

Trial fisheries operations began roughly 15 months after the March 2011 earthquake and tsunami caused the breakdown at Fukushima No. 1.

The trial operations limit the area that can be fished and only allow products confirmed safe to be shipped.

Kyodo News, September 24, 2013

<http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2013/09/24/national/fukushima-fisheries-to-resume-trial-fishing-after-samples-prove-safe/#.UkjM139jbRY>

Motegi sides with locals calling to scrap Fukushima Daiichi nuke plant

TOKYO (Kyodo) — Industry minister Toshimitsu Motegi on Monday suggested he supports local calls to scrap the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant, located near the accident-stricken Fukushima Daiichi complex.

“Thinking about the current feelings of the people in Fukushima Prefecture, I don’t think we can treat Fukushima Daiichi in the same way as other nuclear power plants,” the economy, trade and

industry minister told a parliamentary committee.

The Daini complex is located 12 kilometers south of the Daiichi plant. The four-reactor plant achieved a stable state of cold shutdown shortly after the natural disasters in 2011.

But he also said plant operator Tokyo Electric Power Co. should make a decision by “comprehensively” considering discussions on Japan’s energy policy, local opinion and other factors.

Locals and the prefectural government of Fukushima have been calling for all 10 reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi and Daini plants to be scrapped in the wake of the nuclear crisis, triggered by a huge earthquake and tsunami in March 2011.

TEPCO is already moving to scrap the Nos. 1 to 4 units at Fukushima Daiichi, which were severely damaged in the crisis. But it has not been clear about the fate of the remaining six reactors in the northeastern prefecture.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged TEPCO to scrap the Nos. 5 and 6 reactors at the Fukushima Daiichi plant that avoided meltdowns, saying that the utility should focus more on the plant’s cleanup efforts.

Kyodo News, October 1, 2013

<http://mainichi.jp/english/english/newsselect/news/20131001p2g00m0dm037000c.html>
