

Los Angeles Times

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Fresh fears, harsh reality

2nd blast rocks nuclear plant; Japan quake toll likely to top 10,000



TORU HANAI Reuters

GRIM JOB: Workers recover a body from the rubble in Rikuzentakata, a coastal town in northern Japan that was hit by the tsunami.

MARK MAGNIER
AND BARBARA DEMICK
REPORTING FROM
SENDAI, JAPAN
LAURA KING
REPORTING FROM TOKYO

A fresh explosion rocked a crippled nuclear complex as rescuers from around the world converged on Japan's devastated earthquake zone, searching for survivors and ministering to the sick and hungry.

With the death toll from the largest quake in Japan's recorded history expected to ultimately reach the tens of thousands, more than half a million people have been displaced by growing radiation fears and the massive swath of destruction.

Japanese officials ordered people near the Fukushima complex — around which an evacuation zone had already been carved out — to stay indoors after a hydrogen blast Monday in the containment building of one of its six reactors, similar to one that occurred Saturday in a separate reactor.

Cabinet secretary Yukio Edano, speaking in a live TV broadcast, said it was believed that the reactor remained intact and "we think that the possibility of a massive radiation emission is low."

But the apparently intensifying nuclear crisis sent a wave of fear and anxiety through the quake-battered country, as powerful aftershocks from Friday's temblor continued to rattle cities and towns. Earlier, the government reported that radiation levels had again risen above legal limits outside the Fukushima complex, about 150 miles north of Tokyo, where authorities have been pumping seawater into two overheated reactors to try to cool them down.

The use of seawater was considered a drastic emergency. [See Japan, A6]

Japan crisis may derail 'nuclear renaissance'

Damage to reactors may already have doomed push for new atomic power plants.

KEN DILANIAN
AND DON LEE
REPORTING FROM
WASHINGTON

The nuclear crisis in Japan, even if authorities are able to bring damaged reactors under control, has cast doubts on the future of nuclear power as a "clean energy" solution in the United States and around the globe.

Before the recent events in Japan, the world had seen a surge of nuclear reactor projects, and the talk in Washington was of a "nuclear renaissance" as a way of slowing down climate change and weaning the U.S. from its dependency on petroleum. President Obama

made a pitch for nuclear power in January during his State of the Union address, saying it could set clean energy standards for the country.

But utilities and their investors were already cautious about committing money toward nuclear projects and insisted on government subsidies and loan guarantees. Now the word is that the emergency at Japan's Fukushima nuclear complex is likely to dampen the hoped-for renaissance.

As Japanese officials continued their efforts to prevent damaged reactors from a meltdown, the scenes being broadcast worldwide of an explosion at Fukushima and nearby residents being tested for radiation have conjured up images of the panic surrounding the disasters of Three Mile Island in 1979 and Chernobyl in 1986.

[See Nuclear, A8]



CAROLYN COLE Los Angeles Times

DEVASTATED: A man wanders in the Natori district of Sendai, on Japan's northeastern coast, which bore the brunt of the earthquake and tsunami.

A city tossed upside down

MARK MAGNIER AND BARBARA DEMICK
REPORTING FROM SENDAI, JAPAN

A smashed white pickup wedged beneath another vehicle was marked "Day 13, 3:15 p.m." in Japanese characters.

The numbers indicated the day of the month and time two bodies had been found inside the truck. A team of eight soldiers struggled to remove the unidentified corpses from the truck's cab Sunday. They lifted them onto a soggy tatami mat, covered them with a blue and yellow blanket,

then heaved the load onto their flatbed army truck.

"Push it back farther," Japanese Self-Defense Forces officer Tomonori Yoshinaga told the men. "We still have more to go."

A few minutes later, they found another body, rigor mortis fixing it in a sitting position, within the mess left by the earthquake and tsunami that slammed Sendai, a coastal city in northeast Japan, shortly after 2:30 p.m. Friday.

"This work is heartbreaking," said Yoshinaga, a large army phone system on his back, before heading off to [See Sendai, A5]

Tokyo dims lights to save power

The city's trademark neon glare is toned down voluntarily. **WORLD, A7**

A scramble to avert meltdown

Engineers use seawater to cool two nuclear reactors. **WORLD, A8**

Aid efforts pick up in Los Angeles

Japanese American groups go online to rally support. **LATEXTRA, AA3**

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The latest updates are available online.

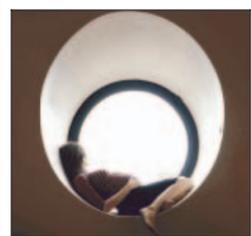
Libya rebels are pushed farther east

Forces loyal to Kadafi overrun Port Brega, site of a key refinery complex, while forcing rebels toward their stronghold of Benghazi. **A3**

A ban on renting recalled cars?

Car rental firms object to a proposed bill, saying fixes are made promptly. **BUSINESS, A12**

HEALTH & WELLNESS



Felix Clinton/Getty Images

Pregnancy myths

New scientific studies turn some folk wisdom on its head. **HEALTH, E1**

It's bigger, but is it better?

Chris Dufresne looks at the expanded field of 68 NCAA tournament teams. **SPORTS, C1**

- World **A3**
- Nation **A9**
- California **AA3**
- Weather **AA8**

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Senior judges keep courts open

As caseloads soar and judgeships go unfilled, they serve justice.

CAROL J. WILLIAMS

The pile of unread magazines and novels on her bedside table is Judge Betty Fletcher's only regret in letting retirement elude her.

Fletcher, who turns 88 this month and relies on a

walker to navigate airports and courthouse corridors, retired a dozen years ago yet still works full time, on what is known as senior status, for the U.S. 9th Circuit Court of Appeals. She travels throughout the court's nine-state region for hearings and spends seven days a week poring over foot-high stacks of written filings.

As federal courts stagger under the weight of mounting caseloads and vacant judgeships go unfilled for

years, senior judges like Fletcher have come to the rescue, especially in the 9th Circuit, where they shoulder a third of the legal load.

"It's kind of a double whammy," Fletcher said of the courts that have had no new judgeships added in 21 years and that have declining numbers of active judges because of partisan posturing in Congress. Nearly 11% of the nation's 875 lifetime positions are empty.

[See Judges, A10]



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