

Fuel removal device installed at meltdown-hit Fukushima reactor

November 13 2017



The meltdown was the worst nuclear disaster since Fukushima

Workers at Japan's crippled Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant have installed a device to remove nuclear fuel from a meltdown-hit reactor nearly seven years after the crisis was sparked by a tsunami, a spokesman said Monday.

The plant's operator, Tokyo Electric Power Co (TEPCO), said it started putting a crane on the roof of unit No. 3 on Sunday to extract a total of 566 rods from its [fuel](#) pool.

It will be the first removal of fuel rods from one of the three reactors that melted down when the tsunami struck the plant in March 2011.

TEPCO has already removed [fuel rods](#) from unit No. 4 whose [reactor core](#) was empty when the tsunami crashed ashore.

It plans to start removing rods from the fuel pool of unit No. 3 "sometime around the middle of the next fiscal year" starting in April 2018, TEPCO spokesman Atsushi Sugiyama said.

It has yet to start removing any fuel from the reactor cores of the three meltdown-hit units, as the complicated decommissioning process is expected to last for decades.

The magnitude 9.0 quake, which struck under the Pacific Ocean, and the tsunami it spawned left about 18,500 people dead or missing and overwhelmed cooling systems at the plant, causing the world's worst nuclear disaster since Chernobyl in 1986.

The quake and [tsunami](#) also caused extensive damage to homes and property while radiation spread over a wide area, with more than 450,000 people evacuating in the immediate aftermath.

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