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S.Korea to ship coolant to Japan

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SEOUL: South Korea said Wednesday it plans to send an emergency shipment of cooling material to Japan to help control its quake-damaged nuclear reactors.

Tokyo has asked for the shipment of boron, a key material used for moderating nuclear chain reactions, as it is running short of the metalloid to which it needs to cool the overheated Fukushima reactors, Seoul's Ministry of Knowledge Economy said.

"We sent boron samples yesterday and we are prepared to send tens of tons of boron if Tokyo gives the nod," said a spokesman from the state-run Korea Hydro and Nuclear Power.

The ministry said Seoul would provide as much boron from its reserves as possible.

Boron goes into control rods used to halt or slow down fission reactions at nuclear reactors.

Japan also asked for an emergency fuel shipment from South Korea.

S-Oil Corp., SK Energy Co. and GS Caltex Corp. said they planned to ship refined petroleum products such as petrol, diesel and kerosene to Japan after many refineries were forced to shut down due to the devastating quake.

"Japan's JX Nippon Oil and Energy Corp, our business partner in Japan, called for help," said a spokesman for GS Caltex, South Korea's second-largest oil refiner.

"They said some of their refining facilities were damaged. We are reviewing what kind of products and how much we can ship to Japan," he said.

Fire crews were fighting a new blaze at reactor number four at the quake-hit Fukushima No. 1 nuclear power plant, operator Tokyo Electric Power (TEPCO) said Wednesday.

-AFP/wk



Photos 1 of 1 Screen grab from NHK shows the damaged number one (L) and number three (R) reactors either side of the number two (C) reactor where a blast was heard. (Credit: AFP PHOTO / HO / NHK)

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