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RELEASE OF WASTEWATER

JAPAN, CHINA HOLD FUKUSHIMA WATER TALKS

Experts from two countries exchange views on technical matters

TOKYO

JAPANESE and Chinese experts held talks on treated wastewater from the stricken Fukushima nuclear plant, Japan's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday, the first

such talks to be announced since Tokyo began releasing the water into the ocean last year.

Japan and China have been at loggerheads over the discharge of the wastewater, which was used to cool the reactors after the 2011 meltdown.

Japan insisted it had been safely treated, but China had criticised the release and banned Japanese seafood imports.

"A dialogue between Japanese and Chinese experts on the discharge of... treated water into the ocean (by the Fukushima plant) was held in Dalian, China, on

March 30 to exchange views on technical matters," Tokyo's Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The announcement came after Japanese Prime Minister Fumio Kishida met Chinese President Xi Jinping in November and said science-based discussions would take place at the expert level.

Japan began gradually discharging some of the 1.34 million tonnes of wastewater that have accumulated since the disaster into the Pacific in August, sparking a diplomatic row with China



Protesters taking part in a rally against the Japanese government's plan to release treated wastewater from the crippled Fukushima Daiichi power plant into the ocean in Tokyo last year. AFP PIC

and Russia, both of which banned seafood imports.

China had accused Tokyo of treating the sea as a "sewer", but Japan insisted the discharge was safe, a view backed by the United Nations atomic agency.

Kishida called on China at the November Asia-Pacific summit in San Francisco to make an "objective judgment" on the safety of

Japan's seafood, a major industry in the country.

Japan began releasing the treated wastewater because the nuclear facility was running out of space to build more water tanks, and it needed to make room for the much more hazardous task of removing radioactive fuel and rubble from the three stricken reactors. AFP

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