

Is Tokyo prepared?

Hanshin quake stuns Tokyo officials, forces government to order immediate rethink of infrastructure standards, emergency relief measures

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The Tokyo Metropolitan Government is set to re-examine whether current earthquake countermeasures and regulations would be sufficient if a temblor the size of the Great Hanshin Earthquake were to hit the metropolis.

Gov. Shunichi Suzuki, addressing an emergency disaster prevention meeting on

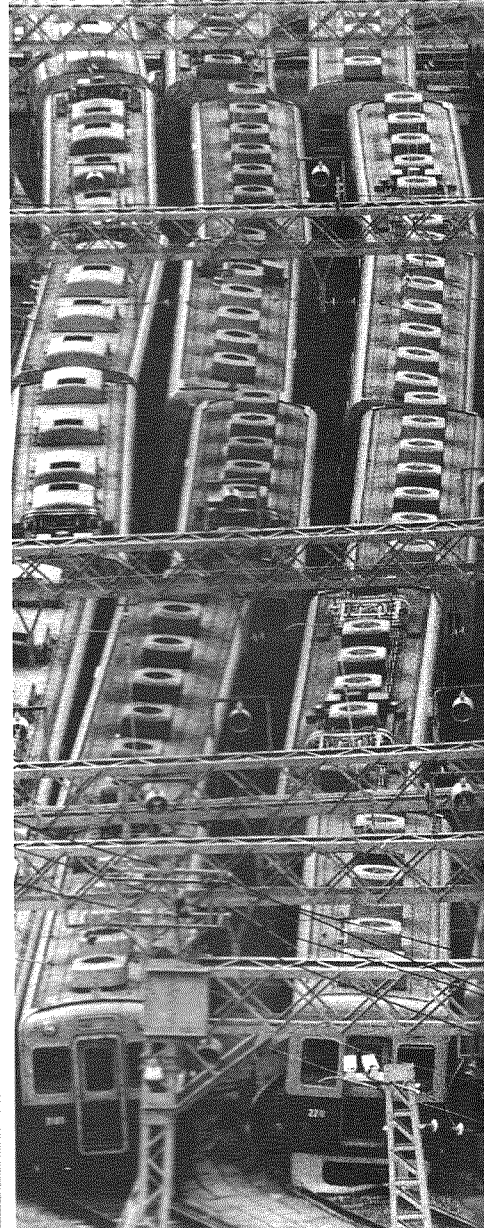
Jan. 26 at City Hall, said the metropolitan government will conduct reinforcement work on public facilities once the national government comes up with revised regulations in the wake of the devastating Hanshin earthquake.

Metropolitan officials and private-sector experts on lifelines and public transportation participated in the meeting. They included officials of such firms as Tokyo

Electric Power Co., Tokyo Gas Co., East Japan Railway Co., Nippon Telegraph and Telephone, and the Metropolitan Expressway Co.

"Damage caused by the earthquake in the Hanshin area was far beyond our expectations. Public facilities, housing and lifelines, as well as bullet train lines and expressways — long considered quake-resistant — were seriously damaged.

"Each bureau should urgently re-examine metropolitan government-run facilities to prepare for a possible strong earthquake, with attention to geographical and



environmental conditions," Suzuki said.

He also asked representatives of firms in charge of lifelines and transportation to conduct similar inspections, in cooperation with the relevant authorities.

Mamoru Kimura, head of the disaster prevention division, said the metropolitan government should first review how to secure necessary drinking water supplies and examine the safety of structures built before the enactment of the revised Basic Construction Law in 1980.

Tokyo experts who were sent to Kobe on a fact-finding mission shortly after the quake shared the public's concern over whether Tokyo could withstand a similar quake.

Citing reports that gravity measurement registered in the Great Hanshin Earthquake was twice as strong as that in the Great Kanto Earthquake, Makoto Oka of

Earthquake intensities

The levels of strength of an earthquake according to the intensity scale used by the Meteorological Agency

- Level 0:** Not felt by people but strong enough to be recorded on a seismometer
- Level 1:** Felt only by people remaining still or people sensitive to quakes
- Level 2:** Felt by most people. Slight tremors of doors or shoji (sliding paper screen) can be seen
- Level 3:** Houses are jolted. Doors and shoji screens rattle. Objects hanging from ceilings, such as light fixtures, swing much. Liquids in containers pitch and roll
- Level 4:** Houses are jolted strongly. Unstable objects, such as a vase, topple. Liquids spill out of containers. Felt also by people walking. Many people go out of their houses
- Level 5:** Walls get cracked. Tombstones fall down. Chimneys and stone fences are damaged
- Level 6:** Less than 30 percent of houses collapse. Landslides occur. Cracks appear in the ground. Most people cannot stand
- Level 7:** 30 percent of houses or more collapse. Landslides occur, the ground cracks or faults are caused by the earthquake