

Hot Mud Flood, Sidoarjo, East Java

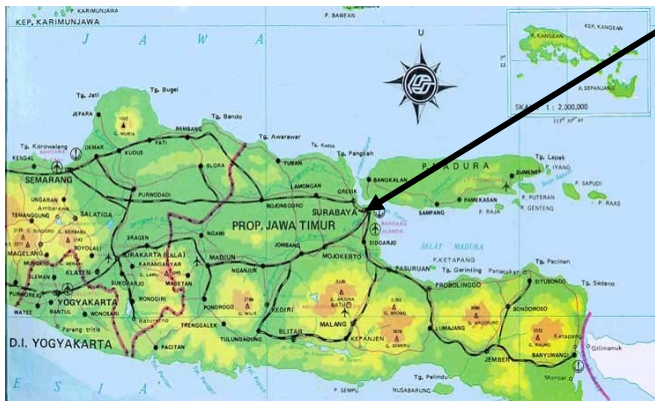
Highlights

- The President declared the mud flow a disaster on 23 November, so the government will now start to be directly involved in recovery operations.
- 450 ha of land covered by mud, deemed a dangerous area, will be totally closed.
- A recent explosion of a gas pipe affected by the mud killed 10 people and will likely cause gas disruptions to customers in east Java.
- There are no more IDPs staying at the evacuation sites. All of them have moved to a rental house or a relative’s house.

Background

The mud began to gush from the gas exploration field of Lapindo Brantas Inc - a subsidiary of the Bakrie Group - on May 29. An area of rice fields and residential land measuring 450 hectares is now a mud lake. The mud has also affected the toll road and the railway. Experts have warned they cannot predict when the mudflow might end.

Place



Sidoarjo District, East Java Province.

Map of East Java: the black arrow shows the location of the hot mud flood.

Sidoarjo District can be reached in 30 – 45 minutes by car from Surabaya.

Current Situation

A gas pipe buried under the relief well exploded Wednesday, 22 November 2006. The explosion occurred at around 8:20 p.m. (1330 GMT) in part of the state-owned Pertamina East Java Gas Pipeline.



The blast made the land surrounding the relief well collapse

450 ha of land covered by mud, deemed a dangerous area, will be totally closed.

The accident occurred because the earth had eroded considerably due to the heavy outflows of mud and water, and a dike that had been built to contain the mud then collapsed onto the pipeline, causing it to rupture. The explosion will likely cause gas disruptions to customers in east Java



The Bakrie Group said on Thursday, 16 November 2006, that it would continue to accept overall liability for paying for the efforts to tackle the mud-volcano disaster.

Damage and Casualties

The mud spilled out to Gempol – Porong toll road because of the gas pipe explosion.

The explosion caused blazing fire nearly 50 meters high and damaged the embankment nearly 50 meters wide, spilling mud 2 to 3 meters high into the Gempol (Surabaya) - Porong (Sidoarjo) toll road. The fire has been contained and no explosions were reported in other parts of the pipeline network.



According to the MOH report, 24 November 2006, ten people died, 13 injured and three reported missing because of the accident. Most of the dead are police and soldiers who were securing the site. The breakdown is as follows:

NO.	Hospital	Deaths	Patient			Missing
			In-patient	Out-patient	Total	
1	Sidoarjo Hospital	-	4	4	8	-
2	Bhayangkara Porong Hospital	-	1	1	2	-
3	Surabaya Military Hospital	-	1	-		
4	Dr. Sutomo Hospital	-	2	-	2	-
5	Delta Surya Hospital	-	1	-	1	-
Total		10	8	5	13	1

Media reported that the explosion caused a decrease in the supply of PERTAMINA gas to PLN, the state-owned electricity company, and Petrokimia Gresik, a fertilizer company in East Java. It has been announced that some parts of Jakarta will suffer blackouts; meanwhile, Petrokimia Gresik has halted operations. The head of the National Mudflow Mitigation Team cited the decrease of land level, up to 5 meters in the area, as the main cause for the blast.

The Sidoarjo District head urged the National Mudflow Mitigation Team to force the relocation of all infrastructures, including all PERTAMINA pipes, surrounding the mudflow area.

The mud flood has presently engulfed 1810 houses as well as 18 schools, 2 government offices, 20 factories and 15 mosques. Recently, the flow has reached 126 000 cubic meters a day. To date, an estimated 3000 families, or about 10 000 people, have been displaced.

The mud has now covered about 450 ha of land, which includes the six villages, paddy fields and sugarcane plantations as well as part of the Sidoarjo highway south of Surabaya, the country's second-largest city. In some areas the sludge is 6 m deep.

Affected Population

There are no more IDPs staying at the evacuation sites. All of them have moved to a rental house or a relative's house.



Problems encountered and needs

Some agencies are concerned about the environmental and health risks of the plan to channel mud into the Porong River, despite government assurance that the mud is not harmful to human health.

Government Action

23 November 2006

The Search and Rescue Teams, with support from the Military and Police personnel, continue the evacuation process.

Four Ministers (Manpower, Energy and Mineral Resources, Environment, Marine Affairs and Fisheries) traveled to the area for a coordination meeting with the National Mudflow Mitigation Team, together with the East Java Governor, the East Java Police Chief, the Sidoarjo District head, and the PT Lapindo Brantas General Manager. Following the meeting, the Ministers visited the injured people at the Sidoarjo Public Hospital. The President convened a special cabinet meeting on the same day to discuss the reports from the Ministers and to coordinate immediate and comprehensive response. The result of the meeting prompted the President to declare the mud flow a disaster. So the government will now start to be directly involved in recovery operations of the disaster. The National Team met BAKORNAS on 24 November 2006.

Over the past few weeks, the government has been channeling the mud into the sea, fearing that the arrival of the rainy season could cause the embankments to collapse. Green groups and locals have protested against this move, saying that it will damage marine life in the area.

27 September 2006

In a cabinet meeting the President declared the area swamped by the mudflow in Sidoarjo, East Java, a disaster area and ordered 2983 affected families to be permanently relocated because the area is no longer fit for human habitation. The government has been preparing land in West Porong District for this purpose.

The President has also agreed with the plan for channeling the mud water into the Porong River; the river would then carry the mud into the sea.

The government will shift the toll road linking Indonesia's second largest city of Surabaya to the rest of Java, including gas pipes under the road as well as train tracks, as a result of the disaster.

17 September 2006

The government promised that Lapindo Brantas Inc. would still hold responsibility for the damage caused by the Sidoarjo mudflow, despite the change in the company's ownership.

15 September 2006

The President signed a decree to form the National Mudflow Disaster Management Team in Sidoarjo. The team, called National Mudflow Mitigation Team, was formed to protect residents around the location of the disaster, maintain the basic infrastructure, and resolve the mudflow problem while minimizing environmental damage within six months. All costs covering the duties – an estimated 1.5 trillion rupiah (164 million US dollars) – of this national team will be borne by Lapindo Brantas Inc.

MOH and WHO Action

Recent Action:

- MOH supports the DHO with one four wheel drive operational car (LC), five units Handy Talkie and 50 body bags.



- The Crisis Center, MOH through its operation room is closely monitoring the situation, ready for back up support and in regular contact with Dr. Soetomo Hospital where the injured cases are being treated.
- The injuries of the victims are under control and treatment.
- MOH – PHO – Dr. Soetomo Hospital, its networks hospitals and WHO have already organized and developed a contingency plan which includes possible gas explosions and other related emergencies that could emerge in relation to the Hot Mud and Gas flow disaster site.
- MOH, WHO, PHO and Dr. Soetomo Hospital plan to organize a workshop from 30 November to 1 December 2006 in Surabaya to review the present situation, life support and critical care, post trauma management and to strengthen the contingency and operational plans accordingly.

Continuing Action:

- DHO Sidoarjo opened 11 medical posts: 6 in-building medical posts and 5 out-building medical posts. Ambulances (118) from Dr.Sutomo Hospital are on stand by and ready if needed. Masks were already distributed to the IDPs.
- WHO conducted several joint assessments, between the WHO EHA unit and Environmental Health unit, in the affected area.
- During the initial phase, WHO facilitated MOH to mobilize clinics to the site to assist the IDPs.
- WHO facilitated MOH to conduct refresher training courses for doctors and nurses.

Status of International Aid

So far the government has not officially requested any international aid. The local authorities, with support from central government and ministries, are trying their best to manage the situation.

Contact people in Indonesia

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Source of Information from Indonesia

Information is gathered from the following sources. This report is for reference only and should not be quoted as factual accuracy can change.

1. WHO
2. UN system
3. Crisis Center (PPK), MOH
4. Media Centre
5. Local news media.