

Hungary sludge flood called 'ecological disaster'

By: AP

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1 Vocabulary – Find the definitions

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|----------------------|--|
| 1. turn off-(pv) | - change a rule, law or decision |
| 2. affect-(v) | - on the surface; not deep |
| 3. emerge-(v) | - to come into view or into existence |
| 4. reservoir-(n) | - stop something from happening |
| 5. superficial-(adj) | - to say something is not true |
| 6. devastate-(v) | - to meet a challenge |
| 7. seep-(v) | - stop a machine; equipment; light etc to enter slowly |
| 8. overturn-(v) | - a place to store a liquid; often a community's drinking water |
| 9. suspend-(v) | - to change or influence |
| 10. deny-(v) | - warning of plan to hurt or punish |
| 11. flood-(v) | - to enter slowly |
| 12. threaten-(v) | - a business or government office |
| 13. prevent-(v) | - to support something or make it stronger |
| 14. shore up-(pv) | - destroy completely |
| 15. agency-(n) | - to put too much in, so that it cannot be controlled or handled |
| 16. sustain-(v) | - experience something bad; suffer |
| 17. face-(v) | - stop temporarily |

2 Reading



Hungary has declared a state of emergency in three counties after a flood of toxic red sludge from an alumina plant engulfed several towns and burned people through their clothes. One official called it "an ecological disaster" that may threaten the Danube and other key rivers.

The toll rose to four dead, six missing and at least 120 people injured after a reservoir failed Monday at the

Ajkai Timfoldgyar plant in Ajka, a town 160 kilometers southwest of Budapest, the capital.

Several hundred tons of plaster were being poured into the Marcal River to bind the toxic sludge and prevent it from flowing on, the National Disaster Management Directorate said.

So far, about 1 million cubic meters of sludge has leaked from the reservoir, affecting an estimated 40 square kilometers, Environmental Affairs State Secretary Zoltan Illes told the state news wire MTI.

Illes called the flood an "ecological catastrophe" and said the sludge could reach the Raba and Danube rivers. He suspended activity at the plant and ordered the company to repair the damaged reservoir.

The disaster agency said 390 residents had to be temporarily relocated and 110 were rescued from the flooded towns, including Kolontal, Devecser and Somlovasarhely. Firefighters and soldiers swept through the region Tuesday carrying out cleanup tasks with bulldozers.

The sludge, a waste product in aluminum production, contains heavy metals and is toxic if ingested. Many of the injured sustained burns as the sludge seeped through their clothes, and two faced life-threatening conditions. Two women, a young man and a 3-year-old child were killed in the flooding.

The injured were being monitored because the chemical burns caused by the sludge could take days to emerge and what may seem like superficial injuries could later cause damage to deeper tissue, Dr. Peter Jakabos of Gyor hospital, where several of the injured were taken, told state television.

In Devecser, the sludge in Tunde Erdelyi's house was still 1.5 meters high Tuesday and rescue workers had to use an ax to cut through her living room door to let the red liquid flow out.

"When I heard the rumble of the flood, all the time I had was to jump out the window and run to higher ground," said a tearful Erdelyi, still shocked by the events but grateful that the family rabbit and cat were safe.

Robert Kis, Erdelyi's husband, said his uncle had been taken to Budapest by helicopter after the sludge "burned him to the bone." The toxic flood overturned Erdelyi's car and pushed it 30 yards (meters) to the back of the garden while her husband's van was lifted up onto a fence.

Erdelyi, a seamstress, was hoping the flood spared the shop in town where she worked, her family's main source of income.

In neighboring Kolontal, the town closest to the aluminum plant, 61-year old widow Erzsebet Veingartner was in her kitchen when the sludge flood hit Monday afternoon.

"I looked outside and all I saw was the stream swelling like a huge wave," said Veingartner, who lives on a monthly disability pension of 70,000 forints (\$350). "Thank God I had the presence of mind to turn off the gas and run up to the attic."

Veingartner, devastated by her losses, looked out at her backyard still covered by some three yards (meters) of red sludge.

"I have a winter's worth of firewood in the basement and it is all useless now," she said. "I lost all my chickens, my ducks, my Rottweiler, and my potato patch. My late husband's tools and machinery were in the shed and it is all gone."

Local environmentalists say they have tried to call the government's attention to the risks of red sludge for years, pointing to a 2003 report in which they estimated the waste at 30 million tons.

"Accumulated during decades ... red sludge is, by volume, the largest amount of toxic waste in Hungary," the Clear Air Action Group said, adding that producing one ton of alumina resulted in two tons of toxic waste.

MAL Rt., the Hungarian Aluminum Production and Trade Company that owns the Ajka plant, said that according to European Union standards, the red sludge was not considered toxic waste. The company also denied that it should have taken more precautions to shore up the reservoir.

"According to the current evaluation, company management could not have noticed the signs of the natural catastrophe nor done anything to prevent it even while carefully respecting technological procedures," MAL said in a statement.

Cause	Effect

3 Comprehension Questions

1. What kinds of threats does the disaster pose on Hungary?

2. How have they tried to prevent further damages?

3. What kinds of measures have been taken in and around the areas affected?

4. Why is the sludge dangerous?

5. What kind of losses do the residents have?

6. According to the sources in the article, could the disaster have been prevented?

7. What do YOU think?

4 Vocabulary

1. The government _____ to put him i jail if he didn't pay his taxes.
2. The locked door _____ her from going in.
3. The police say he was drunk but he _____ it.
4. The hospital was _____ with patients after the storm.
5. He _____ serious injuries in the accident.
6. People _____ many difficulties when they move to another country.
7. The added a new column to _____ the building.
8. He called an employment _____ for help finding a job.
9. His telephone service was _____ because he forgot to pay the bill.
10. The kittens began to _____ from their mother.
11. The city's _____ is in the mountains, and all the water must come over 100 miles.
12. Please _____ the light.
13. The whiskey _____ his driving and he crashed the car.
14. It rained so hard that water _____ through the window frames.
15. The manager said yes but the company president _____ the decision.
16. Physical beauty is _____, it is what's inside a person that is important.
17. The earthquake _____ the city.

5 Focus on Grammar (*passives*)

A Identify

Notice the difference between the sentences "*Carol washed the car*" and "*The car was washed by Carol.*"

The first sentence is about Carol; Carol is the subject.

The second sentence is about the car, the car is the subject.

What is the subject of the sentence(s) below?

1. Robert Kis, Erdelyi's husband, said his uncle had been taken to Budapest by helicopter after the sludge burned him to the bone.
2. The injured were being monitored because the chemical burns caused by the sludge could take days to emerge and what may seem like superficial injuries could later cause damage to deeper tissue, Dr. Peter Jakabos of Gyor hospital, where several of the injured were taken, told state television.
3. The disaster agency said 390 residents had to be temporarily relocated and 110 were rescued from the flooded towns, including Kolontal, Devecser and Somlovasarhely.
4. Two women, a young man and a 3-year- old child were killed in the flooding.
5. , the Hungarian Aluminum Production and Trade Company that owns the Ajka plant, said that according to European Union standards, the red sludge was not considered toxic waste.
6. The toxic flood overturned Erdelyi's car and pushed it 30 yards(meters) to the back of the garden while her husband's van was lifted up onto a fence.

B Practice - Sentence Writing

Write original sentences using the grammar in this exercise.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____