



# Titanic Made By Lapindo

*H. M. Maksum Zuber*

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On May 29, 2006, Indonesian oil and gas exploration company PT Lapindo Brantas triggered the eruption of an enormous mud volcano when drilling for gas in Sidoarjo, East Java. In the years since, no one has been able to stop the scalding mud and noxious gases from spewing to the surface and inundating Sidoarjo. Today the region is covered by an ever-expanding lake of toxic sludge stretching well over 700 hectares. The mud has swallowed homes, roads, schools, factories, and entire villages, displacing and destroying the livelihoods of tens of thousands of people. It has had a devastating impact on the local environment—including plants, animals, rivers, mangroves, and the sea—as contamination seeps into the ecosystem. The degree to which the mudflow will affect human health is still unknown.

Originally published in Indonesian in 2007, *Titanic Made By Lapindo* provides a touching first-hand account of the first days and months of the mud flow disaster as it gives voice to the experience of the women and men known throughout Indonesia as “Lapindo’s mud victims.” Weaving tones of sentimentality, incredulity, and unabashed humor, author H. M. Maksum Zuber, a scholar, teacher, and one of the thousands of people displaced by the Lapindo mud flow, shares personal tales of a community struggling to preserve social and cultural ties—as well as dignity—in the face of sorrow, stress, uncertainty and loss.

Released in English in 2009, this remarkable memoir tells of an unimaginable catastrophe: the mournful spectacle of East Java's uncontrollable, muddied quagmire.

==What People Have Said About the Book==

"The author's friends' and relatives' stories, mostly about Javanese villagers' feelings and ideas are touching and well chosen, while the book's translation from Indonesian to English is nearly flawless. The book shows us how villagers tried to make sense of what is happening to them and this is why you should read this book."

Jim Schiller

Asian Studies, Flinders University, Adelaide

"The Lapindo disaster stands among the worst examples of corporate crimes the world has ever witnessed in recent times. The continuing hardship of victim communities struggling amid wretched environmental conditions serves as a powerful reminder of the folly of corporate greed and the disturbing lack of political means to hold responsible companies fully accountable for their misadventures. Gus Maksum's moving narrative shows what happens when the power to permit is not matched by the power to protect the people from the tragic miscalculations of the strong and mighty."

Von Hernandez

Executive Director, Greenpeace Southeast Asia

"This book tells us that the suffering of mudflow disaster victims and their mud-swamped village are irreplaceable."

Indra Harsaputra

The Jakarta Post Journalist

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