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Major Dam Collapse In Ukraine -Accuses Russia Of Blowing Up Kakhovka Dam

Why In The News?

- A Huge Dam In The **Russian Controlled Area Of Southern Ukraine** Has Been Destroyed, Unleashing A Flood Of Water. Ukraine's Military And NATO Have Accused Russia Of Blowing Up The Dam, While Russia Has Blamed Ukraine.
- Thousands Of People Are Being Evacuated From Communities In The Surrounding Areas, With Fears That Any Flooding Could Be Catastrophic.



Where Is The Dam?

- The Kakhovka Hydroelectric Power Plant Is In The City Of Nova Kakhovka In Ukraine's Kherson Region, Which Is Currently Under Russian Occupation.
- It Was Built In The Soviet Era And Is One Of Six Dams That Sit Along The Dnipro River, Which Stretches All The Way From The Very North Of The Country Into The Sea In The South.
- It's Huge Locals Call It The Kakhovka Sea As You Cannot See The Other Bank In Certain Places. The Dam Holds Water Equal To The Great Salt Lake In The US State Of Utah.



What Happened?

- Stills And Video Show A Massive Breach In The Dam, With Water Surging Through It And Flooding Downstream In The Direction Of Kherson. It's Unclear When Exactly The Dam Was First Damaged, But Satellite Images Suggest Its Condition Has Deteriorated Over Several Days.
- A Road Across The Dam Appears To Be Damaged From 2 June, But There Does Not Seem To Be A Change To The Flow Of The Water Until 6 June. It Is Currently Unclear Whether The Damage To The Road Is Linked To The 6 June Breach.
- While It Is Unclear How Extensive The Flooding Downstream Will Be, There Are Fears It Could Be Devastating For Settlements In A Critical Zone, Home To About 16,000 People. Images From Nova Kakhovka Show Buildings Surrounded By Floodwaters And Even Swans Paddling Around A Local Government Office.
- People Living In Low Lying Parts Of The City Of Kherson, Less Than 50 Miles Downstream, Have Been Warned To Evacuate As Quickly As Possible And Seek Shelter On Higher Ground. Eight Villages Had Been Fully Or Completely Flooded Already, With More Expected To Be Flooded.
- Ukrainian Hydro Power Dam Operator Ukrhydroenerho Said The Station Was
 "Fully Destroyed" And Could Not Be Restored. The River Has Also Been
 Contaminated With 150 Tonnes Of Industrial Lubricant, Said President
 Volodymyr Zelensky, And Another 300 Tonnes Was At Risk Of Leaking.



Has It Been Attacked?

- It's Not Yet Clear What Caused The Breach In The Dam, But Ukraine's Military Has Accused Russia Of Deliberately Blowing It Up. This Seems Plausible, As Moscow May Have Feared That Ukrainian Forces Would Use The Road Over The Dam To Get Troops Across The River Into Russian-held Territory.
- But Kremlin Spokesperson Dmitry Peskov Rejected Russian Involvement, And Instead Blamed Ukraine, Calling It An Act Of "Sabotage" That Would Deprive The Crimean Peninsula - An Area Annexed By Russia In 2014 - Of Water. The Dam Is Very Important And Serves A few Purposes.
- It Holds Back A Vast Reservoir That Supplies Water To A Host Of Communities Upstream. Farmers Rely On Water To Grow Their Crops, And The Breach Could Impact Tens Of Thousands Of People If It Recedes Far Enough.
- The Dam Also Provides Cooling Water To The Nuclear Power Station At Zaporizhzhia, Which Is Under Russian Control And Relies On The Reservoir. The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Said There Was No Immediate Nuclear Safety Risk But It Was Monitoring The Situation.





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