

Prime Minister stresses flood alleviation and prevention plan in four phases

To alleviate the present flood situation and prevent its recurrence, during the Cabinet meeting on 18 October 2011, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra instructed the relevant ministers to carry out their responsibilities in an integrated manner in four phases. Gist as follow:

1. In the immediate term, provincial governors have full authority to issue orders to resolve problems to alleviate the flood situation. The Supreme Commander of the Royal Thai Armed Forces will supervise operations in the severely affected provinces assigned.

2. In severely flooded areas and for people living in flood affected areas longer than 4-6 weeks, all relevant government agencies must ensure the safety and the well-being of flood victims, be they living in their homes or in temporary shelters and provide job skills to generate alternative means of income as well as assist in the victim's mental rehabilitation.

3. In preparation for the period once the flood recedes, the three committees on rehabilitation established must ensure a speedy rehabilitation and recovery process. The first committee, chaired by the Minister of Transport is responsible for infrastructure rehabilitation. The second committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Commerce is responsible for economic rehabilitation. The third committee, chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Police General Kowit Wattana, is responsible for social rehabilitation.

4. In the long term, preventive measures of disasters must be revised and integrated. Deputy Prime Minister Yongyoot Wichaidit will supervise this effort and ensure that all relevant ministries must formulate clear work plans, such as construction of water retention areas, water dykes, improving public amenities and transport routes, and revision of location and layout of industrial estates.

In this connection, all relevant ministries will submit their work plans at the next meeting of the Cabinet for its consideration. Additionally, the following ministries were assigned with the following specific tasks:

- Ministry of Interior is responsible for creating a database for tracking the movements of people and their occupation as well as following up on the affected SME entrepreneurs and their workers.

- Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment and Ministry of Defense are responsible for water quality, including the treatment of waste water and assessment of chronic flood-prone areas.

- Ministry of Public Health is responsible for dispatching mobile medical units and restoring health clinics to treat patients in the affected areas as soon as possible, including the rebuilding of damaged hospitals and stockpiling adequate medical supplies.

- Ministry of Culture is responsible for taking care of monks and priests of all faiths and restore damaged temples and historical sites affected by floods.

- Ministry of Social Development and Human Security is responsible for vocational training of flood victims to alleviate their stress and coordination with the Ministry of Interior in creating a database for the unemployed.

- Ministry of Education is responsible for rescheduling examinations for high school students until the middle of November and assess and, where necessary, repair the damage to schools as well as tend to teachers and students so that special lessons can be provided.

- Ministry of Labour is responsible for the jobless or unemployed due to the floods and follow up the recruitment with the employers after the flood receded.

- Ministry of Transport is responsible for taking care of major transportation routes during the flood period to ensure that general commerce is not affected and repair the main routes to allow free flow of traffic.

- Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives is responsible for water drainage, improve the condition of the embankments and watergates.

- Ministry of Science and Technology is responsible for distributing handbooks to locals and entrepreneurs to raise awareness of flood levels and preventative measures of natural disasters.

- Ministry of Commerce is responsible for ensuring the fair pricing and instilling confidence in the adequate supply of essential commodities and products as well as their distribution to the flood victims.

- Ministry of Finance is responsible for coordinating with commercial banks to ease restrictions on lending loans and come up with measures to assist entrepreneurs, especially SMEs and finding ways of easing debt payments of the flood victims, as well as follow up on the compensation payments of insurance companies to flood victims.

- Ministry of Energy is responsible for preventing gas pipeline from being damaged by road work and construction.

- Ministry of Industry is responsible for assisting entrepreneurs in moving equipments and machines and compiling the damage to the machinery of affected factories.

- Ministry of Tourism and Sports is responsible for facilitating foreign tourists affected by the floods and disseminate accurate and timely information on the flood situation.

The Royal Thai Government is determined to help rehabilitate industries affected by the floods as quickly as possible. The Government will also take the necessary measures to restore other business sectors to prevent the stalling of trade and investment, including through the provision of adequate credit lines for affected businesses to procure new machinery and equipment to replace those damaged by the floods. Towards this end, Thailand will also cooperate with the countries that have given various assistance to the flood relief, which the Government, on behalf of the Thai people, is most grateful and deeply appreciate their generosity. The Government will ensure that this assistance reach the flood victims soonest. We also thank those countries that have expressed their readiness to extend support for the Thai industrial sector and to send experts to cooperate with Thailand in this endeavour.

Furthermore, the Cabinet has approved a credit package, through commercial banks, totaling 325 billion Baht to aid the people and businesses affected by the flood. The Government will also oversee the compensation claims and look into resolving the

problem arising from insurance schemes on natural disaster faced by the insured, both current and future.

Moreover, in rehabilitating affected industries and improving the essential infrastructure as well as a comprehensive flood prevention mechanism, especially surrounding the industrial estates, the Government is considering to develop a national recovery plan, particularly an integrated water management to prevent the recurrence of such flooding. At the same time, the Government will also prioritise the need to improve and develop the Kingdom's water management system by inviting experts from various agencies and experienced specialists from abroad to conduct a joint study and long term planning with a view to achieve a sustained solution to natural disasters, especially floodwater.

FROC Press Release # 13

24 October 2011

Measures for industries and business put in place

The Flood Relief Operation Center (FROC) held daily press briefings at the FROC at Donmueng Airport, gist as follows.

The Prime Minister invited the members of the private and business sector to take part in a meeting with various economic agencies to discuss the impact to industries and businesses, the effects on market and supply of goods, as well as rehabilitation measures put in place, in order to build confidence. Measures discussed include a new credit line, tax incentives for flood affected businesses, increased budget for credit, as well as coordination with private banks for special interest rates. In next week's cabinet meeting, the details of these measures will be discussed and there will be a clear direction on how to proceed.

The Board of Investment has also implemented measures to assist BOI listed companies affected by the floods, such as in moving machinery, importing machinery, and facilitation of foreign experts who have come to assess damage on the technical side of industries. The BOI will also be proposing to cabinet a rehabilitation plan for new investments in place of investments damaged.

The Federation of Thai Industries is looking forward to a long-term rehabilitation plan for industries of all sizes, after the water subsides, which must begin now. The focus is also on rehabilitation of industrial zones and basic infrastructure damaged. The measures put in place will be proof of the resilience of the Thai economy despite the flood situation.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Commerce said that despite the flood situation, the rehabilitation efforts will be well planned and aimed at assisting the wide ranging areas affected. The Government is determined to work closely with the private sector in this regard.

The Internal Trade Department Director-General said that a food distribution center at Donmueang Airport is to be established to support the high demand of consumers and flood affected victims. Due to the flood situation that had caused problems to public transportation, as many routes are now under the flood water, the delivery of food products to the flooded area hgovernment difficult. The government has also launched the blue-flag mobile unit to help the flood victims. The FROC will continue to act on the complaints on the shortage especially for consumer

products. It is expected that by next week, the measures will be implemented.

Pol. Gen. Pracha Promnok, Director of the FROC, mentioned that certain individuals had taken away sandbags from the walls protecting Klong Rangsit, causing water to seep into the dry areas. The problem has been fixed, and the important point is that balance of inflowing and outflowing water between the canals is maintained. The BMA is also pumping water out of affected areas. The FROC has verified all information releases and has disseminated it to the general public without distortion or concealment, as some parties had criticized.

In the overall picture, the situation in the lower northern region and upper central region of Thailand is stable and the water levels are subsiding. The western part of Bangkok remains an area of concern, and the water mass is now at Buddhamonthon area. It is expected that not over one meter of water will be at the Salaya area in two to three days.

The police and armed forces will continue to be on alert so that the dykes, walls and embankments will not be removed or tampered with. There are additional shelters which can fit over 100 persons located in various schools, universities and offices now available for those who need shelter. The FROC also thanks the over 2,000 volunteers that have come to help pack relief supplies.

On traffic routes, the overall picture is that the main northern routes are inaccessible, and an alternative route westbound is advised to be used for travel to the north. Other main routes also have alternative routes, which are clearly marked and patrolled by the police. Information can be checked at www.dh.go.th However, it is advised that the general public avoid travel to certain provinces in this current situation.

In addition, there are also rumors spreading on social media and voice clips sent to phones that 100 million tons of sulfate had leaked in Ladkrabang. These rumours are false. Authorities had investigated this and found only 2 liters of sulfate in the area, and had taken care of the situation.

In addition, there had been false rumors that there would be flood water entering inner Bangkok on 23 October

FROC News
26 October 2011

Updated information on the flood situation and essential services in Bangkok

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment provided about 10,000 housing units under its supervision to accommodate flood victims.

The Ministry of Labor also said that Rai Khing Temple in Nakhon Prathom Province could be used as temporary shelters for flood victims.

According to the Ministry of Science and Technology, the change in wind direction during the high tide period will cause the water level in the Chao Phraya river to rise by about 50 centimeters.

The Prime Minister said that water needed to be drained into the Gulf of Thailand rapidly and instructed the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives to close Rama VI watergate in order to lower the water level in Chao Phraya River during high sea water level period. However, doing so might affect residents in Chai Nart Province.

The Prime Minister instructed all Ministries and agencies to submit contingency plans in order to prepare households for the floods.

Ministry of Finance released flood relief measures to help flood victims as well as affected factories in industrial estates. The Cabinet also approved financial measures worth Baht 325,000 million to stimulate the economy.

This amount will be divided into:

Baht 65,000 million for major businesses;
Baht 170,000 million for small and medium businesses;
Baht 90,000 million for local businesses and residents.

The Cabinet also assigned the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to issue visas and facilitate the entry of foreign experts to assist in rebuilding factories and repairing machines.

In addition, it also declared the period between 27-31 October as public holidays in 21 Provinces including Bangkok and instructed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to look after foreign embassies and international organizations that might be affected by the floods.

The Metropolitan Waterworks Authority reassured the public that it would still be able to provide tap water to residents without any disruption or changes in water quality and safety, although users may notice some changes in the color or smell of the water. Only its Thonburi facility was affected by the overflow, but the problem is being rectified. The only major problem that has the potential to affect water supply is electricity black out. However, MWA has coordinated with the Metropolitan Electricity Authority on contingency plans in case of black-outs.

The Metropolitan Electricity Authority maintained that it would be able to sustain electricity supply to residents, as well as drainage and water gate facilities without disruption. In case of emergencies, please call MEA hotline at 1130 or 02-256-3388, 02-256-3389 and 02-256-3222.