

Floods strike Bang Pakong River locals

Officials insist Bangkok will not be inundated

POST REPORTERS

CHACHOENGSAO: People along the Bang Pakong River in this lower central province are now feeling the effects of rising water levels in neighbouring Prachin Buri.

The Bang Pakong River was overflowing yesterday and flooding villages close to the river's banks.

The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department said in its latest update yesterday that Chachoengsao is one of 24 provinces that are flooded.

Relief officials said Chachoengsao is taking in water from Prachin Buri — mainly Kabin Buri and Si Maha Phot districts — where the situation is improving.

Water from the Prachin Buri River and runoff from Khao Yai National Park, which had hit Kabin Buri and later Si Maha Phot, is now flowing downstream to Ban Sang, Prachantakham and Muang districts of Prachin Buri.

It is also causing rising water levels in some districts of Chachoengsao bordering Prachin Buri, including Bang Khla.

Water in Prachin Buri is being drained into the Prachin Buri and Bang Pakong rivers.

Fifty-one flood victims in tambon Ban Hoi of Prachin Buri's Prachantakham district fell ill with food poisoning yesterday after eating donated box food. They were taken to nearby hospitals.

Adul Nakbunbutr, who lives in village 4 close to the Bang Pakong River in Bang Khla district in Chachoengsao, said the water is rising rapidly and was up to 50cm deep in some areas yesterday morning.

The rising water forced some people to move their belongings to the second floor of their houses, he said.

The Meteorological Department warned of more rain in central provinces including Chachoengsao, Prachin Buri and Bangkok tomorrow.

Kanisorn Chopanya, an official at the Disaster Prevention and Mitigation office in Prachin Buri, said flooding in Prachantakham and Muang districts remained

a major cause for concern. Almost two million people in 24 provinces were affected by the floods, which had claimed 27 lives, according to the department.

In the Central Plains, heavy rains yesterday hit Ayutthaya province, causing flooding in several ancient sites and in temples along the Chao Phraya River.

Maitree Pititanon, director of the Ayutthaya Irrigation Project, said water from the North was being diverted to four *kaem ling* (monkey cheek) retention areas to prevent extensive flooding in Muang Ayutthaya district. The monkey cheek areas are Thung Bang Ban 1, Thung Bang Ban 2, Thung Phak Hai and Thung Maha Rat.

Sanya Cheenimit, deputy city clerk at the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration, said he had assigned his men to monitor the amount of rain in Bangkok throughout this week.

Mr Sanya said the situation in Bangkok is not worrying because water levels in most canals in the capital are still well below their critical points.

However, around half of people in Bangkok are concerned that the capital will be hit by floods again this year, according to research by Bangkok Poll.

Bangkok University pollsters based their conclusions on a survey of 1,190 people living and working in the city.

A total of 48.7% of respondents said reports on flooding in several provinces have made them increasingly concerned about possible floods in Bangkok.

About 54% believed floods would hit the city this year, though the situation would not be as critical as it was in 2011.

Workers erect a large sandbag embankment to defend downtown Ayutthaya against flood waters from the swelling Pasak River. The province, already affected by flooding in many areas, is bracing for more runoff from the North.
PATTANAPONG
HIRANARD

