

**High Alert Due To Serious Flooding In Western Bangkok**  
**Bernama**  
**November 2, 2011**  
**By Jamaluddin Muhammad**

BANGKOK, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Western Bangkok has once again been placed on high alert as the flood situation became serious due to overflow of the Chao Phraya River, as well as damage to its floodwalls.

Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra said Wednesday the river's water level was a metre higher than the floodwalls.

She said authorities also detected damage at 11 spots in the floodwalls and the entire repair works were expected to be completed by Nov 10.

Flood in western Bangkok's districts of Thawi Wattana, Taling Chan and Bang Phlad began to spread to Bang Kae and Thon Buri.

Flood Relief Operation Command director Plodprasop Suraswadi, who is also science and technology minister, warned that western Bangkok could be inundated for between 15 and 20 days, as there were about three billion cubic metres of floodwater in the area.

Yingluck said authorities were experiencing difficulties in draining the floodwater run-off in western Bangkok due to clogged and narrow canals.

In a surprise move, she reversed yesterday's decision on the lifting level of the sluice gate at Klong Sam Wa.

"We will reduce the opening of the watergate," she said, without specifying its new level and reasons for doing so.

Tuesday, Yingluck ordered City Hall to lift the sluice gate to a metre from 80cm, following strong protests from residents there.

Initially, residents in Klong Sam Wa district in eastern Bangkok had demanded the authorities open the water gate from 0.6 metre to 1.5 metre, as their areas were inundated for about three months.

They held a protest at the sluice gate on Monday, and agreed to the 0.8 metre level after negotiating with City Hall.

However, residents held another protest yesterday and demanded that the level be increased to 1.5 metre, prompting interference from the prime minister who ordered it to be further lifted to a metre.

Some of the residents even damaged the floodgates during yesterday's protest, as about 200 policemen monitored the situation.

Yingluck's action yesterday brought criticism from the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration and the opposition.

Bangkok Deputy Governor Thirachon Manomaipiboon said, by lifting the sluice gate to a metre, it would expose Bangkok to a flood threat although 19 districts in inner Bangkok escaped the disaster at the moment.

The opposition Democrat Party condemned Yingluck's action yesterday, saying the government should not bow to pressure when handling the flood crisis.

Democrat spokesman Chavanond Intarakomalyasut wanted the government to invoke the emergency decree to facilitate government efforts in battling the flood and to control protesters.

In some cases, workers have asked for police protection when repairing floodwalls and sluice gates and in one recent case, a warning shot was fired by a resident while trying to obstruct workers from carrying out their duty.

About one-third of the country remains inundated, with 2.1 million people from more than 10,000 villages in 26 provinces affected by the flood which hit the country in stages, beginning July 25.

The death toll climbed to 427 Wednesday.

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