

THAILAND: PM SAYS FLOOD SITUATION HAS GRADUALLY IMPROVED,
CLARIFIES 3 PHASES OF REHABILITATION PLAN

NAM News Network
November 13, 2011

BANGKOK, Nov 12 (NNN-TNA) -- Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra on Saturday said the overall flood situation had gradually improved, stressing that the 'Big Bag' barrier could successfully delay floodwater from overflowing into the inner capital city.

Addressing the public on her weekly TV and Radio programme, "Yingluck Government meets the People," the prime minister said the flood situation in the central region was improving, with many provinces having almost returned to normal, including Ayutthaya, Nakhon Sawan, Sing Buri and Ang Thong.

Some provinces had organised "big cleaning day" campaigns to clean up their provinces to bring them back to normal.

As for Bangkok, she said that after the Flood Relief Operations Centre (FROC) had built a six-kilometre-long barrier using 1-2 tonne sandbags piled up as a makeshift flood prevention dyke, the 'Big Bag' could curb the deluge coming from the north and east of Bangkok.

She said the delay of water inflow has given more time for authorities to manage the floodwater by diverting into canals.

The premier stressed that the 'Big Bag' could not totally stop water but only delay the inflow of new floodwater.

The Royal Irrigation Department was assigned to drain water in Khlong Rangsit while the Interior Ministry would survey damages and deliver compensation to affected flood victims within 45 days, she said.

She added that the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) has been given 70 water pumps which would be used to manage water in inner Bangkok.

"There are significantly good signs as the water inflow into Vibhavadi Rangsit and Phanonyothin roads is decreasing and water levels at the two roads are lower. The task of repairing 14 broken dyke locations is expected to be completed this weekend. If they are fixed, the water in Nonthaburi and Pathum Thani would be reduced," she said.

There was also an attempt to retrieve road number 340 which was earlier flooded to be a replacement for Rama II Road as a route to the southern provinces in case Rama II Road was totally flooded.

Ms Yingluck also clarified the rehabilitation plan announced on Tuesday that the government's strategy for national rehabilitation was divided into three phases or 3Rs – Rescue, Restore and Rebuild to build confidence, regain trust, and restore the country's prosperity and stability in the long-term in a manner that is sustainable and systematic.

The last phase - Rebuild would be divided under the supervision of two committees, the Strategic Formulation Committee for Reconstruction and Future Development (SCRF) and the Strategic Formulation Committee for Water Resources Management (SCWRM).

The prime minister said that during November 16-17, there would be international figures visiting Thailand - UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon and US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. They would visit flood affected areas in Bangkok in separate missions and

Ms Clinton said earlier that she would offer US assistance to flood-hit Thailand but wanted to first see what the kingdom's leaders needed.

Ms Yingluck said she was scheduled to attend the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Summit in Bali, Indonesia during November 17-19 and would take this opportunity to clarify to the international community on the flood situation and rehabilitation plan to rebuild confidence in Thailand among foreign investors.

During the meeting, she would also meet with US President Barack Obama, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda and Chinese President Hu Jintao. -- NNN-TNA

Source: <http://www.namnewsnetwork.org/v2/read.php?id=176192>