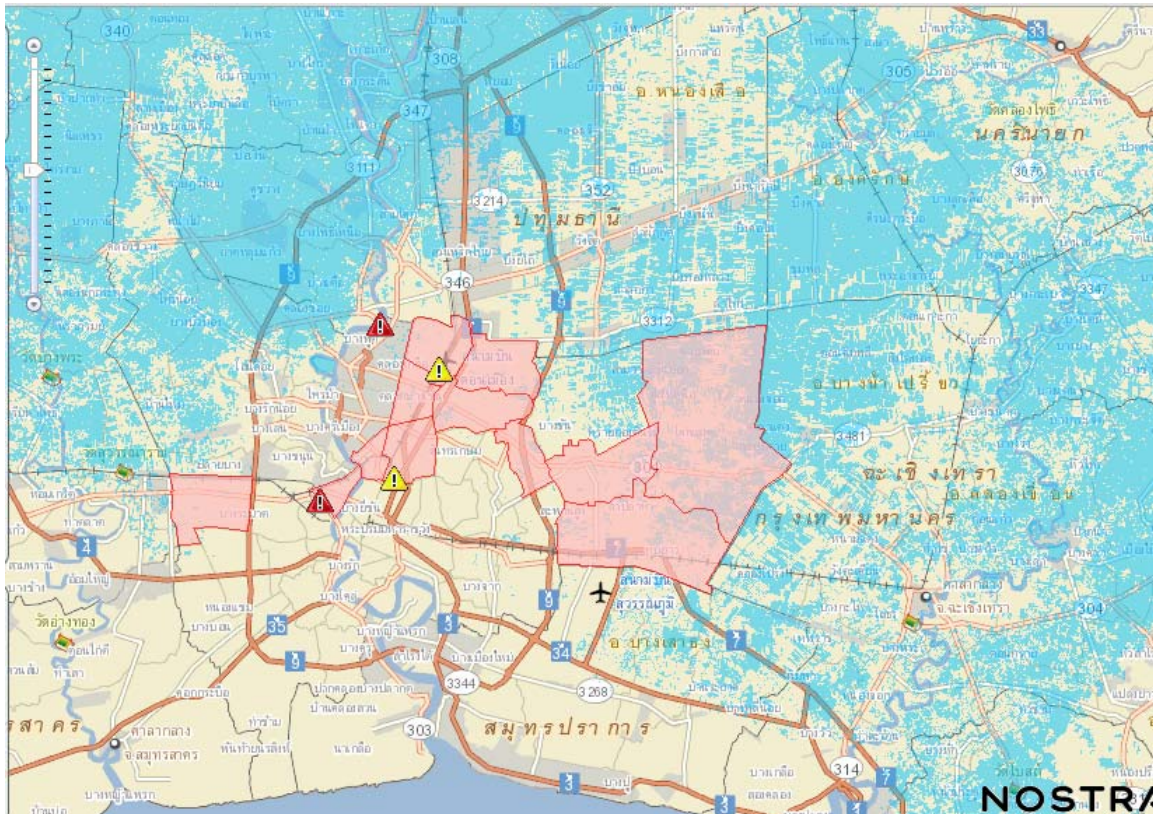


# Fall 2011 Thai Flood Photos: Part 5

## *The Flood Goes On and On*



Bangkok; a river flows through it. Initial defense of the city worked more like leaking plug keeping water from flowing to the sea. This served to build up more and more water upstream that eventually would have to flow to the sea. The magnitude of the water breached the flood barriers around Bangkok forcing officials to open flood gates to allow the water to flow on to the sea. It became increasingly clear some of Bangkok would be flooded.



*Sand bag barriers fail allowing flood waters to flow*



*The volume of water flowing from the north was too much for the Bangkok area flood barriers*



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Numerous breaks in sand bag walls ultimately led to failure of longer and longer sections of Bangkok's flood barriers. More and more sand bags were needed to protect businesses and homes from the rising water.



*Flood water finds its way through the sand bag wall.*



*Sand bagging goes on around the clock with volunteers coming from all over the city. The government's optimism about flood defenses has led to a credibility gap.*





## ***Don Muang Airport Flooded***

Don Muang (the old Bangkok International Airport) became the major operations relief center / shelter.

About 3,000 displaced people found refuge in the old airport. Tents were pitched row upon row in various areas of the old terminal building. Other volunteers met there to sort and bag the mountains of donated food and supplies. The volunteers prepared bags and parcels of relief supplies and loaded them on trucks. Other volunteers drove trucks to flood area distribution points. Still more volunteers unloaded the trucks, loaded relief supplies into boats and delivered them to flood victims in the flood zones outside the main city.

. But on Monday, 25 Oct 2011, flood waters overwhelmed the airport's defensive barriers and invaded. The flooding of the airport saw a major shift as relief supplies were now needed for Bangkok itself.



*Flood waters breached the airport's defenses*



*Flight operations were cancelled.*



*The airport was a shelter for a few thousand people.*



for relief supplies. A logistics nightmare of evacuating flooding neighborhoods was compounded by having to evacuate the evacuation center itself.



The airport was the site for FROC (Flood Relief Operations Center). In addition to housing evacuees, it was a major collection and distribution point





Donations for flood relief were brought to the airport for sorting and bagging by volunteers. These consisted of food, medical kits, and daily needs such as soap, shampoo, tooth brushes and tooth paste.

Volunteers move the prepared bags of relief supplies from the assembly areas and load them onto trucks.



## ***Distributing Relief Supplies and Food***





## ***Shelters: Numerous and Various***



*Tents fill various areas of the old airport terminal*



*Another shelter at Thammasat University.*



*Some shelters were quickly set up with minimal facilities and equipment. Rapidly rising flood waters forced road closures severely limiting emergency services.*

In earlier reports, you saw survivors camped out along the highway shoulders. Hundreds of emergency shelters have sprung up in an effort to provide shelter for the people forced from their homes. Some university gyms, community centers, and buildings with large halls have all be pressed into service.

Facilities are crowded, and vary in terms of quality. But most people realize they are lucky to have a dry place to sleep. As one survivor said, "it's very upsetting, but we also realize we are all in the same situation."

As if this wasn't bad enough, the large shelters are Don Muang Airport and Thammasat University gym had to be evacuated as flood waters rose.





## ***More People Forced to Evacuate***

The rising water in the city limits of Bangkok forced more and more people to flee their flooded homes. Some held out for 2 days with no electricity and no clean drinking water. They finally gave in to the fact they had to leave and got out.



The military operated trucks and boats to help people move out of newly flooded areas of northern Bangkok.

Government credibility has crumbled. Optimistic statements about holding back the flood waters were eroded just as the flood waters breached barrier after barrier.





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There will be no end to the finger pointing and multi-players in the blame game in the aftermath of this disaster. Emergency responders and disaster relief managers and students will analyze this flood with a fine tooth comb. No doubt they will find that many of the short comings in the government's response are well-known from the past floods: deforestation, loss of wetlands, over building in the flood plains, etc.





More Fall 2011 Thai Flood Photos: Part 5



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## *Struggling to Stay Open for Business*





## ***Stuck or Refuse to Go***



To evacuate or shelter in place is a basic decision everyone must be prepared to make; and then be prepared to change according to the situation. Some people chose to stay and ignored warnings because "it's never flooded this badly before." Others were concerned for the security of their property. Others may have been unable to move out or had no



place to go. And there were probably some folks unable to make an effective decision and just waited too long.

As the flood worsens, food and water start to run out. The longer the flood persists, the more sanitation will become a problem. Most residents did not have emergency supplies stockpiled. So last minute shopping soon became panic buying.



## More Fall 2011 Thai Flood Photos: Part 5



Those remaining behind after evacuation orders are issued add to the already difficult task for relief managers. Increased flooding may require rescue teams to ultimately evacuate those who stayed behind. Relief supplies may need to be delivered to them when their food and water runs out. Now Bangkok faces the ugly truth: Parts of the city may be underwater for about a month.



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With the general public not educated or encouraged to prepare for disasters, few residents had emergency supplies and water stockpiled. Most emergency guides start off with suggesting 2-3 days of supplies. Some go as high as 2 weeks. The RTC-TH recommendation was to look at past disaster response times and double it. Then gradually increase to a few months and ultimately 1 year.



*Apparently Ronald has no where to go.*





## *Flood Hazards and Opportunities*



*A crocodile apparently looking at distressed homes. The government offered a bounty on crocodiles in flooded areas. Some thought it wasn't enough to make it worthwhile. Others took up the offer.*



*Centipedes are forced to flee floodwaters, too.*

The floods are so extensive. It seems the world has gone wild. With food supplies being impacted, many rural Thais fall back on their cultural past and diets from yesteryear. This includes a variety of insects, small mammals, and of course, fish. Some of the unusual challenges facing the flooded Thai communities:

- **Snakes:** Some folks catch them and eat them.
- **Crocodiles:** Some escaped from crocodile farms. Perhaps some are wild and rode flood waters from their lakes or rivers outside of Bangkok.
- **Fishing:** In rural Thailand, floods are a fishing opportunity. Some folks with rural roots were fishing in the flood waters.
- **Other Poisonous critters:** Spiders, centipedes, scorpions, ants, to name a few.



*Flood victims fishing in the flood waters.*



*Catfish caught in Bangkok flood waters*



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*Leeches in flood waters pose a health threat*



*This snake was caught just north of Bangkok.*



*Rat looking for a way out*



*Low toxicity to humans, but painful sting*



*A wide variety of ants creates other hazards*

The Ministry of Public Health had to provide a wide variety of solutions to a diverse range of flood related ailments: snake bites, allergic reactions to various types of stings, treatments for a wide variety of infections from contaminated flood waters. And of course, there is the added flood challenge of closed roads making distribution and delivery of medicines, supplies, specialized medical kits and personnel even more difficult.

Experts warn there may be even more hazard involved with poison critters when the flood water recedes. During the recovery and clean up phase, many critters will be seeking shelter in the piles of flood debris. 🌐

