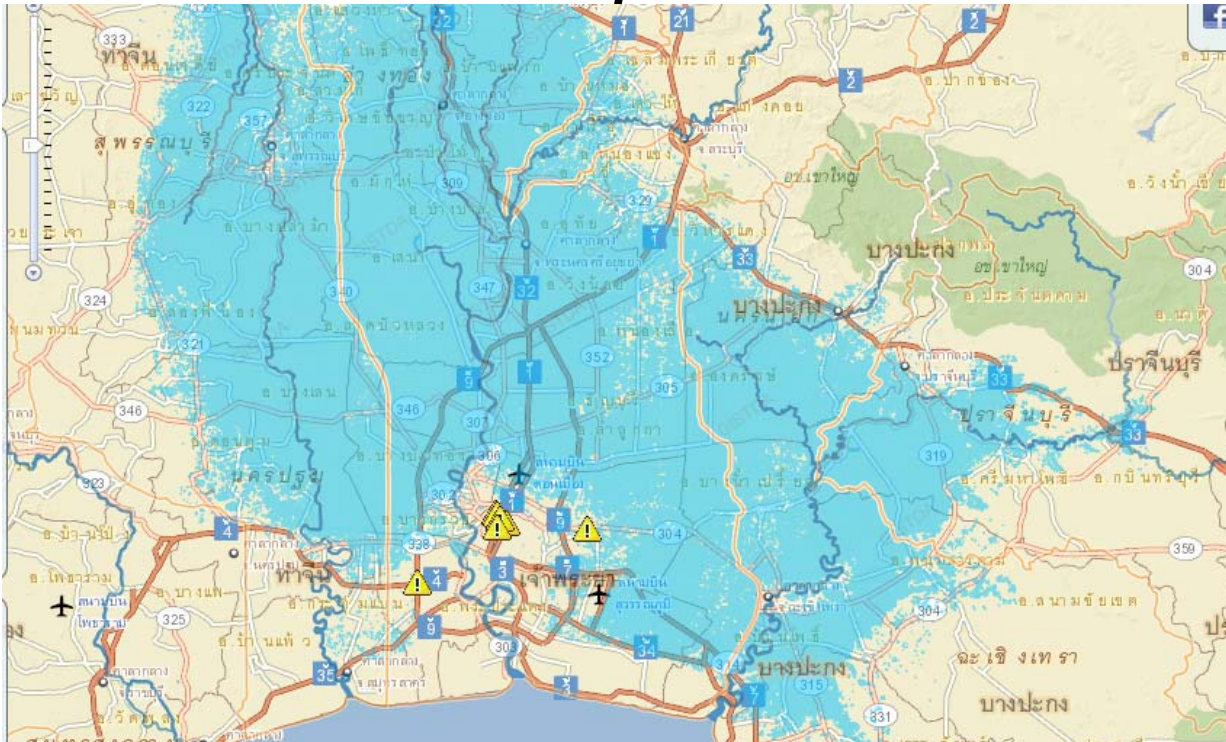


Fall 2011 Thai Flood Photos: Part 10

Latest Flood Map at Press Time



Screen captured 07 Nov 0802 local Thai time



There is growing concern about supplies getting into Bangkok. Major roads to the north are flooded and largely impassable. As flood waters move southward, there is growing fear the last major highway to the south may get flooded. There appears to be a lack of consensus as to what should be done.

One concern is building barriers to protect the road will slow water flowing south to the Gulf of Thailand and thus prolonging the flooding in parts of Bangkok. The other concern is the loss of the road will make getting supplies into the city very difficult. The worst case is no deliveries could get through.

Last week it was decided ***not*** to blast breaks in some roads to let water flow through faster. Draining the water through the various canals crosses many different jurisdictions which lack centralized control and coordination.



Attention is shifting to draining water from Eastern Bangkok. They hope this will reduce the flood threat to Suvarnabhumi International Airport.

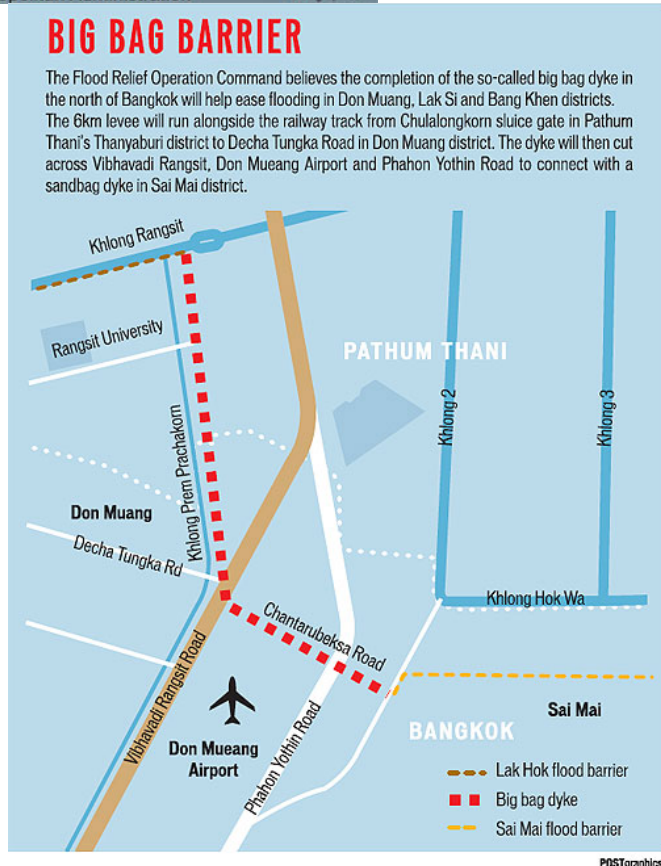
Flood barriers there were raised to a total of 3.5 meters (from 3 m) to avoid losing the second major city airport to flood waters. So far flights continue as normal, but tourism is down.



These big sand bags weight about 2.5 tons each. The new “big bag” barrier is shown as the red dashed line in the diagram on the left.

The idea is to connect to further protect Don Muang Airport, eastern and central Bangkok (toward the right and bottom of the diagram respectively).

It has been difficult to coordinate the water flow at the various levels of authority as there is no unified chain of command.



Flood Protection Work Continues

As flood waters overcome some of Bangkok's main defensive barriers, more and more people are beginning to realize they may be flooded. Compounding the chaos are frustrated flood victims and local officials at odds with city and national flood control workers and efforts. Smaller canals are being diverted, blocked, or breached without concern for coordination or knowing the "big picture."

Reports show canals are being clogged with garbage, dead animals, and vegetation. In some cases, poor or lacking maintenance were also cited. All these conditions reduce the water flow efficiency in the canals and adds to the flooding.



Flood protection of individual homes, shops adds to the run on limited supplies. These cinder block walls are not water tight. They need to be backed up with a water pump (typically electric) or manual bailing. And if power is lost, buckets or scoops are needed. Of course, all of these things are in short supply now. Profiteering is on the rise.



Repairing breached sand bag barriers is a top priority. They can leak. And with increasing water levels and pressures, they can collapse. Worse yet, some people are dismantling them. It all depends on which side of the barrier you stand: chest deep in smelly flood water for ~2 weeks on one side or fairly dry on the other.

As the unrest grows, more troops and police are assigned to guard duty. This reduces the number of people for evacuation and rescue work.

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For example, protestors took sledge hammers to a concrete flood gate structure. They made a hole to drain flood water from their area. This caused a protected area to be flooded. It took 400 police and troops to secure the site to allow for repairs. Once the repairs were completed, guards had to be posted to protect the site



Local protestors broke a hole in at a flood gate



Troops and police had to protect the repair crew



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Flood barriers at bus stations were set up to protect the transportation hub. Business that could afford it did the same.



More sand bags at Mo Chit Bus Terminal to try to keep flood water out and keep people moving.



The pumps need to keep running 24/7. The shortage of pumps requires ordering them from outside of Thailand. That will take time for them to arrive.

This disaster is revealing the lack of coordination between different government agencies, overlapping interests and duties, conflicting politics and ego, lack of effective inspections and maintenance, and an absence of a clear chain of command over a disaster of this magnitude.

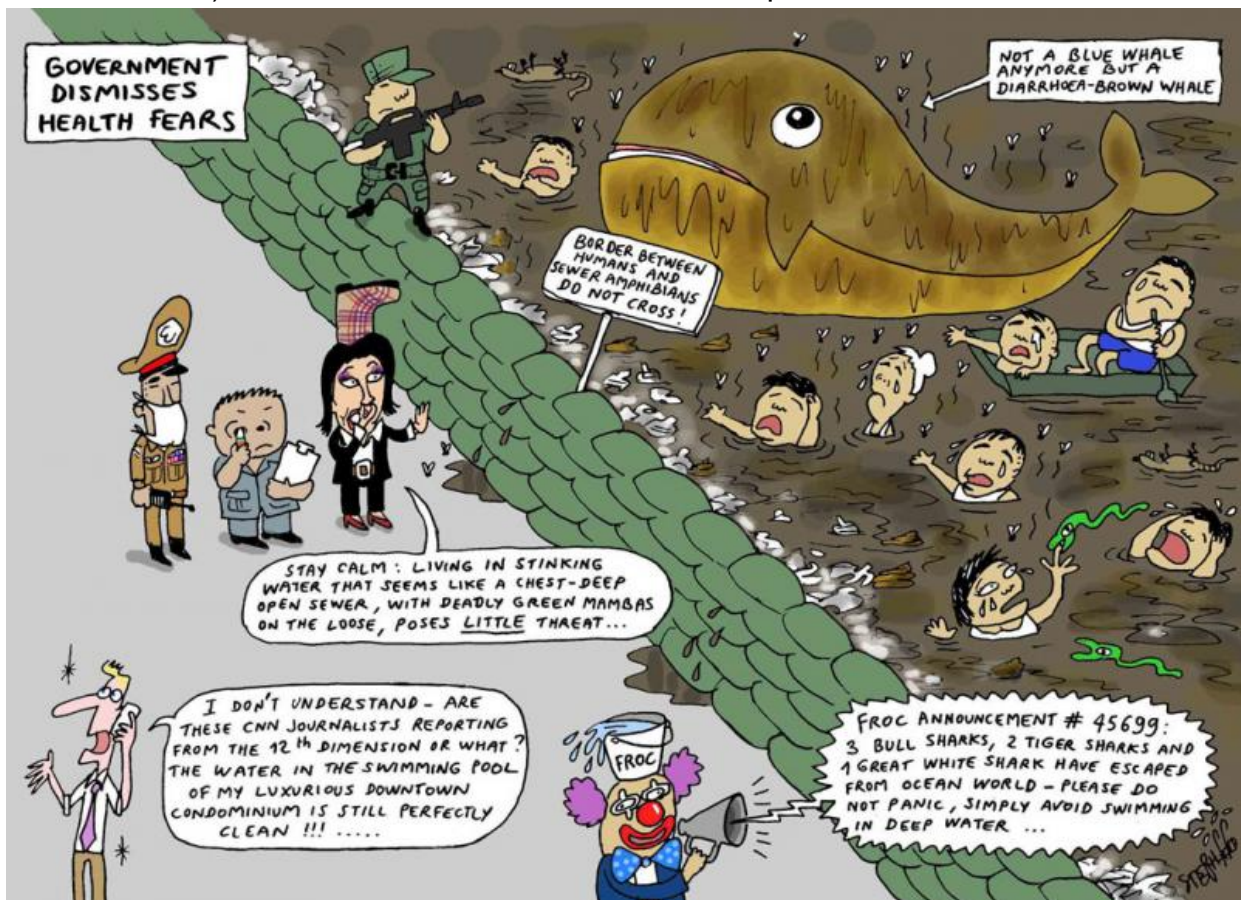


Flood Runoff Spurs Runoff of the Mouth

Internet social media use is going through the roof during the Thai floods in response to a growing thirst for information. Apparently the government cannot give out information fast enough for the people. Politics, finger pointing, mudslinging add to the flood of information, disinformation, complaints, and calls for help.

All of this is festering like all the flotsam in the flood waters. Misinformed people working with incomplete, inaccurate, and at time incorrect information add to the confusion and chaos in the capital. It is not a pretty sight and even more terrible for those who have to live in the middle of it all.

One interesting video summary of it all can be seen in a (with subtitles) using this link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b8zAAEDGQPM&feature=related> (Note: Turn off the sound.) The whale in the cartoon below is a spin off from the video.



Snakes & Crocs: Crock or Not?

Authorities are still trying to verify reports on social networks that 15 Green Mambas (among the deadliest of snakes from Africa) may have escaped from a flooded house in northern Bangkok. Trees are the habitat for these snakes. If the reports are true, gadzooks. If the floods and the native snakes and crocodiles weren't enough to worry about, now this!



Alleged escaped Green Mambas in flood waters

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Hoax or not, the health ministry took no chances and ordered 50 vials of serum at a reported cost of 300,000 THB. Normally this serum is not available in Thailand. The vials have been given to 3 area hospitals.



A very lucky survivor of a suspected crocodile attack (shown above) received 100 stitches to close his wounds. He was checking to see how deep the muddy water was when he felt something bite his leg. Other people claim they saw a crocodile. Many of the people camping under the freeway bridges heard his story. Most of these people declined to go to any of the 120+ shelters in the area. Most want to be closer to their homes to check on their property. But now they are afraid to walk in the flood water. And it is getting harder to find a dry or a high spot.





Sometimes the Best of Intentions...

As the photos below show, sometimes the very best of intentions may not always produce good results. Maybe this is similar to the flood relief efforts in Thailand. It seems everyone is talking about the same problem and pulling in the same direction. But the results don't always turn out they way you thought they should.



Helping the Elderly and Infirm



It is said that one measure of a society is how it cares for the elderly, infirm, and less fortunate. This is why part of the RTC-TH emergency preparedness planning is to know your neighbors. These photos show the human resources needed to assist the elderly. Sometimes it is just 1:1. But more often it can take 2-8 people to help 1 person. Evacuation planners need to consider this ratio as it affects labor and logistics. Some elderly people chose to stay behind in familiar surrounding rather



than go to shelters. But they were not well prepared with food, water, and other essentials. This put additional burdens on relief workers to find their homes and resupply them. Some medical evacuations were needed when an elderly stay-behind ran out of critical medications. It seems that time, energy, and supplies will run out long before relief workers will run out of compassion.



Possible Flood Clean-up or...???



An effort to clean up flood water using EM bacteria is underway. It's never been done on a large scale before, so naturally there are skeptics raising questions. We've successfully used this on our farm to control odors in pig pens, boost composting and soil organisms, but not for cleaning contaminated or polluted water.

Bottles of liquid EM were being readied to treat flood water inside a

building. Volunteers are making them into balls that are to be tossed into stagnant flood water. A box of 30 is given to people to use in their homes.

Some people have doubts and raised questions about this type water treatment method which hasn't be tried on such a large scale before. Their main concern is unintended / unexpected environmental consequences coming from good intentions.



Potentially Shocking Scene

Does anyone see what we think we see in this picture?! I was always taught that electricity and water don't mix. Or did I miss something?

I understand, you should look your best with all those cameras and TV crews around. After all, you never know when you might show up on camera. And maybe it is hard to get their attention with millions of other flood victims out there. And yes, shocking headlines help sell the news. But...

So far this flood has claimed 506 lives and counting. About 80%+ died by drowning. A few were by accidental electrocution. The power authorities tend to cut electricity in an area when water levels get up to the circuit breaker box.

