



Bangkok Post

Date :

Friday, August 7, 2015

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FLOODS

400 Chiang Rai students flee schools

POST REPORTERS

About 400 students were evacuated yesterday after flash floods from a heavy down-pour blocked the entrance to a school and a road in Chiang Rai.

Torrential rainfall in Chiang Rai flooded Huai Plu Witthayakhom School and Mae Fah Luang University in tambon Tha Sut of Muang district yesterday, with water levels reaching as high as 50cm, according to authorities.

Officials from the Chiang Rai Provincial Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department, soldiers and border patrol police shuttled the 400 students out of the deluge using flat-bottomed boats.

No casualties were reported.

The school and the university were temporarily closed.

The electricity was also cut off to prevent people from being electrocuted.

Numerous commuters and broken-down vehicles were also stuck in traffic along 500 metres of flooded Phahon Yothin road.

Police and the university's officers pumped floodwater off the road and into the Mae Khao Tom River.

Tambon Tha Sut municipality also built sandbag walls in flood-prone areas to try to contain the excess water.

Authorities said several days of heavy rainfall triggered the flash floods from Doi San Ton Kok and creeks in Ban Bo Thong, Ban Huai Kian, Ban Si Pa Sang, which inundated many areas in Muang district.

The Disaster Prevention and Mitigation Department director-general Chatchai Promlert said if heavy rain falls, residents in the following areas should prepare for the risk of flash floods: Nong Khai, Bung Kan, Sakon Nakhon, Nakhon Pathom, Chanthaburi, Trat, Ranong, Phangnga and Phuket.

Waves in the Andaman Sea are likely to reach two to three metres high in upcoming weeks, and ships should proceed with caution while small boats should stay ashore, he added.

Meanwhile, the water level in the Mekong River dropped from 7.3 metres to 7.1 metres yesterday, and the water level in the Sai River along the Thai-Myanmar border also fell.

Fifteen districts in Sukhothai and Suphan Buri provinces may continue to suffer from drought, Mr Chatchai said.