

TROPICAL STORM

North, Isan provinces ravaged by 'Sinlaku'

POST REPORTERS

Tropical Storm Sinlaku has ravaged the North and Northeast of Thailand, bringing downpours and floods to over 1,300 households in 10 provinces.

The Department of Disaster Prevention and Mitigation (DDPM) yesterday reported that a total of 1,399 households located in 24 districts in the 10 provinces in the North and Northeast were affected by flash floods from Saturday until yesterday.

The department and other government agencies in the provinces have joined forces to survey the damage and expedite efforts to help.

Chayapol Thitisak, department director-general, said Sinlaku brought heavy rain and caused mountain runoff in some of the hardest-hit areas such as Loei province.

The flood situation in that northern province was so severe that the National Broadcasting and Telecommunications Commission (NBTC) yesterday ordered all mobile operators to ensure service

quality and maintain cellular signal quality in the province to make rescue operations possible.

Trairat Viriyasirikul, acting secretary-general of the NBTC, said that the current flood situation in Loei and nearby areas has intensified while communication is critically needed for people to connect with each other during this time.

Thai Meteorological Department (TMD) yesterday reported that Sinlaku has now lost momentum and was now a low-pressure cell as it departed Pua district in Nan yesterday.

Despite the storm weakening, the TMD still warned that Sinlaku would bring heavy rain and flooding in some areas.

In a related development, Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha yesterday warned that four provinces — Nan, Phitsanulok, Loei and Chiang Mai — are at high risk of more storms during this period and urged related government agencies to prepare.

Army chief Gen Apirat Kongsompong instructed all army units in areas struck by Sinlaku to help affected people immediately, especially those in Nan, Phayao, Lampang and Uttaradit provinces.

The flood levels in the four provinces have already subsided.

Sinlaku brought heavy rains and flash floods to many villages in Muang district in Loei, submerging around 550 households and damaging farmland. No injuries or deaths were reported. Flood levels in Loei remain at around 70 centimetres in some parts of the province.