

Travelogue Pictorial

 October 2011 

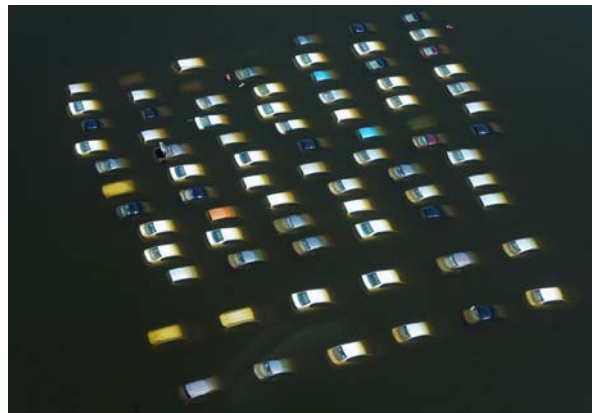
Worst Flooding in Decades Swamps Thailand

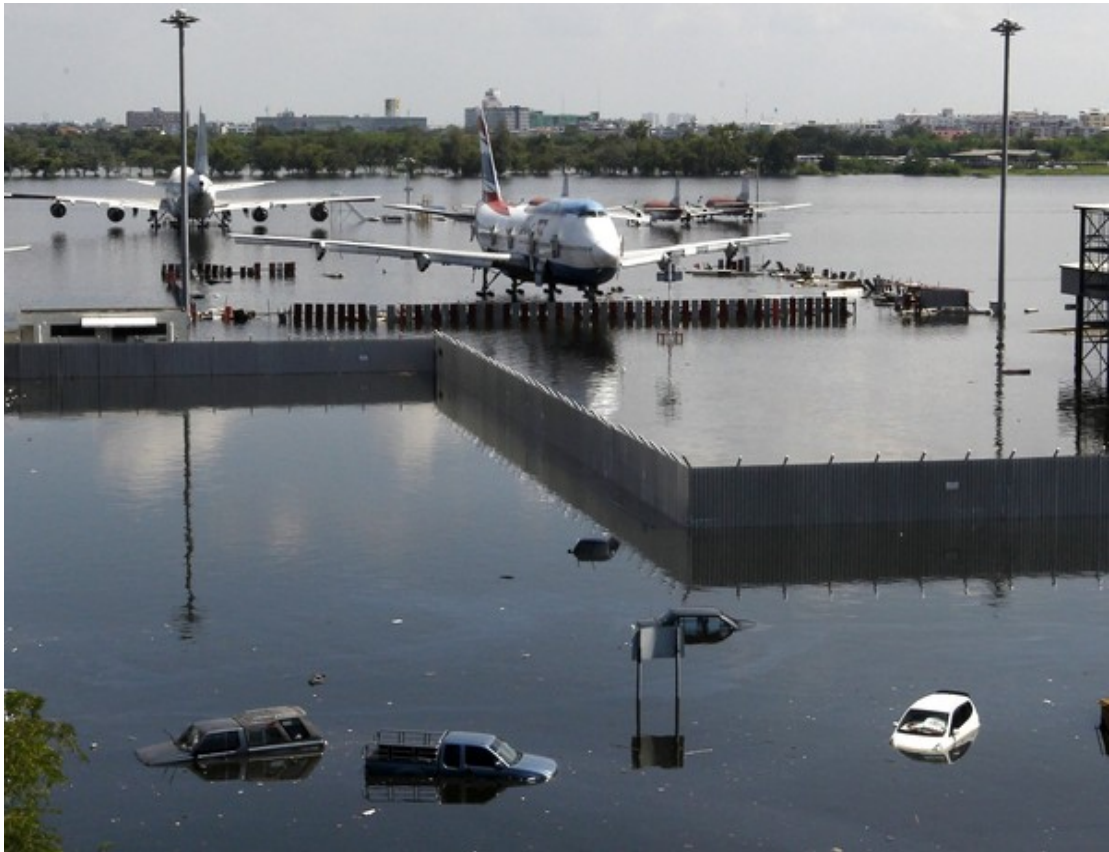
Heavy monsoon rains have been drenching Southeast Asia since mid-July, causing mudslides and widespread flooding along the Mekong River. Parts of Thailand are now experiencing the worst floods in half a century, as water inundates villages, historic temples, farms, and factories. At least 281 people have been killed in Thailand, and another 200 in neighboring Cambodia. Rescue workers are scrambling to prevent a humanitarian disaster, and Thailand's prime minister is warning businesses not to use the flooding as an excuse to raise prices, but to no avail. About 8.2 million people in 60 of Thailand's 77 provinces have been affected by the flooding, and economic losses are so far estimated to top \$2 billion. Collected here are recent images of the crisis in Thailand as some 10 million residents in Bangkok keep a wary eye on the approaching surge of floodwater, already reaching the outskirts of the capital.













...and so the Bangkok contingent descended on Chonburi, Pattaya and all places higher than 3 metres above sea level. The results are siege mentality buying with a propensity for bottled water and anything that would last several weeks. Demand defeated supply and the prices have soared indiscriminately. Accommodation is impossible and hotels, condos and apartments are full throughout the Province. Traffic is horrendous with Sukhumvit gridlocked most of the afternoon and evening. Locals are becoming more harassed as time passes. Weeks of chaos are inevitable with the Thai economy likely to be badly affected with loss of 25% of the rice harvest. Clearing up is conservatively estimated at \$2 Billion, with much expenditure going to future flood defences.



Most of Bangkok seems to have survived without the need of a Noah's ark. The Thai psyche thrives on rumour, panic and exaggeration, and the vast majority who evacuated and clogged the roads and emptied our shelves need not have done so. Bottled water was one of the first essentials to go but again this was unnecessary as the reverse osmosis dispensers use city water. The River Authority was conspicuous by the absence of any pronouncements. The excess water in the northern central plains should have been drained off at least 2 months ago through canals and run-off areas. This would have mitigated the Bangkok situation. Anyhow, we should not need to be living on stilts for another year. RDW

