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Flash Floods in Thailand Cause 43 Deaths

52 people were reported missing

The Thai Public Health Ministry released a report today stating that death tolls in three provinces in the northern part of Thailand, hit by massive flooding, rose to 43, while 52 persons were missing. The floods were caused by heavy rains occurred in the May 22nd -23rd period in provinces Prae, Sukhothai and the Uttaradit, the hardest hit. According to the Public Health Ministry's rescue agency, in Uttaradit province, which is 490 kilometers north of capital Bangkok, 38 people were killed in three districts, out of which the most important - downtown Narenthorn Center. The statement added that in Sukhothai, two people were killed, while three lost their lives in Prae province. The ministry announced it had sent around 400 officials in all three provinces in order to provide aid to survivors and recover the dead. Although water levels started to get back to normal in Prae and Sukhothai, and waters are slowly receding in Uttaradit as well, though some parts are still under waters, the State Railways of Thailand will continue to keep train service between Bangkok and the city of Chiang Mai suspended for the second consecutive day, because of the high levels of water present on the tracks. The faxed statement of the state-owned agency announced that it is highly likely the service would continue to be halted. Moreover, road traffic was suspended as well on 10 highways, while 28 bridges have been severely damaged. During a visit to affected areas yesterday, Prime Minister Shinawatra stated that the extensive flooding was caused in part by illegal deforestation, while the high number of victims was triggered by the floods' occurrence at night. In an interview after the meeting on the crisis situation held by Tahksin today in Bangkok, a government spokeswoman, Sansanee Nakpong, stated that the government of the country cannot establish at this point the extension of economic damages and costs as a consequence of the floods.