

# No serious drought this year, vows RID

## Plenty of water storage in reserve

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The Royal Irrigation Department (RID) yesterday assured Thais will not face severe drought this year as water supplies in 35 catchments nationwide are adequate.

RID director-general Thongplew Kongchan yesterday insisted the country will be able to survive a dry spell this year as 35 major dams and reservoirs across the country are storing around 61.6 billion cubic metres (cu/m) of water between them, or 81% of their capacity on average.

Of the total volume of water, 37.7 billion cu/m (73%) is usable water which exceeds the volume in the previous year by 9.6 billion cu/m.

The country's four main dams also have plenty of water in reserve. The Bhumibol dam in Tak has 10.3 billion cu/m (77% of its capacity), of which 6.5 billion cu/m (68%) is usable water.

The Sirikit dam in Uttaradit holds 7.7 billion cu/m (81% of the capacity) with 4.8 billion cu/m (73%) of usable water while the Khwae Noi Bamrungdan dam in Phitsanulok contains 787 million cu/m (84% of capacity) with 744 million cu/m (83%) of usable water. Also, the Pasak Jolasid dam in Lop Buri retains 746 million cu/m (78% of capacity), of which 743 cu/m (73%) is usable water.

Mr Thongplew said water volume in 19 dams nationwide, including the four dams, exceeds 80% on average. The other dams include the Mae Ngat Somboon Chon dam in Chaing Mai, the Kiew Lom

and Kiew Kor Mah dams in Lampang, the Nam Un dam in Sakon Nakhon.

"The use of water nationwide will increase from next month onward. After the dry season, water supplies nationwide will remain at around 40%-50%," he said.

Next month marks the end of the cool season and the beginning of the summer when the amount of water used for consumption and irrigation are expected to spike. Also, it was uncertain if the rainy season will arrive early this year or whether rainfall will be spread across the country, Mr Thongplew said.

According to the water management plan for the current dry period — which lasts until April or until the onset of the rainy season — the total volume of usable water to be made available nationwide will be around 42 billion cu/m.

Of the total volume, 15.9 billion cu/m will be reserved for agricultural activities, 6.9 billion for the preservation of local ecology and 2.1 billion cu/m for tap water production.

As for the four main dams, a total of 7.7 billion cu/m of water in the four dams is expected to be drawn for use.

Of this, 6.3 billion cu/m will be discharged from the Bhumibol and Sirikit dams combined, 650 million cu/m from the Khwae Noi Bamrungdan dam and 700 million cu/m from the Pasak Jolasid dam.

Meanwhile, temperatures in Bangkok and the surrounding provinces will drop to lowest 16-18C this weekend due to high pressure from China, according to the Thai Meteorological Department.

The pressure will also cause a drop in temperatures by 3-5C in the upper part of the country.

The lowest temperatures of 4-10C are forecast along mountain ranges in the North and Northeast.