



ข่าวสิ่งแวดล้อม ประจำ วันอังคารที่ 13 กุมภาพันธ์ พ.ศ. 2561

หนังสือพิมพ์ The Nation ปีที่ 42 ฉบับที่ 55408 หน้า 3A

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## Rainmaking questioned as efforts underway to fight air pollution

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THE NATION

RAINMAKING IS not the final answer to tackle air pollution in Bangkok and authorities should focus on controlling pollution emissions at their sources, Greenpeace representatives said on the first day of the operation to clean Bangkok air by producing artificial rain.

The Royal Rainmaking and Agricultural Aviation Department was making its first rainmaking flight to cleanse the air in Bangkok of particulate matter smaller than 2.5 microns (PM2.5) yesterday, as the capital continued to suffer from severe air pollution since last month with no signs of improvement.

Four rainmaking planes from Royal Rainmaking Operation Centres in the Central and Eastern regions were tasked with the mission, as it was intended that artificial rain would wash very fine particulate from the air and improve its quality.

The latest air quality update from the Pollution Control Department (PCD) and an international air-pollution monitoring website showed that Bangkok's air quality was expected to remain at critical lev-

els, as PM2.5 measurements at every monitoring station in Bangkok showed levels exceeding 50 micrograms per cubic metre of air. The cold weather was expected to continue, which would intensify the problem.

The director of the Central Region Royal Rainmaking Operation Centre, Rattakorn Warunsukhasiri, said if the rainmaking operation was successful people in Bangkok could expect rain within three hours.

However, Rattakorn said the amount of rain and location would be determined by weather conditions affecting cloud formations and could not be predicted precisely.

He said the outcome of the artificial rain project had not been seen yet, as the rainmaking team was still working.

"Our rainmaking team will continue on this operation every day until this weekend, or until the air pollution problem in Bangkok is resolved," he said.

However, Greenpeace coordinator on climate change and energy, Chariya Senpong, said rain could improve air quality, but only for a short period of time.

She encouraged authorities to solve air pollution problems at their origin by con-



กรมควบคุมมลพิษ  
POLLUTION CONTROL DEPARTMENT

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Aircraft from the Royal Rainmaking and Agricultural Aviation Department take off yesterday to undertake the first cloud-seeding mission in Bangkok. The move is aimed at easing serious air pollution in the capital.

trolling emissions and to set up accurate and real-time air pollution warning systems instead.

Chariya highlighted that rainmaking was just a short-term measure and if fossil fuels continued to be burned for transport and energy, the problem was insurmountable.

Moreover, she also warned that as rain cleaned particulate matter from the atmosphere, toxic substances such as cadmium, mercury, hydrocarbon compounds and other heavy metals associated with PM2.5 would be carried into the

water and would pollute the environment.

“Even though some relief measures are better than no measures at all, I urge the PCD to focus on getting rid of pollution at its source to ensure that air pollution is sustainably solved in the long term,” she said.

“The PCD also needs to include PM2.5 levels in the national Air Quality Index and show real-time hourly levels of PM2.5 to the public, so people will be informed of the threats to their health from air pollution and can properly protect themselves.”