

## From The Editor

---

# Climate and scam that we share

Received 29 January 2026; accepted 1 February 2026  
doi:10.46475/asean-jr.v27i1.1012



On 21 November 2025, heavy rain and sudden floods struck the lower eight provinces of southern Thailand and northern Malaysia. The most severe damage occurred in Hat Yai District, Songkhla Province, where the whole downtown and urban areas submerged under three meters of water. Floodwaters significantly impacted local communities, reaching the upper floors of homes and leaving numerous residents trapped on rooftops. The resulting conditions led to acute shortages of essential supplies like food and water, with rescue efforts hampered by strong currents. The disaster claimed 170 lives in southern Thailand, 131 of them in Hat Yai, and only two deaths in northern Malaysia. Within the same week, three cyclones occurred simultaneously across South and Southeast Asia, and flood-related deaths exceeded 700 in Indonesia, 98 in Vietnam and 410 in Sri Lanka [1]. Earlier that month, the Philippines was hit by two typhoons, leaving more than 200 deaths [2]. Throughout 2025, Vietnam was hit by 14 typhoons.



*Hat Yai, Songkla, Thailand on 21 November 2025, with its center submerged underwater (courtesy of Kamonwon Cattapan, M.D.).*

East, South and Southeast Asia are likely the regions most affected by global warming. Since 2019, it has been reported that three quarters of the cities in the Southeast Asia would experience more frequent flooding, potentially affecting tens of millions of people every year and that internally displaced people from cyclones, floods and typhoons in Southeast and East Asia have already been recorded as representing almost 30% of all global displacements [3]. With ASEAN energy demand expected to increase by 2.6 times by 2050 [4], it is crucial for the region to address the climate crisis and find solutions to reduce emissions while simultaneously strengthening climate resilience. Greater public awareness should be raised, and sustainable practices should be promoted. Radiology, which consumes a large amount of energy and resources, and of which heavy equipment is usually installed on the lowest floor of buildings, is not an exception. Green radiology, a sustainable approach that focuses on minimizing negative environmental impacts by reducing energy, water, helium, and waste, should be widely adopted and practiced, following the concept of “think globally, act locally” [5]. Prevention from being paralyzed due to flooding should be considered every time radiological equipment is installed, as all CT and MRI machines in the affected area during the last flood in Hat Yai were submerged.

From the Chinese-owned scam compounds on the western side where Thailand and Myanmar share their 1,200-km border, a similar or even worse situation is now being reported on the eastern side where Thailand shares its 800-km border with Cambodia. It is estimated that Thai people have lost 60 billion Baht to the scammers in Cambodia. AI technology is used to elevate the success rates, and the digital currencies accelerates money transfers. Among more than 200, 000 forced laborers, recruited from various nationalities all over the world due to the low operating costs of the business, it is estimated that around 5,000 are Thai and 72,000 are Indonesian. The situation has reached the level of a humanitarian and human rights crisis, according to the United Nations experts [6]. Unlike scammer bases in Myanmar which are embedded in areas where ethnic independent groups are active, the scammer centers in Cambodia appear to have certain connections with politicians, government officers, and state institutions including banks, weakening law enforcement and facilitating illegal operations. Thailand is believed to be a money-laundering transit point before funds are moved to Singapore. The Thailand-Cambodia border crisis, starting in July and ending in December, displaced over 200, 000 civilians, once believed to be solely due to a territorial dispute but could partly stem from conflicts following the efforts to eliminate the criminal ecosystem in Thailand.

On 22 December 2025, the Department of Thai Traditional and Alternative Medicine announced the cabinet's approval of the regulations requiring cannabis shops to upgrade their operations to comply with new medicinal standards by January–February 2026. The goal is to upgrade over 10,000 licensed cannabis shops into medical facilities or clinics that meet the Ministry of Public Health's approval [7].

***Wiwatana Tanomkiat, M.D.***

Editor,

The ASEAN Journal of Radiology

Email: aseanjournalradiology@gmail.com

## References

1. Sharman L. More than 1,100 killed as deadly storms cause flooding and landslides across Asia. CNN World [Internet]. 2025 Nov 30 [updated 2025 Dec 2; cited 2026 Jan 31]. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/11/30/asia/flooding-senar-ditwah-indonesia-malaysia-thailand-intl-hnk>
2. Nierenberg A, Suhartono M, Mulkey SK, Suhartono M. An intense monsoon season Is battering parts of Asia. Here's what we know. Unusually destructive storms have killed at least 1,350 people across the region and displaced millions in South and Southeast Asia. The New York Times [Internet]. 2025 Dec 1 [updated 2025 Dec 3; cited 2026 Jan 31]. Available from: <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/12/01/world/asia/flooding-sri-lanka-indonesia-thailand-vietnam-cyclone-rain.html>
3. Soo-Chen K, McCoy D. Climate change in South-East Asia: Where are we and what are we bound for?. United Nations University [Internet]. Tokyo: UNU; 2025 [cited 2026 Jan 31]. Available from: <https://ourworld.unu.edu/en/climate-change-in-south-east-asia-where-are-we-and-what-are-we-bound-for>
4. ASEAN Centre for Energy (ACE) [Internet]. Jakarta: ACE; 2024 Sept 26 [cited 2026 Jan 31]. 8th ASEAN Energy Outlook. Available from: <https://aseanenergy.org/publications/the-8th-asean-energy-outlook/>
5. Ho ELM, Cho DHY, Chuapetcharasopon C, Tomiyama N. A pulse check on environmental sustainability awareness in Asia-Oceania. ASEAN J Radiol [Internet]. 2025 [cited 2026 Feb 1];26:262-9. Available from: <https://asean-journal-radiology.org/index.php/ajr/article/view/967>
6. United Nations [Internet]. Geneva: OHCHR; c1996-2026 [cited 2026 Feb 1]. UN experts urge immediate human rights-based action to tackle forced criminality in Southeast Asia scam centres. 21 May 2025. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/en/press-releases/2025/05/un-experts-urge-immediate-human-rights-based-action-tackle-forced>
7. Regan H, Olarn K. Thailand was the first country in Asia to legalize marijuana. Things didn't go as planned. CNN Travel [Internet]. 2025 June 28 [cited 2026 Feb 1]. Available from: <https://edition.cnn.com/2025/06/28/travel/thailand-cannabis-laws-tourism-intl-hnk>