

Groningen still threatened by flooding

The heavy rainfall that accompanied the storms of the past few days have led to critically high water levels in the northern-most provinces of Groningen and Friesland.

On Thursday, a dike near the Groningen town of Tolbert was in danger of collapse, but the situation there has since stabilised. On Friday, the condition of a dike along the Eems Canal became critical. About 800 inhabitants of several villages along the canal have been evacuated.

State of emergency

Dozens of residents and soldiers have placed sandbags along a stretch of 400 meters where the canal dike has been seriously weakened. A state of emergency has been declared in the area. Access roads have been closed off by the police and helicopters are patrolling the area.

Water levels in the east of Groningen have been rising much faster than expected, and the water management authorities have been making an all-out effort to get rid of the excess water. Holes were dug in the dikes around some of the region's water storage polders to allow for faster inundation.

Burst dike

The neighbouring province of Friesland is also facing a dangerous situation as the result of high water levels and strong winds. A 200-metre section of the dike surrounding the island de Burd near the town of Grou collapsed on Thursday evening.

The local council has urged residents the island's residents to evacuate. All except for 10 residents whose homes are located on higher ground have since left the island.

Dangerously high

The abundant rainfall has quickly raised the water levels in the main Dutch rivers from exceptionally low to dangerously high. Several quays in Dordrecht have already flooded, and the authorities in the province of Limburg – in the southeast of the country - are closely watching the rising water levels in the river Maas.

Even though the authorities do not expect problems on the same scale as faced by the provinces up north, additional pumps have been placed in several towns along the Maas as heavy rainfall is expected up-river in the Ardennes region.

© Radio Netherlands Worldwide

Link to article on Expatica.Com

http://www.expatica.com/nl/news/dutch-news/groningen-still-threatened-by-flooding_199445.html