

Chiang Mai releases Line bot to warn of high air pollution

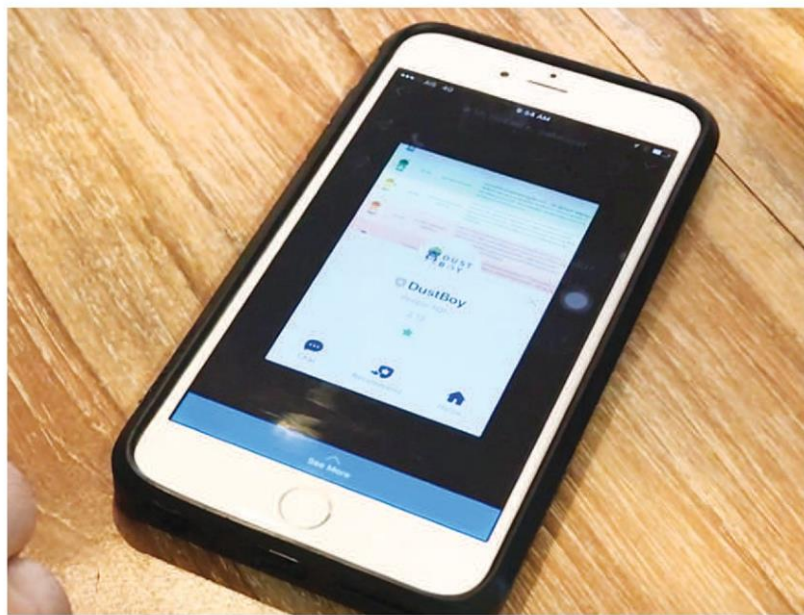
**SAKAORAT SIRIMA,
PATINYA SRISUPAMART**
THE NATION

CHIANG MAI has launched the first public-sector air pollution monitoring system and set up a “People’s AQI (air-quality index)” to allow users to receive real-time air pollution warnings.

Researchers from three northern institutes – Chiang Mai University, Rajamangala University of Technology Lanna, and Mae Fah Luang University – have joined forces with the Chiang Mai Chamber of Commerce to develop a Line bot called “Dustbot” to help warn Chiang Mai province smartphone users about dust levels that are beyond safe limits. It will be officially launched today and become Thailand’s first public-sector air pollution warning system.

The “self-warning” chatbot will be linked to six pollution-sensor stations in this pilot phase before expanding to 20 such stations by the year’s end. It will interact with users with set response messages and allow users to set an AQI, which will alert them when the dust level rises beyond a certain point.

Eleven sensor stations will be set up at hospitals in Chiang Mai for wider coverage in detecting PM10 and PM2.5 particles – respectively those with average diameter of 10



The “Dustbot”, a first for Thailand, is officially launched at an event yesterday.

micrometers and 2.5 micrometers.

The head of Chiang Mai University’s Climate Change Data Centre (CCDC), Sate Sampattagul, said that data from pollution sensors would be calculated into an AQI under the method used by the Pollution Control Department (PCD), and then it would be updated on a real-time basis on the centre’s website and the Dustboy bot.

Sate hopes pollution sensor stations will eventually be set up

throughout the North in an “open data” manner so all stakeholders get to interact with them. He also aims to raise public awareness about the issue and help people better prevent negative impacts from haze with the development of this user-friendly air pollution monitoring program.

Meanwhile, the CCDC revealed that in Chiang Mai, as of 8am yesterday, the level of PM2.5 was as high as 83.13 micrograms per cubic metre of air, while the AQI level was at 133,

which was considered harmful to health.

According to records of daily averages this week from the PCD, the PM2.5 level in Chiang Mai reached the highest level yesterday of 80.06 micrograms.

The severe haze problem in the province coincided with a rapid increase in hotspots within the province. The Thailand Fire Monitoring System of Geo-Informatics and Space Technology Development Agency detected 17 hotspots on Tuesday.

Chiang Mai province Governor Pawin Chamniprasart has already ordered local authorities in the areas that were hotspots to find a solution to the problem.

In related news, the Royal Rainmaking and Agricultural Aviation Department director-general Surasee Kittimonthon said that the department had found the new method to relieve the smog problem in the North. This involved adapting the rainmaking method to change weather conditions that cause the accumulation of dust particles in the air.

Surasee said that the rainmaking plane would sprinkle dry ice over the troposphere to cool the temperature and break down the warm inversion layer, which traps the dust particles within the lower layer of the atmosphere.