

Turning the Tide



Disasters hit without warning. They change all plans and make you follow their own. But those who stand firm with integrity don't just survive them, they come out stronger.

It wasn't easy, but when the disastrous 2011 Thai floods hit the country, the Aditya Birla Group was ready. Mud bunds and sandbags, prevention and precaution, every possible measure that needed to be taken, had been initiated. The situation seemed manageable.

But destiny had other plans. On 10th October, the Group was informed that a flood gate would be opened as dam levels had increased beyond capacity and the Indo-Thai property was in the periphery of the waters. This sudden news would test their

readiness to the limit, the pressure began to mount. But the spirit to overcome it, never weakened.

Shoulder to shoulder, everyone stood as equals. Plans were formulated and measures taken to evacuate the property immediately. They had less than 12 hours to execute the rescue mission. Those who could be sent to Bangkok were sent and reunited with their families. But over 200 employees, many with families, were still stuck in the water-clogged area.

Not a moment was wasted. Ranks were forgotten, new leaders emerged out of ordinary folks and quickly a large university area was secured for the people of Indo-Thai to be temporarily relocated. Sustenance supplies, electricity and water were provided for a convenient stay. But as they say, a true captain never leaves a sinking ship. Even with the compound area filled with over 1.5 meters of water for 50 days, around 30 key members stayed put. Securing the plant, facing one wave at a time.

Food and basic supplies were delivered on boats, not just for the employees but for the people of the community as well. The group knew it had a responsibility towards the community which had supported it. Every victim of the floods was treated equally, with love and sympathy.

After 15 days, reports came in that the floods were soon to strike the University. The entire team sprang into action. Transport was arranged in no time and the entire team relocated. No stone was left unturned to ensure a sense of security in those facing the grave calamity. The team of employees had suddenly become a family.

Survival was only the first step. There was destruction everywhere. Buildings that were once someone's home now lay submerged, only as a ruin of what once was. Every piece needed to be refitted into the beautiful puzzle that is life. The Group took it upon themselves to ensure a new life could take shape for those that had put their faith in the management. They decided to pay a minimum of 75 percent of wages to every employee, despite all work having come to a standstill. It was the least they could do for those who had seen tides turn and still stood by the company.

The plant had been ravaged, stripped of all its glory and made redundant. But the passion and integrity of its people still stood strong. In the glow of this commitment the business was not only resurrected but turned into a state-of-the-art plant, outperforming itself every year.