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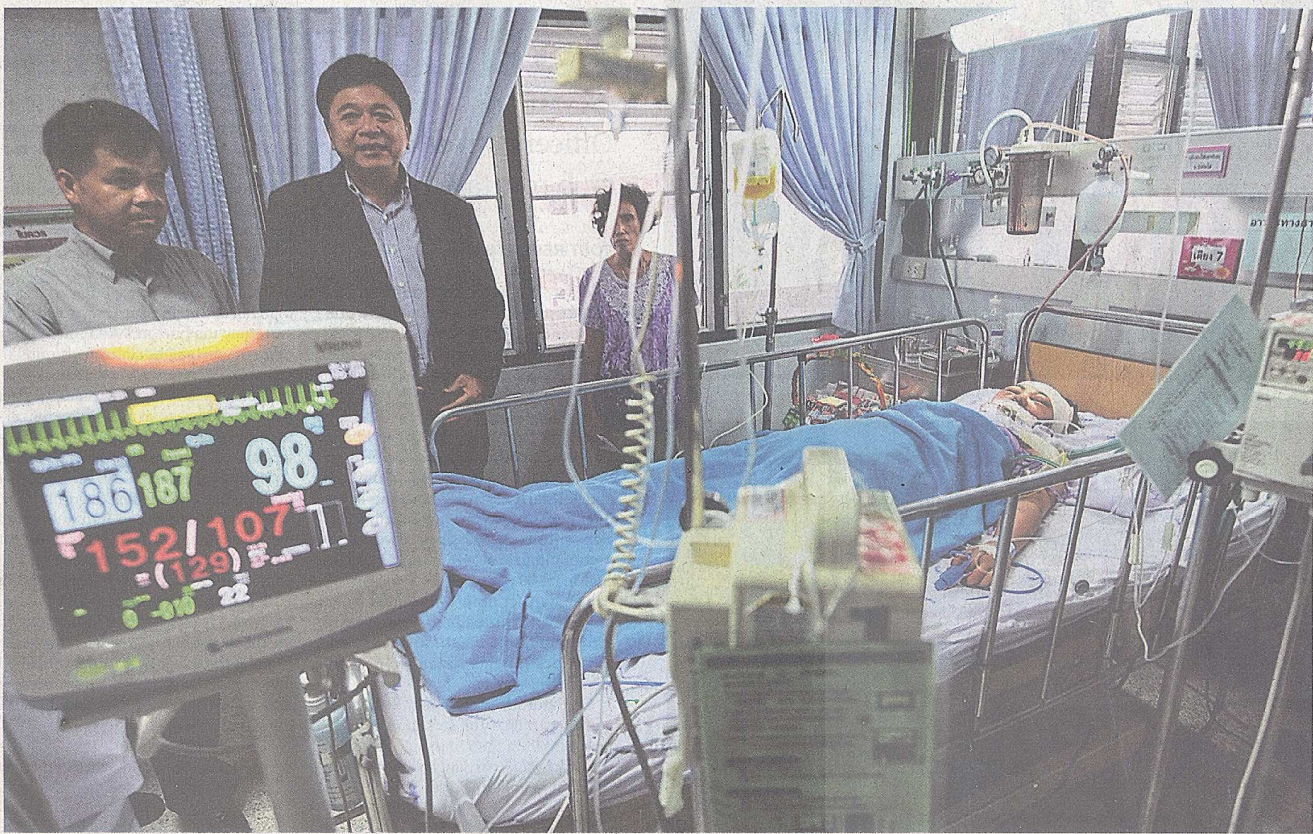
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TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 4, 2014 + 30 BAHT



## Student struggles

Suthida Tangjai, 20, a second-year student at Princess of Naradhiwas University (PNU), the latest victim of southern violence, is treated in a local hospital's intensive care unit. Ms Suthida was shot in the back of the head while riding a motorcycle home in Muang district of Narathiwat on Sunday. Doctors said her condition was critical. PNU rector Jongrak Plasai visited Ms Suthida and issued a plea to gunmen not to target innocent people, particularly students and educators. WEADAO HARAI

# Army targets 2,700 rifles for villagers

## Deadly attacks spur volunteers strategy

### POST REPORTERS

The army is preparing to arm new defence volunteers with 2,700 rifles to strengthen security operations in the far South, which has been recently bombarded by a new string of deadly attacks.

Under the plan, formed up yesterday in a meeting chaired by Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan, the army will acquire the weapons for the Interior Ministry to distribute to the defence volunteers, said Col Banphot Poolpian, spokesman of the Internal Security Operations Command (Isoc).

The move to add teeth to the defence volunteers — squads of local residents who volunteer for security details — came as two more people were killed and three others, including a *kamnan* in Pattani, were injured in another attack yesterday evening.

The arms purchase was among several issues raised at yesterday's meeting of members of a new committee responsible for implementing security policies in the southernmost provinces.

The committee also approved 7.7 billion baht to finance efforts to solve the southern unrest during next year's first quarter, with plans to boost the region's economy a top priority, Gen Prawit said.

But he said military approaches will remain crucial, and the help from defence volunteers is a major part of them. The Territorial Defence Volunteers Administration Bureau is overseen by the Interior Ministry.

The bureau recruits villagers for security missions on a voluntary basis. Their role is

to support the military and police officers. The recent spate of shootings, bombings and arson attacks in Pattani, Songkhla and Narathiwat between Friday and yesterday have prompted a more urgent response from Gen Prawit and other senior security officers.

Commenting on the weekend attacks, Gen Prawit said Isoc has been looking into the spike in violence.

Army chief and Isoc deputy director Udomdej Sitabutr has ordered "more intensive joint operations involving soldiers, police and village defence volunteers," Gen Prawit said.

Gen Udomdej held an emergency teleconference with officers of Isoc Region 4, which oversees the southern provinces, after the militant attacks, urging them to adopt tighter security measures.

Among them are extra vigilance at checkpoints both in and outside cities at night, greater care for victims of violence and an intensive hunt for insurgents.

Security forces have been searching for several men who fired at a group of villagers in Ban Nong Sarai Moo 8 in Songkhla's Tepha district on Saturday night.

Three men were killed and seven people, including a girl, were wounded in the attack, which occurred one day after deadly bomb blasts at four karaoke restaurants in Pattani's Muang district and arson attacks on five cellular signal towers in Narathiwat.

According to an intelligence official, investigators believe insurgents behind the attack in Tepha work for three suspected militant leaders — Rutsalan Baima, Chamroen Umasa and Seri Waemamu, all of whom are wanted on arrest warrants.

The three are believed to be active in Songkhla's Tepha district and Pattani's Khok Pho district.

In the Tepha case, it was believed there

were as many as six people involved in the shooting. Two of them kept a lookout for security officers, while the other four fired M16 assault rifles into the crowd, the official said.

Investigators who examined spent bullet shells at the scene linked some to a previous deadly attack in which a militant killed three villagers in Ban Bang Khao in Pattani's Nong Chick district in 2011, the official added.

Asked whether this string of violent incidents would affect peace talks with the Barisan Revolusi Nasional, which have been on hold since late last year, Gen Prawit said the government still wants to go ahead with plans to resume the dialogue.

Yesterday evening, a drive-by attack took place when a gunman in a pickup truck opened fire at five people travelling in another vehicle on the Pattani-Narathiwat road in Pattani, police said. Two victims who were yet to be identified were killed and three others, including Waedao Chetae, kamnan of Khlong Maning in Pattani's Muang district, were injured.

And on Sunday, gunmen killed one woman and injured four other people, including a border patrol officer and a university student, in two separate attacks in Narathiwat.

Suthida Tangjai, 20, of the Princess of Naradhiwas University, was seriously wounded in a drive-by attack in Muang district while Somporn Pothipoch, 40, was gunned down, police said.

Yesterday was also the first day back at school in southernmost provinces since six schools in Pattani's Thung Yang Daeng and Mayo districts which were set on fire in early October.

Amid tight security, students returned to class in tents erected as temporary classrooms.

## POLITICS

# Prayut warns PDRC, reds against unrest

PATSARA JIKKHAM  
WASSANA NANUAM

Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha has called on political groups to refrain from engaging in any agitation and vowed to take tough legal measures if they ignored his warning.

His remark was made yesterday after the People's Democratic Reform Committee (PDRC) and the United Front for Democracy against Dictatorship (UDD) locked horns over an impeachment request against former Senate speaker Nikhom Wairatpanich and ex-House speaker Somsak Kiatsuranon.

The PDRC reportedly threatened to pressure the National Legislative Assembly (NLA) into voting to accept the impeachment petition for consideration, prompting the red-shirt UDD to threaten a counter-move.

Gen Prayut said it would be better if these political groups put on hold any political activity during his government. They should wait until a new election has ushered in a new government, he said.

The prime minister said security authorities are keeping a close watch on the situation and will roll out measures to make sure there is not another round of political conflict.

"If their actions are deemed trouble-making, legal measures will be enforced," he said.

"It is not right to mobilise people to join protests. Don't make threats or counter threats. So far, the NCPO and the government have been using their powers to solve problems. Don't pressure us into using draconian laws," he said.

Commenting on the impeachment bid

against the politicians, Gen Prayut said it is up to the NLA, not the government.

Gen Prayut urged the media to avoid reporting the movements of deposed prime minister Thaksin Shinawatra if they threatened to create or deepen the existing conflict.

A number of newspapers and TV stations have been reporting Thaksin's movements, such as his recent visit to Japan and China with his sister, ousted prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra.

Defence Minister Prawit Wongsuwan yesterday warned politicians not to create further rifts and end up destabilising the country.

He said the government is working hard to solve the country's problems and its efforts should not be undermined.

"The government is trying to ensure justice and fairness. The prime minister is doing all he can," he said. He expressed confidence that the public is giving the government its full support; however, he refused to discuss the possibility of lifting martial law.

Meanwhile, PDRC member Thaworn Senneam said yesterday the group was not making threats or holding any rally against the NLA, it was just demanding that the NLA do its job.

He said Mr Nikhom and Mr Somsak were accused of abuse of power — a charge which could lead to their impeachment and a ban from politics.

If the NLA, which functions as the Senate, refuses to hear the impeachment case, it would not be doing its job, Mr Thaworn said.

'People's' reform council: Page 3

# Tony Blair calls for election next year

PATSARA JIKKHAM

Former British prime minister Tony Blair wants to see an election take place in Thailand next year, according to government spokesman Yongyuth Mayalarp.

Dr Yongyuth spoke to the press after Mr Blair and Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha held a one-hour meeting at Government House yesterday.

Dr Yongyuth said Mr Blair, who is on a private trip to Thailand, paid a courtesy call on Gen Prayut.

Mr Blair took the meeting as an opportunity to tell Gen Prayut that he wants to see Thailand move forward and the best way to do this would be to hold a general election sometime next year.

Gen Prayut used the occasion to brief Mr Blair on the current political situation in Thailand.

He told Mr Blair that the government is embarking on reforms towards restoring democracy, improving the economy and healing divisions in the country.

Problems in these areas have existed in Thailand for more than a decade, according to Dr Yongyuth.

Mr Blair told the prime minister that he understands the problems facing Thailand, said Dr Yongyuth.

The former British prime minister also said that he understands Thai politics divides the country and that it differs from other nations.

Mr Blair informed Gen Prayut that



Former British prime minister Tony Blair shakes hands with Prime Minister Prayut Chan-o-cha during a courtesy call at Government House yesterday. CHANAT KATANYU

it would be advisable for the Thai government to explain to foreign countries as quickly as possible what the political and economic situation is like in Thailand at present.

The government spokesman said Mr Blair wants the prime minister to oversee the basic needs of the people, such as health and education, to give them a better way of life.

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# Pakistan toll from border blast hits 60

## Frontier closed after another bomb found

**ISLAMABAD:** The death toll from an overnight suicide bombing on the Pakistani side of the border with India climbed to 60 yesterday as authorities from both sides temporarily closed the frontier to travellers and trade, officials said.

Twelve more people died of their injuries, raising the toll from 48 on Sunday after the Taliban bomber hit a crowd gathered to watch a flag-lowering ceremony at the Wagah border crossing near the eastern Pakistani city of Lahore, said Kurram Shahzad, a doctor at Khurki Hospital.

More than 130 people were injured in the worst attack to hit the country in several months, said Tahir Javed Khan, head of the paramilitary Rangers force that mans the border.

The attack occurred as security was on high alert across Pakistan for the Shia Muslim month of mourning, Sukhera said. Shias marking the month are often the target of sectarian attacks.

Jamaat ul-Ahrar, an al-Qaeda-linked splinter group of the Pakistani Taliban, claimed responsibility for the attack, but did not mention who the target was.

"We will continue targeting infidels," the group's spokesman Ehsanullah Ehsan said in a statement to the media.

The attack is the deadliest since the Pakistani military launched an offensive against Islamist militants in their strongholds in the country's tribal region near the Afghan border.

More than 1,100 militants have so far been killed in over four months of campaigning that started in mid-June, according to the military.

India stepped up security on its side of the border after the bombing while Prime Minister Narendra Modi condemned the attack on Twitter as "a dastardly act of terrorism".

Rangers head Mr Khan said the border crossing had been sealed temporarily after police found another bomb in the parking area yesterday. Dozens of passengers on buses and nearly 300 lorries loaded with goods cross the border daily.

"The crossing will remain closed till we complete a combing



Relatives gather beside the bodies of victims killed in Sunday's suicide bomb attack at the Wagah border crossing, before funeral prayers in Lahore yesterday. At least 60 people died in the attack on the Pakistani-Indian border. REUTERS

operation in the vicinity," said police official Mushtaq Sukhera.

As well as the border closure, a flag-lowering ceremony that attracts thousands of people on both sides every sunset was stopped, Mr Sukhera said. It is the first time the colourful parade has been called off since the two countries went to war in 1971.

India's Home Ministry said India's Border Security Force agreed to a Pakistani

request to suspend the flag-lowering ceremony to allow mourning. The ceremony resumed yesterday.

Every day, thousands flock to watch the show where border security officials kick their feet high and grimace in mock aggression in a peacock-like display of patriotism.

The crowds pack out bleachers set up on either side of the each country's border gates, which are adorned with large, facing

portraits of their founding fathers, Mahatma Gandhi on the Indian side and Mohammed Ali Jinnah on the Pakistani side.

"It is the first time we have suspended the ceremony after the war. The ceremony was not suspended even during Kargil," India's Home Ministry spokesman KS Dhatwalia said yesterday, referring to a 1999 conflict between the neighbours triggered by a Pakistan army incursion. AGENCIES

## INDIA

## Kids to spy on outdoor defecators

**NEW DELHI:** Children armed with whistles will soon be patrolling villages in central India to try to shame those defecating in the open, a report said.

Madhya Pradesh state government is expected soon to launch the unusual sanitation initiative, in which school-children will blow whistles loudly when they spot someone squatting in the open instead of using a toilet.

Open defecation has long been a major health and sanitation problem in India.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said recently that every household should have a toilet within four years.

But a Madhya Pradesh official said many preferred to relieve themselves in the open rather than use a toilet, requiring unusual efforts to halt the practice which spreads disease.

"It is not just enough to make pucca [proper] toilets to stop the practice of open defecation in rural areas," Sanjay Dubey, a divisional commissioner for Indore region, told the Press Trust of India.

"There is also a need to launch an effective social drive in such areas to check it."

Children in the Indore region will be educated about the need to keep their surroundings clean, before being handed the whistles and asked to roam their neighbourhoods, he told the news agency.

"This [blowing a whistle] would make that person feel shameful and would help to check this practice."

Mr Modi has stressed the need to clean up India, which has a reputation for poor public hygiene and rudimentary sanitation.

A recent report by the UN children's fund Unicef estimates almost 594 million — or nearly 50% of India's population — defecate in the open.

In addition to those who choose to do so, some 300 million women and girls are forced to squat in the open at night, exposing themselves to harassment and assault.

The issue was highlighted in May when two girls, aged 12 and 14, were attacked as they went into the fields to relieve themselves.

Police are investigating if they were gang-raped before being lynched. AFP



Bangladeshi Jamaat-e-Islami leader, Mohammad Kamaruzzaman, right, sits next to a police officer as he leaves court in Dhaka in May last year. AFP

## BANGLADESH

## Top Islamist loses death appeal

**DHAKA:** Bangladesh's highest court yesterday upheld the death sentence against a leader of the largest Islamist party after he was convicted of committing war crimes, including mass murder, during the 1971 independence conflict.

The Supreme Court's rejection of Mohammad Kamaruzzaman's appeal means that he will now be hanged within months, unless the case is reviewed again or he is granted clemency by the country's president.

The 62-year-old assistant secretary-general of the Jamaat-e-Islami will be the second senior Islamist to hang for crimes committed during the war which saw the former East Pakistan secede from Islamabad.

War crimes verdicts and sentences have

triggered deadly protests across Bangladesh in the past, although there were no immediate reports of violence after yesterday's announcement.

Jamaat called a nationwide 48-hour strike from tomorrow morning to protest the court's decision.

It came after another senior Jamaat official, Abdul Quader Molla, was executed in December after being convicted on similar charges.

In the past week, Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal — a domestic court — has sentenced Jamaat's supreme leader Motiur Rahman Nizami and key financier Mir Quasem Ali to death.

Rights groups have said the trials have

fallen short of international standards and lack any foreign oversight.

Independent researchers estimate that between 300,000 and 500,000 people died in the 1971 war.

Kamaruzzaman was found guilty in May last year of mass murder, torture and abductions. The prosecution was centred around a mass killing at the border town of Sohagpur, which has become known as the 'Village of Widows', after at least 120 unarmed farmers were lined up and slaughtered.

"My mother did not live to see this day. I am sure this verdict would have lessened her pain," said Jalal Uddin, whose father, a brother and five other relatives were shot dead in the carnage. AFP

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