

Yingluck puts Chalerm in charge of South
The Nation
July 31, 2012

Despite her recent apathy toward the surge in terror attacks in the deep South, Prime Minister Yingluck Shinawatra yesterday instructed Deputy Prime Minister Chalerm Yoobamrung to handle the problem by closely coordinating with the National Security Council.

The Cabinet also approved a budget of Bt391 million yesterday to cover allowances, supplies and logistical support for military personnel based in the region. It also declared three public holidays for people living in the South, namely Eid ulFitr for Thai Muslims, Tet for Chinese Thais and Christmas for Thai Christians. The first Eid ulFitr holiday will fall on August 21, once the fasting period of Ramadan comes to an end. The Cabinet has also approved in principle an improvement in the compensation payments for people suffering from the violence, future budget allocations for recruiting civil defence volunteers and citizen patrols for the period of 2012-2015. In addition, funds have been earmarked for the renovation of Songkhla's main mosque as well as the dredging of parts of the Pattani River. The work will begin next year. Suranand Vejjajiva, the PM's secretary general, has also been told to help Chalerm come up with solutions for the situation in the South. Yingluck is also pushing through the plan to dub television shows in the indigenous Yawi language, which will initially be aired for three hours daily on the Armyrun Channel 5 and staterun Channel 11. PM's Office Minister Nivatthamrong Boonsongpaisal said it would take up to a year to setup a new digital television service in Yawi, similar to the technique used by the BBC in Britain. He said the new system would air around 50 channels, which can be viewed via special receivers. Some Armyrun channels are already being broadcast in Yawi language through satellite. Separately, an explosion at a market in Narathiwat's Ba Cho district wounded a marine on patrol, while insurgents shot dead an assistant village head in Pattani's Thung Yang Daeng district and stole his service pistol. Defence Minister Sukampol Suwannathat said yesterday that people living in the deep South will suffer some inconvenience because there will be changes in security measures and some new policies will be put into effect. However, he did not elaborate. Meanwhile, opposition leader Abhisit Vejjajiva called on Yingluck to personally take charge of dealing with the increased violence in the South, citing a Pheu Thai policy focused on distancing her from politicised matters - a policy that was mentioned by House Speaker Somsak Kiatsuranont at a recent party meeting. Abhisit said Yingluck had direct responsibility of handling the situation, and could be held liable if she stays inactive. In addition, government psychiatrist Dr Phetdao Tohmehna said the morale of people living in the deep South had taken a nosedive, adding that security officials should not take violent measures to stop the

insurgency. Six companies of Army paramilitary rangers have been mobilised to hunt key insurgent Kaman Chaichana, who is thought to be behind last week's car bomb attack that killed five policemen. More checkpoints have been set up and more patrols are being conducted while intelligence gathering is underway.

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