

Asia

North East Asia

➔ **China/Japan Amid ongoing Japan-China tensions, Tokyo deepened international security ties.** Chinese carrier group 3 April reportedly spotted passing international waterway between Japan's Okinawa and Miyako islands. In phone conversation with Chinese FM Wang Yi, Japanese FM Toshimitsu Motegi 6 April expressed "strong concern" over recent Chinese incursions into Japan's territorial waters while Chinese counterpart urged Japan to steer clear of "internal issues." In reassertion of its claim over disputed Diaoyu/Senkaku Islands, China's Coast Guard 25 April publicised its patrol within territorial waters of islands and China's ministry of natural resources next day published topographic maps of islands. Japanese PM Suga 26 April voiced "grave concerns" over China's aggressive actions in surrounding waters during call with Indian PM Modi. Tokyo next day published annual diplomatic assessment, expressing strong concern over Chinese military activities; Beijing same day protested. In sign of deepening ties with Germany, Japan 13 April held high-level security dialogue with Berlin, proposed holding joint naval drills when German frigate visits Asia later in year. Japanese Ground Self-Defence Force 15 April announced nationwide exercises for first time in 30 years to boost deterrence and Defence Minister Nobuo Kishi 23 April confirmed military exercises with U.S. and France 11-17 May in Japan's south west. Suga and U.S. President Biden 17 April met in Washington D.C., committed alliance to face up to challenges posed by China and oppose coercion in South and East China Seas; Chinese MFA same day rejected statement; Suga 20 April told Parliament statement "does not presuppose military involvement at all".

➔ **Korean Peninsula Amid concerns over North Korea (DPRK) economic situation, Japan and U.S. committed to working toward denuclearisation of peninsula.** As concerns persisted over suspected economic and COVID-19 crises, DPRK leader Kim Jong-un 6 April acknowledged country was facing "worst-ever situation" during meeting of Workers' Party's secretaries in capital Pyongyang and urged members to carry out new five-year economic plan as decided at party congress in Jan. Kim Jong-un 9 April called on country to prepare for another "arduous march" — phrase commonly used to describe country's struggle with famine in 1990s. Meanwhile, U.S., South Korea and Japan 2 April met in U.S. for high-level security summit to discuss cooperation on addressing North Korea's nuclear and ballistic missile programs; in joint statement reaffirmed "concerted trilateral cooperation towards denuclearization", and agreed on need for full implementation of UN Security Council resolutions on North Korea. South Korean exit polls in election for key mayoral posts — including in capital Seoul and in port of Busan — 7 April showed landslide victory for main opposition People Power Party, as Progressive Democratic party of President Moon suffered crushing defeat amid string of political scandals. After official poll results, South Korean PM Chung 16 April resigned and President Moon same day reshuffled cabinet and appointed new PM. South Korean court 21 April upheld Japan's state immunity and dismissed lawsuit submitted by group of South Korean "comfort women"

forced to work as sex slaves during Japanese occupation, contradicting Jan ruling in separate case that ordered Tokyo to compensate 12 victims.

➡ **Taiwan Strait Amid intense Chinese military activities, U.S. bolstered its diplomatic support for Taipei.** Ten Chinese military aircrafts 5 April conducted simultaneous military exercises west and east of Taiwan; Chinese navy same day said such drills would become regular. Taiwanese defence ministry claimed series of Chinese military aircraft entered Air Defence Identification Zone throughout month; it noted that China 12 April dispatched 25 military aircraft in largest ever incursion since Sept 2020. Other reported Chinese incursions included two J-16 fighter jets, one KJ-500 airborne plane and one Y-8 reconnaissance plane 6 April; 15 Chinese aircraft, including 12 fighters 7 April; two Y-8 anti-submarine warfare planes 8 April; four J-16 fighter jets and one Y-8 anti-submarine warfare plane 13 April; two J-16 fighter jets 15 April; and five J-16 fighter jets, two Y-8 anti-submarine warfare planes 20 April. Taiwanese FM Joseph Wu 7 April said island will defend itself “to the very last day” if attacked; China 14 April reiterated it prefers peaceful reunification and all options including military force remain. Meanwhile, U.S. continued military activity in region. John S. McCain guided missile destroyer 7 April conducted “routine” transit of Taiwan Strait; China next day protested passage. On diplomatic front, U.S. 9 April issued new guidelines to enable U.S. officials to meet freely with Taiwanese officials; in response, China 13 April told U.S. to stop “playing with fire”. U.S. Sec State Antony Blinken 11 April concerned at China’s “increasingly aggressive actions” against Taiwan, warned it would be “serious mistake” to try to change status quo by force; U.S. President Biden 13 April sent unofficial delegation of three former senior officials to Taiwan in “personal signal” of support. Media reports 20 April indicated that U.S. administration set to approve its first weapons sales to Taiwan. Australian defence minister 25 April said conflict over Taiwan cannot be discounted.

South Asia

🔴* **Afghanistan Taliban attacks continued at high intensity amid signs group could be gearing up for May offensive, while U.S. announced full troop withdrawal by 11 Sept 2021.** Taliban continued daily violent attacks in several key areas suggesting preparation for large-scale offensive in coming months, likely after 1 May – date on which U.S. forces are supposed to withdraw according to Feb 2020 deal. In Kunduz province (north), significant Taliban attacks 6, 11, 14 April killed ten police officers on outskirts of Kunduz city, and attacks in border town of Imam Saheb district 6 and 15 April killed at least seven security personnel and as many as eight Taliban militants. In Sar-e Pul province (north), Taliban attacks 9 and 11 April killed five security forces, marking unusually high level of violence in province. In Zabul province (south), Taliban attack involving car bomb 15 April killed ten soldiers on military base in Shahjoy district. In Balkh province (north), Taliban attacks 13 and 22 April killed 18 soldiers and eight more were taken as prisoners. In Qarabagh district in Ghazni province (centre), fighting between Afghan security forces and Taliban displaced around 650 families. In Logar province (east), car bomb 30 April killed at least 27 people and injured over 100. Targeted killings continued across country, although attacks decreased in capital Kabul throughout month; notably, gunmen 18 April killed

Afghan Air Force member and 21 April killed university security guard in Mazar-e Sharif city (north). In Kandahar province (south), insider attack at security outpost 11 April killed eight police officers. In major announcement, U.S. President Biden 14 April said U.S. will start evacuating remaining troops from 1 May and intends to fully withdraw from Afghanistan by 11 Sept 2021. Responding to leaked reports, Taliban 13 April rejected U.S.-proposed summit on Afghan Peace Process in Turkey on 24 April on basis that they refuse to attend any Afghan peace summit until all foreign forces are pulled out of Afghanistan; Ankara later confirmed summit postponed. U.S. continued to support diplomatic efforts and rally regional and international consensus to pressure Taliban to remain engaged in talks.

➡ **Bangladesh Tensions continued to run high following anti-India unrest in March, as authorities arrested dozens of protest leaders and activists; election-related violence persisted.** Following last month's deadly protests by Islamist groups and student activists against Indian PM Modi's visit, PM Hasina 4 April said Hefazat-e-Islam is disgrace to name of Islam and blamed opposition Bangladesh Nationalist Party and Jamaat-e-Islami for inciting violence. Further clashes between police and Hefazat-e-Islam supporters 2 April left at least 20 injured, including several police officers. Since last month's protests, authorities arrested over 100 Hefazat leaders and activists, including Joint Secretary General Mamunul Haque on 17 April in capital Dhaka. Hefazat-e-Islam Acting Amir Januyed Babunagri 2 and 19 April asked govt to stop harassing and arresting Hefazat leaders. Violent clashes between Awami League factions over upcoming municipality elections persisted: clashes 1, 8 and 14 April left two killed and at least 24 injured in Pabna, Kustia and Madaripur districts. Meanwhile, govt continued to use Digital Security Act to stifle critics. Teenager 1 April faced court after govt supporter filed charges against him for making video mocking PM Hasina and Modi; ruling Awami League leader 18 April lodged case against civil society activist. Counter-terrorism police in Dhaka 10 April arrested Rezaul Haque, acting amir of banned Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen. International concerns over relocation of Rohingya refugees continued. Fire at market near Kutupalong refugee camp in Cox's Bazar district 2 April killed three and destroyed at least 20 shops. Diplomats from EU, U.S., UK and others 3 April visited Bhasan Char, low-lying flood-prone island in Bay of Bengal, to assess facilities for Rohingya refugees. Following March visit to inspect safety, UN 16 April urged govt to move refugees in "gradual and phased manner". FM Momen same day told reporters he would demand 10% of funds raised by humanitarian agencies for Rohingyas in Bangladesh if they refused to provide services to refugees in Bhasan Char.

↓ **India (non-Kashmir) Maoists launched deadliest ambush in four years, deadly COVID-19 wave engulfed country, and govt and China held new round of talks on disputed border.** In deadliest and most daring attack on security forces since 2017, hundreds of Maoist insurgents 3 April ambushed security patrol in Chhattisgarh state (centre), killing 22 security forces personnel and injuring over 30 others; attack prompted govt to step up counter-insurgency operations in region. Maoist violence also continued elsewhere, including in Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Jharkhand states. Notably, in Maharashtra state (west), Maoists 3 April killed local official in Gadchiroli district. In Chhattisgarh state, Maoists 16 April attacked road workers in Sukma district, killing employee. In Odisha state (east), security forces 23 April killed Maoist in

Kalahandi district. In Jharkhand state (east), Maoists 23 April shot dead civilian in West Singhbhum district. Meanwhile, COVID-19 infections reached alarming proportions as health ministry 24 April reported over 345,000 cases in previous 24 hours, with total of at least 200,000 deaths so far. In many cities, including capital New Delhi, govt and private hospitals faced shortage of oxygen, and cremation grounds were extended to accommodate increase in deaths; Modi govt throughout month faced criticism for having allowed – despite COVID-19 concerns – recent political rallies and weeks-long Hindu festival Kumbh Mela which attracts millions of pilgrims from across country. China-India border talks stalled over sequencing of border troop withdrawal. Indian and Chinese military officials 9 April met in eastern Ladakh province for 11th round of talks on disengagement along Line of Actual Control (LAC), two months after 10th round; MFA previous day stated India “would like to see disengagement in the remaining areas”. Talks made no progress as Chinese side reportedly proposed to first “deescalate” troops, meaning to pull back troops who sit behind the front lines, while Indian side proposed to “disengage” front-line troops from additional areas from border. Referring to border crisis, Indian Ambassador to China Vikram Misri 15 April said it was “inadvisable” to “sweep this situation under the carpet and characterise it as just a minor issue and a matter of perspective”.

➡ **Kashmir** **Ceasefire continued to hold along Line of Control (LoC, dividing Pakistan and Indian-administered Kashmir), while insecurity persisted inside Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).** India-Pakistan relations seemed to ease as details on backchannel talks emerged and both sides respected LoC ceasefire. After Islamabad 31 March announced resumption of trade ties with India, suspended since Aug 2019, Pakistan’s PM Khan 1 April backtracked and 4 April said there would be “no normalisation of relations with India until it reversed its illegal actions” in J&K. Media report 23 April indicated Pakistan expects India to take first step in creating “enabling environment” for dialogue, for example by releasing political prisoners, easing movement, or reducing military presence. United Arab Emirates (UAE) 14 April confirmed for first time their mediation role in Feb agreement in which India and Pakistan pledged to respect ceasefire along LoC. U.S. National Intelligence Council 7 April warned India and Pakistan may stumble into large-scale war neither side wants, “especially following a terrorist attack that the Indian government judges to be significant”. Inside J&K, attack on ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader 1 April killed one police officer. Security forces next day killed three militants in Pulwama district, including two allegedly involved in BJP leader attack. Anti-India protests erupted in response to operation, injuring at least four civilians. Militants 9 April shot dead soldier in Anantnag district. Security forces 11 April killed five militants in Anantnag and Shopian districts. Militants same day killed civilian in Budgam district. Police 13 April arrested two alleged militants and three alleged militant sympathisers in Kupwara district; authorities next day arrested alleged militant and three alleged sympathisers in Kulgram district, and alleged militant in Budgam district 24 April. Police 15-16 April arrested and fired female special police officer for “glorifying terrorism” and “obstructing” security operation in Kulgram district, and arrested teacher in Bandipora district for allegedly supporting Lashkar-e-Tayyaba group. J&K police chief Vijay Kumar early April advised journalists to avoid live media coverage of security operations against militants or protests; J&K’s press club

responded that “any such attack on press freedom and journalism is highly distressful”.

➡ **Nepal Ruling party and opposition continued competing efforts to secure majority in parliament; meanwhile, govt faced criticism for handling of COVID-19 pandemic.** Prospects of potential vote of no-confidence against PM KP Oli continued to linger with opposition Nepali Congress — which has 61 seats in 275-member House of Representatives — 2 April announcing decision to seek Oli’s resignation and form new govt under its own leadership; Nepali Congress, however, had yet to follow through on its decision by late April, leading to claims from observers that some of its leaders would prefer holding early elections instead. Ruling Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist or UML), accelerated its outreach to opposition Janata Samajbadi Party (JSP) — the fourth largest party holding 32 seats in parliament — including by offering to release detained JSP cadres in exchange for party joining the UML govt; potential UML-JSP coalition govt would likely render any no-confidence motion against Oli unsuccessful. Capital Kathmandu 29 April entered another strict lockdown following sharp uptick in COVID-19 infections, which increased 1,000% 15-30 April, leading to widespread criticism of govt for lack of precautionary measures and preparedness despite earlier appeals from ministry of health and population officials.

↓ **Pakistan Deadly unrest erupted after political-religious group launched nationwide protests against ruling party; militant attacks continued at high intensity.** Ruling Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) govt faced its most serious security crisis during its two-and-a-half years in power amid violent protests throughout country. Tehreek-e-Labaik (TLP) chief Saad Hussain Rizvi 11 April announced countrywide protests planned for 20 April in protest at govt’s failure to abide by Nov 2020 agreement to deport French ambassador over cartoons deemed blasphemous; authorities next day arrested Rizvi in Lahore city. Arrest triggered violent protests, killing four police officers and injuring at least 100; TLP claimed three supporters killed. Govt 15 April banned TLP under anti-terrorism law. Protests ended after govt 20 April accepted most TLP demands, including discussing French ambassador’s expulsion in Parliament, and releasing detained leaders and activists. PTI parliamentarian 20 April introduced resolution in Parliament. Yet, opposition parties’ rejection of the proposal to form special parliamentary committee to discuss issue risks renewed TLP protests. Unity among Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), 11-party opposition alliance including Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) and Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), further fragmented after five PDM parties 3 April opted to form separate opposition block in senate. PTI candidate 11 April lost by large margin to PML-N’s candidate for seat in Punjab’s Sialkot district. Militant attacks and security operations continued. Notably, Pakistani Taliban suicide car attack on hotel in Balochistan’s capital Quetta 21 April killed five and wounded scores; attack possibly targeted visiting Chinese ambassador staying in hotel. Bomb blast 28 April killed police officer in Balochistan’s Qilla Abdullah district; earlier, bomb blast at football tournament 13 April injured at least 14 civilians in Hub district. Security forces 3 and 4 April claimed to have killed two Pakistani Taliban militants in North Waziristan, and Pakistani Taliban militant 13 April in South Waziristan district. Police 11 April claimed killing previous night high-profile Pakistani Taliban militant

in Rawalpindi city, Punjab province. Internationally, Russian FM Sergei Lavrov 7-8 April met with PM Khan, Army Chief Javed Bajwa and FM Mahmood Qureshi; agreed on deepening defence and counter-terrorism cooperation.

➡ **Sri Lanka Country commemorated deadly 2019 Easter attacks as authorities furthered “anti-extremism” agenda; meanwhile, govt bill on Colombo mega project sparked legal challenges.** As country marked second anniversary of Islamic State (ISIS)-inspired Easter suicide bombings that killed over 260 people, govt continued to pursue “anti-extremism” agenda. Activists 8 April filed lawsuit challenging constitutionality of new “deradicalisation” regulations introduced in March that allow extended detention without charge. Govt 10 April formally proscribed 11 “extremist” groups, including range of local Salafi groups and Muslim charity funded by two suicide bombers of April 2019 attacks. Attorney general 20 April indicted 16 Muslim men detained without trial for almost two years for their alleged involvement in Dec 2018 vandalism of Buddhist statues in town of Mawanella. Police 24 April arrested Rishad Bathiudeen, Muslim legislator and leader of the All Ceylon Makkal Party, in connection with 2019 bombings. Cabinet 28 April approved ban on burqas and other religious face-coverings on “national security” grounds. Catholic Cardinal and Archbishop of Colombo Malcolm Ranjith 18 April claimed Easter attacks were “politically driven”, and the victims “attacked not by religious extremism, but by a group that exploited it [...] to strengthen their political power.” Opposition MPs 20 April alleged govt was covering up evidence indicating contacts between military intelligence officials loyal to President Rajapaksa, then in opposition, and bombers before Easter attacks. PM Rajapaksa 9 April introduced legally unprecedented resolution in Parliament to implement recommendations of presidential commission on “political victimisation” to dismiss ongoing murder, corruption and other criminal cases against Rajapaksa family members and loyalists and to prosecute investigators, prosecutors and witnesses. Meanwhile, govt 8 April introduced bill granting unprecedented legal autonomy to Colombo port city, its multi-billion-dollar flagship economic project financed by Chinese company; more than dozen organisations and opposition parties challenged bill in lawsuits filed at Supreme Court. Former minister and ruling party MP Wijeyadasa Rajapakshe told court on 20 April bill would create “a haven for money laundering” and 15 April criticised project for establishing “Chinese colony”; Rajapakshe alleged President Rajapaksa next day threatened him for his criticisms.

South East Asia

➡ **Indonesia Amid series of deadly attacks in Papua’s Puncak district, govt designated Papuan separatist armed groups as “terrorists”.** Armed assailants 8-9 April killed two teachers and set on fire three schools in Juluokma village in Beoga sub-district, Puncak district; authorities said attackers belonged to separatist armed group West Papua Liberation Army. Authorities 14-15 April evacuated 35 civilians, including teachers and health workers, from Beoga to Timika city, Mimika district, while security forces launched Operation Nemangkawi to find those responsible for violence. In subsequent days, suspected armed separatists 25-26 April killed regional intelligence officer Brigadier General I Gusti Putu Danny Karya Nugraha during shoot-out in Puncak

district; President Joko Widodo 26 April declared “there is no place for armed groups in Papua” and ordered arrests of all separatists. Govt 29 April announced categorisation of “organisations and people in Papua who commit mass violence” as “terrorists”; NGO Amnesty International next day expressed concern that terrorist designation “only increases the potential for even further human rights violations.”

➡ **Myanmar Security forces continued brutal crackdown on anti-coup protesters and civilians, escalating their counter-insurgency practices, as resistance groups launched sporadic deadly attacks on military.** Pro-democracy protesters demanding end to military rule continued rallies nationwide, notably in Yangon, Mandalay and many other towns and cities; police and military responded with deadly force, including by opening fire on protesters; death toll of security crackdown since 1 Feb surpassed 750 people. In major attack, military 9 April assaulted multiple protest camps in Bago town, using for first time mortars and rifle grenades, killing at least 80 civilians. Resistance groups in several parts of country targeted military convoys, as well as ward and village-tract general administration offices. Notably, resistance forces 9 April ambushed military convoy in Tamu, Sagaing region, killing three soldiers; in Chin State, resistance fighters 27 April killed at least 16 soldiers in fighting in Mindat town. State media 9 April announced that military tribunal in North Okkalapa had sentenced to death 19 protesters who allegedly attacked military in March. Opponents of junta 16 April announced creation of National Unity Government. In northern Shan State, military 7-8 April met with leaders of armed groups United Wa State Army and Shan State Progress Party in effort to bolster ceasefires. In Kachin State, Kachin Independence Army (KIA) 8 April ambushed military convoy in rural part of Mogaung township; military same day fired artillery at Laiza town, headquarters of KIA and its civilian wing. Militants associated with Three Brotherhood Alliance (consisting of Arakan Army, Myanmar National Democratic Alliance Army and Ta’ang National Liberation Army) 10 April attacked police station outside of Lashio, killing at least 14 policemen, making it first attack since late March decision to re-evaluate unilateral ceasefire. Unidentified attackers 27 April fired rockets at military bases in country’s centre. International pressure continued. UK 1 April imposed sanctions on conglomerate Myanmar Economic Corporation; EU 19 April imposed sanctions on junta; U.S. 21 April added two state-owned enterprises to sanctions list. Junta chief Min Aung Hlaing 25 April attended summit of regional bloc ASEAN, agreeing five-point statement calling for cessation of violence and dialogue.

➡ **Philippines Low-level violence continued in south between militant groups and security forces.** In Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao in south, clashes between insurgents and security forces took place at relatively low levels throughout month. In Cotabato City, explosion 1 April injured two civilians while six Bangsamoro Islamic Freedom Fighters combatants 17 April surrendered to govt; in Marawi in Lanao del Sur province, security forces 12 April exchanged fire with leader of jihadist organisation Daulah Islamiyah; in town of Datu Salibo in Maguindanao province, joint police and military operation 14 April resulted in killing of leader of crime group; in Tipo-Tipo municipality on Basilan island, IED 12 April injured two persons; in Patikul town in Sulu province, clash 22 April killed three militants, including Egyptian foreign fighter. Smaller

cohorts of Islamic State (ISIS)-linked Abu Sayyaf Group 10 April surrendered to govt in Sulu province. Meanwhile, clashes between communist New People's Army and armed forces continued in Luzon in north, Visayas in centre and Mindanao in south, although at lower level of violence compared to March. At least 20 combatants and civilians killed throughout month. Internationally, the dispute between Manila and Beijing over Chinese military incursion at disputed Whitsun Reef continued (see South China Sea).

➡ **South China Sea Heated exchanges continued between Philippines and China over Chinese maritime presence at disputed reef in South China Sea (SCS).** Following late March diplomatic protest over continued presence of some 200 Chinese vessels at disputed Whitsun Reef, Filipino FM Teodoro Locsin 2 April met Chinese FM Wang Yi in Nanping city in China; Wang said China is willing to work with Philippines to fully abide by 2002 Declaration on Conduct of Parties. Filipino Secretary of Defence Delfin Lorenzana next day demanded that Chinese ships at Whitsun Reef "get out"; in response, Chinese embassy in Manila reiterated assertion that Chinese fishermen have traditionally fished at reef; Filipino MFA 5 April denounced Chinese embassy's attempt to promote "clearly false narrative of China's expansive and illegitimate claims". U.S. Sec State Blinken 8 April spoke with Filipino FM Locsin about Whitsun Reef and again affirmed Mutual Defence Treaty applied to SCS. U.S. and Philippine armed forces 12 April commenced annual two-week "Balikatan" joint military exercises. Philippines 12 April summoned Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian to convey Manila's dismay over "illegal lingering presence" of Chinese ships at Whitsun Reef, after which "both sides affirmed the use of peaceful settlement of disputes"; 14, 21 April filed further diplomatic protests concerning disputed reef. President Duterte 19 April said in public address that he would send navy ships to SCS to "stake a claim" to resources. EU 24 April issued statement noting presence of Chinese vessels at Whitsun Reef, opposed "unilateral actions that could undermine regional stability". Filipino coast guard 26 April deployed numerous vessels for training in SCS; in response, Beijing 28 April protested; Lorenzana same day said China has "no authority" to prevent drills. Meanwhile, U.S. military activity in region continued: aircraft carrier strike group USS Theodore Roosevelt 6-7 April conducted exercises with Malaysian navy in SCS; U.S. aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt then 9 April carried out exercises with USS Makin Island amphibious group; China's MFA 9 April called on U.S. to stop "inciting quarrels and sowing discord".

➡ **Thailand Pro-democracy activists held protests throughout month on smaller scale, while violence continued in deep south.** Pro-democracy protest movement continued activities throughout month in capital Bangkok and other cities, calling for release of jailed 22 protest leaders, amendment of lèse-majesté law and reform of monarchy; resurgent COVID-19 cases throughout month ensured turnout at protests remained in lower, double-digit figures. Leaderless rallies earlier in month descended into violent clashes between protesters and police. Two prominent protest leaders in detention remained on hunger strike; at least 83 people have been summoned by police on lèse-majesté charges since law was revived in Nov. Core leader of National United Front of Democracy Against Dictatorship Jatuporn Prompan 4 April launched group called "People United" at rally in Bangkok, seeking ouster of PM Prayuth Chan-ocha. Violence in deep south

continued. In Pattani province, clash between militants and police 6 April killed Muslim religious leader in Khok Pho district; six assailants 12 April seized two Muslim assistant village chiefs before setting fire to road-repair work site in Thung Yang Daeng district; two cell towers, CCTV camera, tires and security post 13-14 April were set alight in Yarang and Thepa districts. In Bacho district, Narathiwat province, marine outpost 13 April was targeted by pipe bomb. Militants 22 April threw IED at defence volunteer outpost in Yi-ngo district, Narathiwat; in ensuing gun battle, police killed one militant and arrested two others. In Sai Buri district, Pattani, motorcycle-borne gunmen opened fire on pickup truck, forcing it off the road and setting it alight, killing driver and two passengers.