

Turmoil in Thailand: The battle of Bangkok

Thailand's capital Bangkok continues to see ongoing fighting between the "Yellow shirts" (the government) and the "red shirts" (the opposition) (the United Front for Democracy (UDD)). The "civil war" intensified in the city's shopping district after renegade Thai general Khattiya Sawasdipol was shot whilst giving an interview as he backed the protesters. He later died in hospital. Troops later opened fire on the red shirt encampment using live bullets rather than rubber ones. Tear gas was also used to try to get the red camp to shift. They responded by setting alight rubber tyres that created black smoke to shield themselves. Thousands of tyres now line the area. The reds torched nearby buildings and used slingshots at troops. Fire crackers were also hurled. Trucks and other vehicles were burnt. Since March, when the dispute started, more than 60 people have been killed, another 1,600 wounded. This is in the land of smiles where tourists still go! Tourists though have been advised to stay away from Thailand by their governments. Tourism has unsurprisingly sharply dropped.

After serious pitched battles in the centre of Bangkok the red shirts called for UN intervention. The government rejected outside interference, instead ordering women and children to leave the red shirt barricaded camp. Many refused, seeking instead refuge in a nearby temple. Thailand's government to date has rejected mediated peace talks with the red shirts until they leave their encampment. Both sides accuse each other of indiscriminate sniper fire. Meanwhile mysterious 'black' shirts have been captured on film inside the red camp firing at soldiers. The government has seized more than 9,000 tyres to try to stop them being used in the battle. Meanwhile the Red Cross has been distributing food to residents caught up in the dispute. The latest is that troops have now stormed the camp using armoured vehicles overwhelming the red supporters.* The red shirts are mainly the supporters of ousted Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra. His supporters want fresh polls because they say the government is illegitimate – coming to power through a parliamentary deal with the military rather than through an election. Shinawatra now lives overseas and now has Montenegro citizenship! *see p3

Category: Thailand / Bangkok / Battle of Bangkok

Level: Intermediate / Upper intermediate

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EXERCISES

1. **Geography: Thailand** Where is Thailand? What is its capital? What countries and seas surround it? Draw a map on the board or **look on Google maps** to help you.

2. **The Battle of Bangkok:** Briefly, what three things do you know about the Battle of Bangkok? Go round the room swapping details.

3. **Dictation:** The teacher will read four to six lines of the article slowly and clearly. Students will write down what they hear. The teacher will repeat the passage slowly again. Self correct your work from page one - filling in spaces and correcting mistakes. Be honest with yourself on the number of errors. Advise the teacher of your total number of errors. Less than five is very good. Ten is acceptable. Any more is room for improvement! More than twenty - we need to do some work!

4. **Reading:** The students should now read the article aloud, swapping readers every paragraph.

5. **Vocabulary:** Students should now look through the article and underline any vocabulary they do not know. Look in dictionaries. Discuss and help each other out. The teacher will go through and explain any unknown words or phrases.

6. **The article:** Students should look through the article with the teacher.

- a) What is the article about?
- b) What do you think about the article?
- c) What is the latest on this situation?

7. **A day in Bangkok:** In pairs. Look at the list below. Each person chooses to be one of the following. Think of five things that person might do or see during a typical day in Bangkok. (Imagine!) Create a short story about it. Tell it to your partner. Try to make it interesting, funny, the problems, the experiences, the weather, etc...

- | | |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 Tour guide | 4 Hotel receptionist |
| 2 Tourist | 5 Open air food seller |
| 3 Tuk tuk driver/ taxi driver | 6 Dancer |

The teacher will choose some pairs to tell their stories in front of the class.

8. **Let's think! Bangkok:** Swap partners. With your new partner on the board write as many words to do with '**Bangkok**' as you can. *One-two minutes*. Compare with other teams. Using your words compile a short dialogue together.

9. **Let's debate:** In pairs. Students A think Bangkok is a great Asian city for tourists to visit. Students B think otherwise – choose an alternative Asian city. Explain why.

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10. Let's do 'The Article Quiz': Have the students quiz each other in pairs. They score a point for each correct answer and half a point each time they have to look at the article for help. See who can get the highest score!

Student A

- 1) What colours belong to whom?
- 2) Where is 'the land of smiles'?
- 3) What mystery colour what caught where and by whom?
- 4) Name the ousted Thai leader.
- 5) What countries citizenship does the ousted Thai leader now have?
- 6) Where is the opposition encampment?

Student B

- 1) How many people have been killed and wounded?
- 2) What have been set alight and why?
- 3) Where are women and children hiding?
- 4) What is the latest (from the article!)?
- 5) Name the shot general.
- 6) What has the Red Cross been doing?

11. Let's Think: Thailand: Swap partners! With your new partner think of three top tourist destinations in Thailand. Add three things you might do there. Would you like to visit the places in Thailand you have mentioned? Why? Why not?

Thailand: Hot spots for tourists	Thailand: Top three things to do
1	1
2	2
3	3

The teacher will choose some pairs to discuss their findings in front of the class.

12. Sentence starters: Finish these sentence starters. Correct your mistakes. Compare what other people have written.

- a) Thailand _____
- b) The red shirts _____
- c) Troops _____
- d) Tourism _____

13. Quickfire session: In a group the teacher asks students, "I love Thailand because..."

14. Let's talk! In a pub: *In pairs:* Imagine you are in a pub. The conversation gets onto what one of you did in today's English lesson in class – **The battle of Bangkok**. Discuss. Would it put you off visiting Thailand? *5-minutes.*

15. Let's write! An e-mail: Write and send a 200 word e-mail to your teacher about: **The battle of Bangkok**. Your e-mail can be read out in class.

***from page 1 - Note:** This lesson was written as the government sent the troops in to break up the red shirt encampment. Many events have followed since.

DISCUSSION

Student A questions

- 1) Did the headline make you want to read the article?
- 2) Have you ever visited Thailand? If yes, when and where?
- 3) What do you think of the fighting in Thailand?
- 4) Is Thailand safe for visitors?
- 5) Why is Thailand called 'The land of smiles'?
- 6) Why did the government order a curfew in Bangkok and many provinces following their crackdown on the red shirts?
- 7) What were the protests about?
- 8) Have we been witnessing a mini civil war?
- 9) Is this battle about rich people versus poor people?
- 10) What happens next in Thailand?

Student B questions

- 1) Would you like to visit Thailand?
- 2) Are you alarmed about the situation in Bangkok?
- 3) What three things would you advise the Thai Prime minister?
- 4) What three things would you advise the red shirts?
- 5) Who is responsible for the terrible things that have happened in Bangkok?
- 6) Why was the army controlling the situation rather than the police force?
- 7) Have you ever witnessed a demonstration that turned violent?
- 8) What do you think will be the outcome of the situation in Bangkok?
- 9) What do you think will happen to the ousted former Thai Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra?
- 10) Did you like this discussion?

SPEAKING

Let's debate! The battle of Bangkok

Allow 10-20 minutes - Small groups / pairs / 1 to 1

'The battle of Bangkok'

Brainstorm some ideas about the following:-

(Check the links on page 8 on the internet to help you!)

The red shirts – who are they?

The yellow shirts – who are they?

The former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra

The Thai government – their response and actions – what next?

The areas of Bangkok hit by the civil war – Describe - what does it look like now?

The military – background – why are they involved?

The teacher can moderate the session.

GAP FILL: READING

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Thailand's capital Bangkok continues to see ongoing fighting between the "Yellow shirts" (the government) and the "red shirts" (the opposition) (the United Front for Democracy (UDD)). The "civil war" intensified in the city's shopping district after _____ Thai general Khattiya Sawasdipol was shot whilst giving an interview as he backed the _____. He later died in hospital. _____ later opened fire on the red shirt encampment using live _____ rather than rubber ones. Tear gas was also used to try to get the red camp to shift. They responded by setting alight rubber tyres that created black smoke to _____ themselves. Thousands of tyres now line the area. The reds torched nearby buildings and used slingshots at troops. Fire crackers were also _____. Trucks and other vehicles were _____. Since March, when the dispute started, more than 60 people have been killed, another 1,600 wounded. This is in the land of smiles where _____ still go! Tourists though have been advised to stay away from Thailand by their governments. Tourism has unsurprisingly sharply dropped.

protesters

troops

tourists

burnt

shield

renegade

hurled

bullets

After serious pitched battles in the centre of Bangkok the red shirts called for UN intervention. The government rejected outside _____, instead ordering women and children to leave the red shirt barricaded camp. Many refused, seeking instead refuge in a nearby _____. Thailand's government to date has rejected mediated peace talks with the red shirts until they leave their encampment. Both sides accuse each other of indiscriminate _____ fire. Meanwhile mysterious 'black' shirts have been captured on film inside the red camp firing at soldiers. The government has seized more than 9,000 _____ to try to stop them being used in the battle. Meanwhile the Red Cross has been distributing food to residents caught up in the dispute. The latest is that troops have now stormed the _____ using _____ vehicles overwhelming the red supporters. The red shirts are mainly the supporters of ousted Thai leader Thaksin Shinawatra. His supporters want fresh polls because they say the government is _____ - coming to power through a parliamentary deal with the _____ rather than through an election. Shinawatra now lives overseas and now has Montenegro citizenship!

illegitimate

sniper

camp

military

temple

interference

armoured

tyres

GAP FILL: LISTENING

Listen and fill in the spaces.

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GRAMMAR

Put the words into the gaps in the text.

Thailand's capital Bangkok continues to see ongoing fighting between the "Yellow shirts" (the government) and the "red shirts" (the opposition) (the United Front for Democracy (UDD)). The "civil war" intensified (1)___ the city's shopping district after renegade Thai general Khattiya Sawasdipol was shot whilst giving (2)___ interview as (3)___ backed the protesters. He later died in hospital. Troops later opened fire on the red shirt encampment using live bullets rather than rubber ones. Tear gas was also used to try to get the red camp to shift. They responded by setting alight rubber tyres that created black smoke to shield themselves. Thousands of tyres now line (4)___ area. The reds torched nearby buildings and used slingshots (5)___ troops. Fire crackers were also hurled. Trucks (6)___ other vehicles were burnt. Since March, when the dispute started, more than 60 people have been killed, another 1,600 wounded. This is in the land (7)___ smiles where tourists still go! Tourists though have been advised to stay away from Thailand (8)___their governments. Tourism has unsurprisingly sharply dropped.

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than

through

their

many

after

more

because

meanwhile

SPELLING TEST

The teacher will ask the class individually to spell the following words that are in the article. Afterwards, check your answers with your teacher, using the following ratings: **Pass = 12, Good = 15, Very good = 18, Excellent = 20**

1	bullets	11	barricaded
2	meanwhile	12	supporters
3	encampment	13	governments
4	illegitimate	14	Thailand
5	distributing	15	Bangkok
6	mysterious	16	slingshots
7	interference	17	unsurprisingly
8	Montenegro	18	indiscriminate
9	tyres	19	overwhelming
10	intervention	20	parliamentary

LINKS

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/05/17/thailand.timeline/index.html>
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/05/20/thailand.protests/index.html?hpt=T1>
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/05/20/thailand.protests.reaction/index.html?hpt=C1>
<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/05/19/thailand.explainer/index.html>
<http://www.cngo.com/bangkok/none/bangkokians-go-online-share-news-sadness-and-anger-485412>

ANSWERS

GAP FILL: Turmoil in Thailand: The battle of Bangkok: Thailand's capital Bangkok continues to see ongoing fighting between the "Yellow shirts" (the government) and the "red shirts" (the opposition) (the United Front for Democracy (UDD)). The "civil war" intensified in the city's shopping district after **renegade** Thai general Khattiya Sawasdiplol was shot whilst giving an interview as he backed the **protesters**. He later died in hospital. **Troops** later opened fire on the red shirt encampment using live **bullets** rather than rubber ones. Tear gas was also used to try to get the red camp to shift. They responded by setting alight rubber tyres that created black smoke to **shield** themselves. Thousands of tyres now line the area. The reds torched nearby buildings and used slingshots at troops. Fire crackers were also **hurled**. Trucks and other vehicles were **burnt**. Since March, when the dispute started, more than 60 people have been killed, another 1,600 wounded. This is in the land of smiles where **tourists** still go! Tourists though have been advised to stay away from Thailand by their governments. Tourism has unsurprisingly sharply dropped.

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