

HUNT FOR SUSPECTS

Thailand links Bangkok bomb blasts to southern insurgents

BANGKOK: Small bombs that rattled the capital as Thailand hosted world powers last week have been tied to insurgents from the conflict-hit south, the deputy prime minister said yesterday, as police hunt more suspects after arresting two men.

There were at least nine successful or attempted bomb blasts

on Friday, which left four people wounded as the city hosted top diplomats, including United States Secretary of State Mike Pompeo and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi.

The attacks occurred as anger grew over the recent arrest of a rebel suspect from the Muslim-majority south, who was found in

a coma at an army camp where rights groups have documented allegations of torture.

A preliminary army-led probe said Abdulloh Esormusor, 34, could have been suffocated.

Deputy Prime Minister Prawit Wongsuwan said that last week's blasts were "linked to a southern group".

"We have to investigate how they travelled, where they obtained the bombs," he said.

Former junta leader turned civilian premier Prayuth Chan o Cha said there were nine suspects at large.

"An investigation is still ongoing to bring them to justice," he said.

Two men from a southern province were arrested last week just hours after wires and ball bearings were found in an inactive device outside Thai police headquarters.

Prayuth, who is also defence minister, will travel to the south today on a previously scheduled trip. **AFF**