

Thai bomb suspect spoke foreign language, not English: Police

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Bangkok: Thai police said on Wednesday the prime suspect in the bombing of a Bangkok religious shrine in which 20 people died was overheard speaking a foreign language other than English.

"Foreign language, not English also," national police spokesman Prawut Thavornsiri said when asked by reporters whether a man seen leaving a backpack in the shrine minutes before Monday's deadly explosion spoke any foreign languages.

Prawut did not elaborate on how police knew the suspect spoke a foreign language. But police said earlier they had interviewed two motorcycle taxi riders near the shrine, one of whom gave a ride to the suspect.

Prawut also gave a description of the suspected ethnicity of the alleged bomber, using the Thai phrase "khaek khao" a word often used to describe light skinned Muslims from South Asia, Central Asia and the Middle East.

"His skin is white and he has a high nose. Whether khaek khao or not I don't know. But from the footage it looked like that," he said. Earlier on Wednesday a Bangkok court issued an arrest warrant for the unnamed man, who was filmed on security footage dropping off the backpack that is believed to have contained the bomb.

The warrant described him as a tall foreigner with white skin. The attack occurred on Monday as worshippers crowded into the Hindu shrine in the Thai capital, shredding bodies and incinerating motorcycles. A majority of the victims were Asian tourists.

Prawut made his latest comments during a walkabout in Soi Cowboy, one of the city's famous red light districts, as part of a police push to reassure tourists after the deadly blasts which have left the city reeling.

- PTI