A landmine exploded inside the ruins of Cambodia's ancient Phreah Vihear temple yesterday.

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The blast happened behind a Cambodian military base near the ancient ruins. It was believed a Cambodian soldier stepped on one of the landmines planted in the area to prevent border intrusions.

Meanwhile, Defence Minister Thammarak Isarangkura na Ayudhaya has ordered Thai troops to stay on alert along the border with Cambodia. The order follows a recent border dispute.

Bangkok earlier protested that Phnom Penh was building living quarters for its officials close to the frontier, and deployed about 100 paramilitary rangers along a one kilometre stretch of the border, from Pha Mo E-Daeng to Phu Makhua.

Cambodia asked Bangkok to withdraw its troops, saying the living quarters were being built on its side of the border.

It also protested against Thailand for building a checkpoint near the entrance to Phrea Vihear, which is accessible only from the Thai side.

Cambodia had ordered the gate to the Phreah Vihear ruins, which Thais call Prasat Khao Phra Viharn, closed indefinitely pending negotiations between the two countries.


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