

## Gangnam Style dance-off escalates into gang shootout in Bangkok

West Side Story-esque show of rivalry stokes Thai debate over gang violence and demonstrates wide appeal of K-pop video

Kate Hodal in Bangkok

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Psy performing Gangnam Style live on NBC's Today show in New York. Photograph: Jason Decrow/AP

The dance has inspired a host of parodies, the song has hit the top of the charts in [South Korea](#), Malaysia, Finland and Latvia, and the [YouTube video](#) has accumulated more than 227m views. Now, according to Thai media, [Gangnam Style](#), by the [K-pop](#) star Psy, has inspired a West Side Story-esque show of rivalry between two Bangkok gangs who are said to have had a dance-off before engaging in a gun battle.

The [INN](#) website reported that the two gangs were dining in the same restaurant when "the younger members of both groups danced provocatively at each other in the manner of top hit Gangnam Style". The dance-off escalated into an argument and, eventually, a gun attack in the upmarket Ekkamai neighbourhood, in which one of the gangs [fired at least 50 bullets from a carbine and an 11mm gun](#).

No one was injured in the incident, police Lt Col Apichart Thongchandee [told the Bangkok Post](#). He said the two gangs had a history of confrontation and would face arrest warrants.

The shootout has stoked debate over gang violence in [Thailand](#). Much of the violence plays out in secondary schools and vocational colleges – the latter primarily cater to working-class children – where students seek to defend their school's honour with guns, knives, machetes and even homemade grenades. Between January and July this year, Bangkok police registered more than 1,000 cases of student rivalry, according to a recent [report by Agence France-Presse](#). Several students have been killed or injured since the start of the school year in May.

Thai authorities recently established an army-style boot camp where, according to AFP, repeat offenders must endure regular fitness drills and 5am wake-up calls side by side with their rivals. Not all those attending went back home reformed, Lt Col Wanchana Sawasdeem said, "but for 90% it will work, even if it just means they hesitate before fighting ... At least the camp will have made them think."

That the two gangs apparently engaged in a Gangnam Style dance-off is indicative of the video's popularity. Psy, otherwise known as Park Jae-Sang, [told Radio 1's Scott Mills](#) this week that his distinctive dance style emulated "riding an invisible horse in your lower body". The video

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features Park doing the dance all over Seoul – from car parks to steam rooms – with a supporting cast dressed as geishas, nuns and boxers. Park sports various outfits, among them a blue tuxedo together with shellacked bouffant and sunglasses. "This is the point of the Gangnam Style," Park told Mills. "Dress classy and dance cheesy."

The track, which is said to mock the affluent Seoul suburb Gangnam, could become the first Korean pop song to reach number one in the UK charts, according to the BBC. Park has already featured on numerous US TV shows, taught the horse-riding dance to Britney Spears, and helped inspire [a flash-mob wedding proposal](#) in Malaysia. The video has been parodied by [Los Angeles lifeguards](#) (who, according to LA news outlets, were fired for the stunt), [an American college football team](#) and even [the government of North Korea](#). Park recently signed a record deal with Justin Bieber's management team.

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