



PHOTO: STAR

Police try to shield the textile minister's car from stone-hurling crowd as he leaves the Narayanganj 200-bed Hospital where he went to see the body of slain businessman Sabbir Alam Khondokar yesterday.

Top businessman slain in N'ganj

Mob stones textiles minister's car

OUR CORRESPONDENT, N'ganj

Gunmen shot dead the vice-president of the Bangladesh Knitwear Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BKMEA), Sabbir Alam Khondokar, in front of his Masdair residence yesterday morning.

The killers ambushed Sabbir, 38, younger brother of the Bangladesh

Road Transport Corporation (BRTC) Chairman and BNP leader Taimur Alam Khondokar, when he was returning home after jogging. They sprayed 21 bullets on him, leaving him instantly dead.

Angry BNP supporters took to the streets following the murder and damaged four buses.

They also stoned the car of

Textiles Minister Abdul Matin Chowdhury, who went to the Narayanganj 200-bed Hospital to see the victim's body at around 11:30am, smashing the rear windshield. He left the hospital under police protection.

Matin belongs to the anti-group of Taimur in the local BNP.

Police arrested Ziku Khan,

younger brother of former Jatiyatabadi Chhatra Dal president Zakir Khan. Zakir is a notorious criminal, police said.

Sabbir went to the Begum Rokeya Khondokar Primary School on Sher-e-Bengla Road, a few yards from his home, for jogging, family sources

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120 killed in S Korean subway arson

AFP, Daegu, South Korea

At least 120 people were confirmed dead yesterday after a former mental patient set fire to a packed subway train in the South Korean city of Daegu, officials said.

Daegu fire chief Kim Shin-Dong said that more than 70 bodies had been discovered inside the two trains that were gutted by flames following an arson attack.

Police indicated earlier that 50 bodies had already been recovered from the downtown subway station following the inferno which swept through the two six-carriage trains carrying some 400 morning commuters.

"The bodies were burned beyond recognition," said the fire chief. "It will take a considerable time to identify all the remains."

Police and fire department officials said the toll could rise further as dozens of people were still listed as missing.

Witnesses said a man who appeared deranged sprayed flammable liquid from a bottle inside one of the carriages before igniting it with a cigarette lighter.

The blaze ripped through the six-carriage train while it was at a standstill inside the station. It spread to another train running in the opposite direction that had also halted at the station.

Witnesses said the scene below ground was horrific. "It was grotesque. Everything was black. It was still hot eight hours after the fire," said a witness who saw the destruction first hand.

Police earlier put the initial death toll at 50 and said they were unable to count the number of bodies remaining in the carriages.

"We are getting field reports saying that dozens of tangled bodies are inside the trains, but we don't have a figure to put on it," said a spokesman.

A fireman emerging from the subway station told AFP that the bodies had been reduced to bones and ashes.

Daegu Mayor Cho Hae-Nyong identified the arson suspect as Kim Dae-Hwan, 56, a man he said had a history of mental problems.

"He is found to have a history of mental illness. I expect the police to find out the exact criminal motives after the investigations," the mayor said.

Lee Sang-Bum, department head at Gyeongbuk University hospital in Daegu, said Kim had suffered a stroke two years ago which left him partially paralysed.

According to YTN news, Kim was arrested when he was being treated for injuries in hospital. Other victims who were receiving treatment at the same hospital identified him to police.

Witnesses saw a middle-aged man wearing a blue tracksuit board a compartment of the subway train in the centre of the city and set alight liquid from a plastic canister around 10:00am (0100 GMT).

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PHOTO: AFP

Smoke pours out of a subway station entrance after yesterday's arson attack on the underground train of the southeastern South Korean city of Daegu. A former mental patient set the packed subway on fire.

Rain points for Bangladesh

AL-AMIN from Benoni

The rain gods saved Bangladesh from recording their 29th defeat in the last 29 matches when their World Cup Pool B match against West Indies had to be abandoned at Willowmoore Park here yesterday.

When the match was called off Bangladesh were 32-2 in 8.1 overs while chasing West Indies total of 244 for nine in the stipulated 50 overs.

The washout meant Khaled Mashud's beleaguered side finally opened their account. Both teams were awarded two points each.

The West Indies, who were hoping to win and join Sri Lanka and New Zealand at the top of group B with eight points, were left stranded at six points from three matches.

Bangladesh had earlier lost to qualifiers Canada by 60 runs and against Sri Lanka by 10 wickets. They play South Africa on February 22.

On the other hand, Carl Hooper's team, upsetting hosts South Africa and then losing to New Zealand, will be hoping that the elements stay away from their next game against Canada on Sunday.

"We are very disappointed not to pick up four points here, but there is little one can do about the weather,"

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PHOTO: AFP

A ground staff walks on the pitch covers after rain stopped yesterday's World Cup cricket match between the West Indies and Bangladesh at the Benoni Cricket grounds.

JS to debate gas export issue soon

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The government will take a decision on gas export soon through discussions in parliament, State Minister for Energy and Mineral Resources AKM Mosharrar Hossain told the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday.

"We've not taken any decision yet, neither have we signed any accord. We'll take a decision on gas export soon considering national interest and gas reserve position. We'll discuss this in parliament," he said replying to a series of questions from opposition and treasury bench members.

The state minister said international oil company (IOC) Unocal proposed for gas export during Awami League government's tenure in line with the policy laid out in the last five-year plan.

Awami League lawmaker Mirza Azam had asked whether the government was rushing for an accord to export gas to India.

In reply, the state minister also said, "We (present government) formed two committees and they

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Indemnity disapproval motion

Opposition walks out over rejection

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The opposition walked out of the Jatiya Sangsad yesterday after a disapproval motion on indemnity for the joint forces during the Operation Clean Heart was turned down.

Fifty opposition lawmakers from the Awami League, the Jatiya Party and the Bangladesh Krishak Sramik Janata League (BKSJL) had moved disapproval notices. The notices were rejected through voice vote in the House.

The opposition legislators termed the indemnity ordinance anti-constitutional and against human rights.

Law Minister Moudud Ahmed

dismissed the opposition and said the law was designed to "ensure security and human rights".

The Joint Forces Indemnity Bill, 2003 may be placed in the house for its passage today, parliament sources said.

The proposed law aims at indemnifying all activities of the joint forces during the anti-crime campaign between October 16, 2002 and January 9, 2003.

The Awami League staged the walk out when the law minister was replying to the opposition. It said Moudud's reply was not relevant and the chair did not stop him.

Jatiya Party lawmakers and the lone lawmaker of the BKSJL fol-

lowed suit. During his hour-long deliberation, Moudud referred to the law and order situation during the post-independence period, the Awami League's 'apathy' to the armed forces and the formation of the Rakkhi Bahini and BAKSAL.

He also referred to the provision of indemnity in Pakistan and India.

In his bid to justify the indemnity ordinance, he said: "The joint-drive created a sense of security."

Awami League's Suranjit Sengupta said if passed, the indemnity act would undermine democracy, human rights, the parliament

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Akram recalled Mashrafee needs surgery

SPORTS REPORTER

Mashrafee-bin-Mortuza was ruled out of the World Cup on Monday after X-rays confirmed torn ligaments in his right leg.

The 19-year-old Bangladesh medium paceman twisted his ankle on Sunday when he stepped on a

ball during training.

Mashrafee needs an immediate surgery, preferably in South Africa, and will be out of action for an indefinite period, doctors said.

Skipper Khaled Mashud termed Mashrafee's injury a painful blow to the team and said he felt sorry for

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Akram Khan



Mashrafee-bin-Mortuza

SHAZNEEN CASE

6th prosecution witness gives deposition

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Mohammad Iqbal Hossain, sixth prosecution witness in the Shazneen case and husband of the victim's paternal aunt, gave his deposition before court and identified all the six accused in the dock yesterday.

He was then cross-examined by the lawyer of Shahidul Islam alias Shahid, principal accused in the case.

Kazi Rahmat Ullah, Judge of the Second Special Tribunal for Prevention of Women and Children Repression, Dhaka, adjourned the hearing till today as the witness fell sick during cross-examination.

In his deposition, Iqbal Hossain said he had come to know about Shazneen's death at around 10:30

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