

S. Korea subway fire kills 120

By Soo-Jeong Lee
THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

DAEGU, South Korea — Fire raced through two crowded subway trains in South Korea on Tuesday after a man ignited a carton filled with flammable material, killing about 120 people and injuring at least 138, officials said.

A suspect police said had a history of mental illness was under interrogation in Daegu, South Korea's third-largest city. Police still did not know what motivated the attack or what substance the attacker used to start the blaze.

Many of the injured were seriously hurt, authorities said. The fire started in one six-car train at a station, igniting seats and spreading to another train also stopped at the station, officials said.

Lim Dae-yoon, chief of Daegu city's east district municipal government, estimated the number of people killed at about 120.

Many bodies were burned beyond recognition. Officials said they would have to wait for DNA tests to determine an exact number of dead, which could take weeks.

Other people died of asphyxiation on the train platform. One man said his missing daughter called by mobile phone to say there was a fire and the subway door wasn't opening.

Firefighters gave horrifying accounts of the scene underground: bodies of victims asphyxiated as they tried to escape up the stairs; on the platform were the ashen bones of those trapped in the flames.

Chung Sook-jae, 54, rushed to the scene after her daughter, 26-year-old Min Shim-eun, called her husband to say she was suffocating. Then the line went dead.

"She never caused any problems. She was a good kid. Why does this have to happen here?" Chung said, crying on the pavement near the scene. "If she's not out by now, she's probably dead."

Police were interrogating Kim Dae-han, 56, who witnesses said carried the milk carton into the subway car, according to Kim Byong-hak, a police lieutenant in Daegu. Another police official said the suspect had been treated for mental illness.

"When the man tried to use a cigarette lighter to light the box, some passengers tied to stop him. Apparently a scuffle erupted and the box exploded into flames," the officer said. Authorities said the fire was put out by 1 p.m., about three hours after it started, but toxic gas in the tunnel delayed rescue efforts, the Yonhap news agency said. The acrid odor of burned plastic still wafted over the fire scene hours after the flames had been put out.

In the minutes after the fire began, thick black smoke billowed out of ventilator shafts of the subway. Downtown traffic came to a standstill as ambulances rushed to the scene. Orange suit-clad firefighters wearing oxygen tanks rushed into the subway.

The television station YTN aired footage of the chaotic scene inside a hospital reportedly showing the suspect being attended to by nurses. The man was lying on a bed wearing a hospital smock. His face and hands smudged from soot from the fire.

Subway attack

Police said about 120 people were killed and at least 138 injured in South Korea's subway arson attack Tuesday in Daegu, its third-largest city.



SOURCES: ESRI; Daegu Metropolitan AP Subway, Daegu Metropolitan City, Associated Press

NEWS IN BRIEF

Army sends 20,000 to Persian Gulf

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Defense Department has activated more than 20,000 more Army troops to be sent to the Persian Gulf as the U.S. military buildup continues for a possible war with Iraq, Pentagon officials said Tuesday.

Deployment orders signed by the Defense Secretary over the weekend will send the Army's 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment and several smaller units to the

area around Iraq, where they will join about 150,000 other U.S. forces already in the region.

The other units include an artillery brigade, a combat support hospital, a chemical weapons defense company, a military police unit, "civil affairs" specialists in humanitarian missions and rear area support units.

Chicago files charges against club owner

CHICAGO (AP) — The city will file criminal contempt charges against the owners of the night-

club where 21 people were killed in a stampede, because a court had ordered the club to be closed, Mayor Richard M. Daley said Tuesday.

Daley rejected the contention by owners of the E2 nightclub that they had a deal to stay open, despite a list of building code violations including failure to provide enough exits.

Hundreds of people packed into the second-floor E2 club stampeded down a stairwell Monday after guards broke up a fight and someone sprayed pepper gas or Mace.

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Monday, February 17th
10:00am - 4:00 pm Kickoff Celebration Academic Plaza
Play Games & Win Prizes @ Raffle: XBOX*PALM*DVD PLAYER*MORE
5:00pm - 9:00pm AICHE Basketball Tournament Rollie 351

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"9 DAYS AT GROUND ZERO"

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7:00pm - 10:00pm AIAA Bowling Tournament Triangle Bowl

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