

SEA GAMES FOOTBALL

**S'pore stumble
in dismal draw
against Laos**

SPORTS
PULLOUT **S2**

ARSENAL 1 EVERTON 1

**Spanish teen
cancels out
Oezil's goal**

S10



MONDAY DECEMBER 9 2013

FATAL CRASH SPARKS RIOT IN LITTLE INDIA



**Police cars
overturned,
some in
flames**

Bus driver bashed, many others injured **S2**

TNP PHOTO: JONATHAN CHOO



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RACE COURSE ROAD

It looked like a battlefield

Online frenzy
Pictures, videos posted on various sites
NEXT PAGE



HAMPSHIRE ROAD

TNP PHOTOS: JONATHAN CHOO

Bus driver dragged out, assaulted

Report by ANDRE YEO, ELIZABETH LAW, NG JUN SEN and MATTHAEUS CHOO
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The riot broke out in Little India after a pedestrian was knocked down by a private bus and killed last night.

Police said in a statement that the accident occurred at the junction of Race Course Road and Hampshire Road at about 9.25pm.

The statement said that a riot then broke out, involving about 400 people. They damaged five police vehicles and several private vehicles.

Police later said in a press conference that 27 people, all of South Asian descent, had been arrested. Eighteen people, including 10 police officers and four Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF) officers, were taken to hospital with injuries.

The New Paper learnt that the driver of the private bus was dragged out and assaulted by a group of people.

His colleague, Madam Wong Gek Woon, 38, was covering at the back of the bus as the angry mob smashed the windows and tried to hoist themselves into the vehicle to get to its occupants.

Her husband, Mr Alan Wee, 50, told TNP at Tan Tock Seng Hospital (TTSH) early this morning that she coordinates the buses for the company and was in

Little India when someone told her one of its buses had been involved in an accident.

The bus was filled with workers being taken back to their dormitory. Mr Wee said she went to check and someone told her to get into the bus as it was getting dangerous.

He said she called him as the bus came under attack. She told him the driver had a serious neck injury and his clothes were stained with blood.

Mr Wee said he rushed to the scene and his wife was escorted out of the bus by six police officers.

STABLE

She is in stable condition and was kept under observation at TTSH, he said.

Police said that men from the Special Operations Command and Gurkha Contingent were deployed to Little India to tackle the riot and the situation was under control.

Police advised members of the public in the area to remain indoors while police operations were ongoing. Others should stay away from the area.

They also advised the public to stay calm and not to speculate on the incident.

Those with any information about the riot should call the police at 1800-255-0000.

Deputy Prime Minister and Home Affairs Minister Teo Chee Hean said: "This

is a serious incident which has resulted in injuries and damage to public property.

"The situation is now under control. Police will spare no efforts to apprehend the subjects involved in the riot."

The SCDF said in a statement at 1.40am today that when its officers arrived at the scene, they found a man trapped under a bus.

A paramedic pronounced him dead and SCDF rescuers extricated the body using hydraulic rescue equipment.

Projectiles were thrown at them while they were extricating the body.

The statement said nine SCDF vehicles were damaged in the incident.

At press time, the SCDF had taken 18 casualties to TTSH.

When TNP arrived at the hospital just after midnight, several people had gathered at the accident and emergency (A&E) department.

Dozens of uniformed and plainclothes police officers were nearby.

Witnesses told TNP there was a surge of casualties between 10.30pm and 11.30pm.

A man who declined to be named said he saw several police cars bringing injured police officers with their heads and faces bandaged to the A&E department.

"It was very bad. I have never seen anything like that before," he said.

ZAIHAN MOHAMED YUSOF was there when mob turns violent after death of a pedestrian hit by bus at Race Course Road

The stretch of Race Course Road near Buffalo Road resembled a battlefield last night.

Some police cars had been overturned and others were in flames.

A private bus that was involved in a fatal accident earlier was badly damaged, as was a Red Rhino from the Singapore Civil Defence Force.

Video footage posted on social media show an angry mob smashing the front windscreen of the bus. They had apparently been angered by the death of a pedestrian who was hit by the bus.

When The New Paper team arrived at the scene at about 10.45pm, the area looked as though it was under control.

My colleague, photojournalist Jonathan Choo, and I were soon to discover how wrong we were.

Over the next hour, as the police, many of whom were in riot gear, tried to regain control of the street, we found ourselves in the middle of a running battle.

Mr Choo said: "In my 32 years as a photographer, I had never experienced something like this on home soil. I'm still shaking from being chased by the mob."

He had got a little too close to a group of men who were hurling rocks, broken bottles and other objects at a line of policemen which had formed some 50m away.

"Suddenly, one man turned and tried to grab my camera," Mr Choo, 56, said. "The next thing I knew, more of his friends were surrounding and shouting at me."

They were angry that Mr Choo was taking pictures of them. "As I ran away, I could hear flying objects hitting the ground behind me."

I thought I was in a safer position standing near the police line. After all, an officer had told me it was safe there.

RUNNING FROM AREA

A minute later, we were both running from the area as rocks began raining down near us.

I escaped unhurt and found myself in Rotan Lane, off Race Course Road, where I met Mr Muhd Ridhuan, who had told me what had sparked the riot.

"I heard some men shouting, 'Who is going to be

responsible for that man's life?'" said the 54-year-old senior bank analyst who had just finished dinner with friends at a Race Course Road restaurant at 10pm.

After 11pm, more police reinforcements, including police dogs and plainclothes officers, arrived.

They combed the nearby alleys and shouted at the crowd to disperse.

As I was interviewing witnesses on Chandler Road, I saw a mob of angry men running towards me.

Fortunately, a hand grabbed my shirt collar from behind and pulled me into a coffee shop.

Identifying himself as the owner of Kian Heng coffee shop, he locked his shop's gate and asked me in Malay: "Young man, are you crazy walking around in the open?"

"For the last hour, they've been running wildly outside my shop and causing trouble. One look and they'll know you're an outsider. It's safer to stay in my shop."

After about 20 minutes, I left to find Mr Choo. It took an hour to do so.

By about midnight, the streets had become relatively quiet, except for a few defiant men still lobbing objects at riot police from across Serangoon Road.



WANT VIDEO?



- Turn on 3G or WiFi.
- Download QR code reader to smartphone.
- Scan QR code.

TARGET:
A rioter attacking a bus on the street in Little India yesterday.

PHOTO:
FACEBOOK/
BERLINDA
SAMUEL TAN



DOWN:
An aerial view of two vehicles burning on the street in Little India yesterday.

PHOTO:
YOUTUBE/
MARCUS YEW



Online frenzy

Pictures, videos posted on various sites

Report by **MATTHAEUS CHOO**
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Social media sites were abuzz with comments on the Little India incident last night.

Twitter user jayleif posted at 11.18pm: "Witnessed an explosion near Race Course Road. And just found out it's a riot??? Oh dear are we back in 1964?"

Another user named yaxenduf tweeted at 11.38pm: "There's a riot below my apartment in Little India on Race Course Road intersection (with) Buffalo Road. Be safe!"

Hot FM91.3 DJ Boy Thunder tweeted at 12.10am: "Pls stay away from Race Course Road area. Don't need to go kaypoh."

Acting Minister for Manpower Tan Chuan-Jin tweeted at 1.26am: "Situation under control. Don't stir racial angle pls. Emotions will remain raw for some time. Not a game."

Pictures and videos of the incident were also posted on various social media sites.

YouTube user chewkkf posted a six-minute video showing an overturned police car on fire and sirens could be heard in the background.



ON THE GROUND: Riot police forming up at the scene of a burning police car on Hampshire Road in Little India yesterday. TNP PHOTO: JONATHAN CHOO

DON'T MISS OUR
**SPORTS
NOON
EDITIONS**
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

WED DEC 11

- **Bayern v Man City**
- **Galatasaray v Juventus**
- **Man United v Shakhtar Donetsk**

THURS DEC 12

- **Chelsea v Steaua Bucharest**
- **Napoli v Arsenal**
- **Barcelona v Celtic**

