

Hungarian school coach crashes in Italy

Fiery bus crash kills 16 in Italy



A firefighter extinguishing flames in the wreckage of a bus following a crash on the A4 motorway near the Verona East exit, northern Italy.

Verona

At least 16 people died when a coach bringing Hungarian teenagers home from a skiing trip crashed and burst into flames on a northern Italian motorway overnight, authorities said yesterday.

Emergency workers said that the bus carrying 56 people returning from France, most of them teenagers aged 14-16, as well as several teachers and two drivers, ploughed into a bridge pillar.

"At the moment, there are 16 confirmed deaths," said Verona traffic police chief Girolamo Lacquaniti.

The accident has deeply shaken Hungary where Prime

Minister Viktor Orban has declared a national day of mourning to be observed on Monday to remember the victims.

It appeared the death toll from the tragedy near Verona at around 11:00 pm (2200 GMT) could have been much worse had it not been for the bravery and quick thinking of a teacher.

"Those who were seated at the back of the bus saved themselves by smashing the windows amid shouting and panic," Hungary's consul in Italy Judit Timaffy told Italian media.

"A gym teacher rescued lots of those on board by



Two survivors of a coach crash stand in a hallway in Verona

getting back on the bus. He was taken to hospital with serious burns on his back,"

Timaffy said.

The Hungarian government said that three

people were in a very serious condition, including one in an artificial coma. Ten more were seriously hurt and 13 had minor injuries.

All were being treated in nearby hospitals. Twelve others who were not hurt were receiving counselling at a hotel in the vicinity.

Describing a "devastating" scene, Lacquaniti told Radio Capitale that 13 passengers had managed to escape by jumping out.

A huge inferno very quickly engulfed the bus, dramatic pictures released by police showed, completely destroying the interior and reducing the vehicle to a

burned-out wreck. Once the blaze was put out emergency workers had to wait for a judge to give approval to comb through the smoking remains, which they then spent the rest of the night doing to establish the complete death toll.

Some passengers were killed when they were hurled from the coach on impact, but most of the victims were found badly charred inside the vehicle after being unable to escape in time.

Traffic police in Italy were still gathering evidence and consulting video evidence so it was "still too early to determine the cause of this tragedy," Lacquaniti said. (AFP)

The game is on!

Picture courtesy of NDTV

Manama/Chennai

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi's decision to overturn court ban on a popular bull-wrestling festival was welcomed with cheers yesterday by expatriates here in Bahrain.

The ruling overturned after a gap of two-years follows massive protests in southern India by demonstrators who called the court's ruling an attack on their culture.

The decision by India's Supreme Court also sparked a

wave of protests here in Bahrain too, with expatriates coming out in large numbers to express their solidarity and protest.

Hundreds of expatriates including women and children gathered at Asry beach to voice their support for the pro-Jallikattu movement, which in recent days saw thousands of demonstrators gathering in state capital Chennai and other cities, demanding the ban on Jallikattu be lifted.

The court outlawed the bull-



During a protest in Manama

wrestling Jallikattu festival last year after a plea by animal rights groups, which have long accused

Tamil Nadu gears up for 'Jallikattu' as Indian Prime Minister overturns court ban



During a protest held in Zallaq

participants in the event -- held annually across southern Tamil Nadu state -- of cruelty to the animals. The growing protests prompted Tamil Nadu's chief minister to travel to Delhi earlier this week to ask Modi to overturn the ban, which he did late Friday.

Tamil Nadu's governor then promulgated the executive order Saturday evening, paving the way for Jallikattu to resume on Sunday.

"Tamil Nadu Governor Vidyasagar Rao approves

Jallikattu ordinance," the state's ruling AIADMK party posted on Twitter.

Television footage from Chennai showed crowds erupting in joy, waving, giving the thumbs up and flashing peace signs as the news came in.

State Chief Minister O. Panneerselvam is set to kick off the traditional contest today morning.

"Honourable CM Thiru O. Panneerselvam thanks the students, women and the public who staged agitations

across the state to protect our culture," the party said on Twitter.

In Jallikattu, young men struggle to grab the bulls by their sharpened horns or jump on their backs as the muscular animals, festooned with marigolds, charge down the road.

Unlike in traditional Spanish bullfighting, the animals are let loose into open fields where young men compete to subdue them bare-handed. (With inputs from agencies)