

N. Korea assassination trial to proceed

Shah Alam, Malaysia

The murder trial of two women accused of assassinating the half-brother of North Korea's leader can proceed, a Malaysian court ruled yesterday, in a blow to their families who insist the pair were tricked into carrying out the dramatic hit.

After hearing the prosecution case, the judge said there was sufficient evidence to support a murder charge against Siti Aisyah from Indonesia and Doan Thi Huong from Vietnam, accused of murdering Kim Jong Nam with nerve agent VX at Kuala Lumpur airport.

Judge Azmi Ariffin said the evidence presented in court since the trial started in October pointed to a "well-planned conspiracy" with a group of North Korean suspects who are still at large.

Colombia says 19 killed in bus crash

Quito, Ecuador

Colombia's government said Wednesday that 19 of the victims of a deadly bus crash in Ecuador were its citizens, as Quito lowered the overall death toll from the accident.

Ecuador's foreign ministry said in a statement that 23 people were killed in the Tuesday crash, instead of 24 as previously announced.

Twelve Colombians, four Venezuelans and two Ecuadorans who died in the accident have been identified, the statement said.

The bus, which had foreign license plates, overturned and crashed into three houses after a collision with an all-terrain vehicle near Quito.

'Iceman' sentenced to death in Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand

A Malaysian drug dealer dubbed the "Iceman" was sentenced to death yesterday by a court in Thailand after he was convicted of running a narcotics network that funnelled huge profits into legitimate businesses.

Tun Hung Seong was arrested in April last year after a tipoff that he had hired a man to smuggle nearly 300 kilogrammes of crystal meth -- known as ice -- through the violence-scarred south.

Investigators believe he acted as a gatekeeper to the Malaysian drug market just over the border and laundered money through karaoke bars, hotels and restaurants.

Flood worsens in India's southern state



Kochi's International airport apron is seen flooded following monsoon rains



Residents look at houses destroyed by floods at Kannappankundu in Kozhikode

● 10,000 kilometres of roads have been destroyed

● 34 dams and reservoirs have been opened

AFP | Kochi, India

The government says 10,000 kilometres (6,000 miles) of Kerala roads have been destroyed or damaged and hundreds of homes lost.

It has ordered the opening of gates at 34 dams and reservoirs where water levels reached danger levels.

Indian television broadcast images of cars and livestock washed away in the floods while men and women waded through chest-high waters that flowed through village streets.

Many used social media to send rooftop distress calls, some



Fire and Rescue personnel evacuate local residents in an inflatable boat near Flood in Kochi's Ernakulam district



Local residents look at a partially destroyed house after heavy monsoon rains led to a landslide in Kannappankund, in the Indian state of Kerala

with video.

In Kerala families could be seen paddling boats provided by the military, while in some areas families commandeered local wooden boats to ferry themselves to safety

A member of parliament from Kerala, Shashi Tharoor, shared on Twitter an appeal for help made by a woman who said

she was trapped on the third floor of a temple with phone batteries running out.

"Over 36 people including myself and family stranded here. Phone network and charge finishing please help in any possible way," Devika Sreekumar said in the Facebook post.

Greeta Mathew pleaded for

help for her family in a Twitter message.

"Anybody reading this, PLZ HELP. My relatives are stuck on the upper floor of house with an 8 months pregnant lady, in Edayaranmula, Pathanamthitta dist. All rescue control rooms' numbers busy. No rescue team reached yet. No contact with family since last evening," she

said.

North and central Kerala has been worst hit by the floods but all 14 of the state's districts have been put on "red alert" as heavy rain is predicted for several days.

In the main city of Kochi, the international airport will remain closed until at least August 26, authorities said.

Bahrain remembers former Indian PM AB Vajpayee

TDT | Manama

Residents of Bahrain are cherishing the fond memories of Atal Bihari Vajpayee's visit to the Kingdom two decades ago.

Vajpayee, the Indian politician who thrice served as Prime Minister of India, had visited several countries in the Middle East.

As part of delegations, and on diplomatic assignments, Vajpayee had travelled (from 1965-1993) to several countries including East Africa, Canada, Japan, Switzerland and Geneva.

He led the Indian Delegation to the Human Rights Commission Meeting at Geneva in 1993 and the Delegation of Standing Committees of External Affairs to Gulf countries including Bahrain, Oman and Kuwait.

During his visit to Bahrain, Vajpayee had Darshan at the Krishna Temple in Manama.

In 1988, the Thattai Hindu Community (THC) President Baboo H Kewalram wrote a letter to Vajpayee which reads: 'Hearty congratulations on being



File images from AB Vajpayee's visit to Bahrain

appointed as the Prime Minister of India. You will kindly recall that during your recent visit to Bahrain you had Darshan of Shree Nathji Temple at Manama when the Temple priest told you that you would be the next Prime Minister of India'.

Atal Bihari Vajpayee wrote a reply to the above letter which is kept in the records of the Manama temple: 'Dear Shri Kewalram, I am in receipt of your letter of 10th March 1998. I am thankful to you and all the

members of the Thattai Hindu Community in Bahrain for their greetings and good wishes. They are a source of inspiration and strength to me in serving the nation to the best of my ability'.

THC Vice Chairman Bhagwan Asarpotta said, 'Vajpayee had visited Shri Krishna temple when he was the opposition leader. I have fond memories of him visiting the temple. I remember he made a speech at the THC auditorium in which each sentence was thought-pro-



voking."

"He reached the temple from Sheraton accompanied by around 8 cars but only 4 cars could enter the temple area. And he said in Hindi that those who could enter the temple was lucky," reminisces Asarpotta.

In 2003 when Vajpayee was the Prime Minister, India and Bahrain signed five agreements, including an extradition treaty that deals with concrete steps to combat terrorism and strengthens bilateral cooperation in con-

trol of crime. The agreements which were signed in the presence of visiting Bahrain Prime Minister HRH Prince Khalifa bin Salman Al Khalifa and Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, also included a memorandum of understanding on foreign office consultations.

The Indian Embassy has informed that a condolence book for the departed dignitary will be kept open by on August 19 and 20 from 10am to 4pm at the Embassy building in Seef.