

Five dead as Indonesia train hits fuel tanker

JAKARTA, INDONESIA: A commuter train collided with a fuel tanker in the Indonesian capital Jakarta killing at least five people and injuring 80 others as a women-only carriage derailed and burst into flames.



A train hit a petrol tanker in Jakarta killing at least five people. Image: Wiki Images

Both the carriage and tanker flipped on their sides following the crash at a level crossing and caught fire, sending thick plumes of smoke into the air as passengers jumped from the train and fled.

"The first and last carriages on this train were for women only, so it was the first carriage that collided with the truck," Sukendar Mulya, a spokesman for state-owned train company Kereta Api Indonesia, told AFP.

"The truck accelerated and drove onto the tracks just as the gate was closing to halt traffic and let the train pass," Mulya said.

The train company estimated that around 600 passengers were on board when it slammed into the truck on the south-eastern fringes of Jakarta.

Truck, carriage go up in flames

Forty-year-old Ira, who goes by one name, was in the carriage that hit the truck. "I felt the strong crash and panicked, so I forced my way out a window and just ran," Ira told AFP as she broke down in tears. "I was outside when I heard an explosion and saw the truck and carriage go up in flames," she said.

Jakarta deputy police chief Sujarno confirmed that five people were killed but other passengers were safely evacuated. "There were also a number of young children hospitalised with injuries," he said.

A list displayed near the crash site showed more than 80 people had been hospitalised. An AFP correspondent at the scene saw several burns victims being taken away in ambulances.

Jakarta police spokesman Rikwanto said the train sounded its horn several times before hitting the truck, which was unable to get out of the way as it was stuck in traffic behind a motorcycle.

"The train hit the truck at the back left and propelled it around 20m forward before both the truck and the train flipped," Rikwanto said, adding that police were questioning seven witnesses.

Isnadi, a senior official at Kereta Api Indonesia, said the safety gate was working.

"The warning alarm sounded for at least five minutes before the train arrived. The train was travelling at 70kph when it hit the truck," Isnadi told state-run news agency Antara.

Local media reported that an engineer and a technician from the driver's compartment were among the dead.

The tanker was owned by state-owned company Pertamina, which has assisted with the evacuation.

Train accidents, especially at crossings, are common on Indonesia's ageing and poorly maintained railroad network.

Source: AFP via I-Net Bridge

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