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Blasts in E Tvl hit pipeline, substation

By JOHAN BUYS

THE blast which wrecked a transformer at an Evander electricity sub-station on Wednesday night, was followed three hours later by an attempt to blow up the water pipeline to Sasol III.

A police spokesman said an explosion was heard at the Secunda plant. Minimal damage was done and the water supply, which is used for industrial purposes, was not interrupted.

Security police are investigating sabotage at both blasts.

The Evander blast, which could be heard 15km away, occurred at 8.45pm at the town's main sub-station. Damage was estimated at R18 000.

The saboteurs cut an opening in the security fence close to the transformer to attach powerful explosives to it. The blast shattered windows in the sub-station building.

Bomb disposal experts were immediately flown in by helicopter from Middleburg and an emergency floodlight was set up while council technicians connected a spare transformer kept handy for an emergency, the town clerk Mr J S van Onselen, said yesterday. Power was restored an hour and 45 minutes later.

"It was wonderful to see how quickly the civil defence people swung into action to have the area floodlit so that technicians could couple up the spare transformer," Mr Van Onselen said.

The nearby Evander hospital had to use its own emergency power plant when power was cut by the blast.

Yesterday morning the sub-station was crawling with security policemen and other experts trying to find clues to the explosion. There was no security guard at the sub-station at the time of the explosion, Mr Van Onselen said.

No-one was injured in the explosion as the sub-station was deserted at the time.

Difficult

Mr van Onselen said it was difficult to find the ideal security protection for such sub-stations. "If one has the area floodlit, it only draws attention. A night watchman with a dog is of little use because they could easily be put out of action by saboteurs who want to destroy."

He said his town council was, however, looking into ways to afford better security to safeguard the sub-station and other key installations against future attacks.

Police photographers arrived at the sub-station yesterday morning to take pictures of the damage. Shattered glass was lying around the wrecked transformer and glass insulators on the overhead power line were blown off by the blast.

TREFWOORDE

1 Buys Johan

2 Evander

3 Kragseentrales

4 Bomontploffings

5 SASOL

6 Secunda

7 Sabotasie

8 Ondersaek

9 Kommentaar

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