

LUNAR NEW
YEAR SHOOTING
**10 dead in
California's
Asian city**
10 others hurt

AFP, Monterey Park

Ten people have died and at least 10 others have been wounded in a mass shooting in a largely Asian city in southern California, police said yesterday, with the suspect still at large hours later.

The gunman opened fire at a dance venue in Monterey Park, as the local community were celebrating Lunar New Year, with witnesses saying he shot indiscriminately with a semiautomatic weapon.

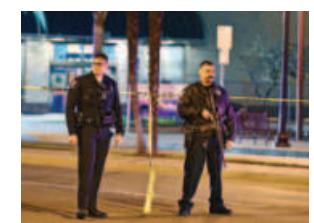
Captain Andrew Meyer of the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department said officers had responded to emergency calls around 10:20pm on Saturday and found people pouring out of the premises.

"The officers made entry to the location and located additional victims," he said.



People take photographs next to lanterns in the Chinatown area of Yokohama, Japan yesterday, on the first day of the lunar new year. Lunar New Year is the beginning of a lunar calendar or lunisolar calendar year, whose months are moon cycles. The event is celebrated by numerous cultures in different ways and at different dates.

PHOTO: AFP



The Monterey Park Fire Department responded to the scene and treated the injured and pronounced 10 of the victims deceased at the scene.

"There are at least 10 additional victims that were transported to numerous local hospitals and are listed in various conditions from stable to critical.

The suspect fled the scene and remains outstanding."

Police gave no description of the wanted man, and did not say what kind of gun he used.

Monterey Park, about eight miles (13 kilometers) east of downtown Los Angeles, is home to around 60,000 people, the majority of them Asian or Asian American.

Meyer said detectives were also aware of another incident in the neighboring city of Alhambra.

"It's just too early in the investigation to know whether this incident was a hate crime or not," he told reporters.

Russia pushing towards 2 towns in Zaporizhzhia

Putin ally says West's deliveries of new weapons to Ukraine will lead to global catastrophe

AGENCIES

Moscow's forces are pushing towards two towns in Ukraine's Zaporizhzhia region, where fighting intensified this week after several months of a stagnant front, Russian state media reported yesterday.

Russian-installed official in the region Vladimir Rogov said offensive actions were concentrated around two towns: Orikhiv, around 50 kilometres (30 miles) south of Ukrainian-controlled regional capital Zaporizhzhia, and Hulyaipole, further east.

"The front is mobile, especially in two directions: Orikhiv and Hulyaipole," Rogov was quoted as saying by the Ria Novosti news agency.

He said there was active fighting in those areas, according to the agency. "The initiative is in our hands."

In its daily report yesterday, the Ukrainian army said "more than 15 settlements were affected by artillery fire" in Zaporizhzhia.

Earlier this week, Rogov

announced a "local offensive" around Orikhiv and said the Russian army had taken control of the village of Lobkove, near the Dnipro river, reports AFP.

He also said this week that fighting has "sharply increased" in the southern region.



On Saturday, the Russian army said its troops held "offensive actions" in the Zaporizhzhia region and claimed to have "taken more advantageous lines and positions."

Meanwhile, a close ally of President Vladimir Putin said yesterday that deliveries of offensive weapons to Kyiv that threaten Russia's territories will lead to a global catastrophe and make arguments against using weapons of mass destruction untenable.

Vyacheslav Volodin, speaker of the Duma - Russia's lower house of parliament - warned that the United States and Nato's support of Ukraine is leading the world to a "terrible war", reports Reuters.

"If Washington and Nato countries supply weapons that will be used to strike civilian cities and attempt to seize our territories, as they threaten, this will lead to retaliatory measures using more powerful weapons," Volodin said on the Telegram messaging app.

"Arguments that the nuclear powers have not previously used weapons of mass destruction in local conflicts are untenable. Because these states did not face a situation where there was a threat to the security of their citizens and the territorial integrity of the country."

Western allies pledged billions of dollars in weapons for Ukraine last week, although they failed to persuade Germany to lift a veto on providing German-made Leopard battle tanks, which are held by an array of Nato nations but whose transfer to Ukraine requires Berlin's approval.

ANTI-GOVT RIOTS

Brazil's Lula sacks army chief

AFP, Brasilia

President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva sacked the commander of Brazil's army Saturday, two weeks after an election-denying mob loyal to his far-right predecessor ransacked the halls of power in Brasilia.

The veteran leftist's dismissal of Julio Cesar de Arruda came a day before Lula was to make his first trip abroad - to Argentina - as he moves to put the South American powerhouse back on the international stage.

Arruda had only taken up the post on December 30, two days before the end of outgoing president Jair Bolsonaro's term, and was confirmed by Lula's administration in early January.

On January 8, Bolsonaro supporters ransacked the presidential palace, Supreme Court and Congress in Brasilia, breaking windows and furniture, destroying priceless works of art, and leaving graffiti messages calling for a military coup.

SURGE IN COVID CASES

China logs 13,000 deaths in a week

Top official says vast majority of population already infected

AFP, Beijing

China reported nearly 13,000 Covid-related deaths in hospitals between January 13 and 19, after a top health official said the vast majority of the population had already been infected.

The death toll came a week after China said nearly 60,000 people had died with Covid in hospitals in just over a month -- but there has been widespread scepticism over official data since Beijing abruptly axed anti-virus controls last month.

China's Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) said in a statement on Saturday that 681 hospitalised patients had died of respiratory failure caused by coronavirus infection, and 11,977 had died of other diseases combined with an infection over the period.

The figures do not include anyone who died at home.

Airfinity, an independent forecasting firm, has estimated daily Covid deaths in China will peak at about 36,000 over the Lunar New Year holiday. The firm also estimated that more than 600,000 people have died from the disease since China abandoned the zero-Covid policy in December.

China has passed the peak period of Covid patients in fever clinics, Guo Yanhong, an official from the National Health Commission told a news conference on Thursday.

Tens of millions of people have travelled across the country in recent days to mark Lunar New Year, raising fears of fresh outbreaks.

GUARDS TERROR LABEL VOTE

Iran FM vows response to EU

AFP, Tehran

Iran yesterday warned the European Union it would take "reciprocal" measures after the European Parliament voted to list the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps as a terrorist group. "The parliament is working to place elements of European countries' armies on the terrorist list" of the Islamic republic, Foreign Minister Hossein Amir Abdollahian said on Twitter. Members of the European Parliament voted on Wednesday to include the Guards on the 27-nation bloc's terror list in "light of its terrorist activity, the repression of protesters and its supplying of drones to Russia".

COW SLAUGHTER IN INDIA

Court blames it for earth's problems

NDTV ONLINE

A court in Gujarat has made some curious observations on cow slaughter while sentencing a man to life imprisonment for illegally transporting cattle. "All the problems of the earth will be solved if cow slaughter is stopped," legal news website Live Law quoted the Principal District Judge of Tapi district court as saying while passing the order. Samir Vinodchandra Vyas also said that "houses made of cow dung are not affected by atomic radiation" and use of gaumutra (cow urine) is a "cure for many incurable diseases".



Former British prime minister Boris Johnson visits the town of Borodianka, heavily damaged during Russia's invasion of Ukraine, outside of Kyiv, Ukraine yesterday. Britain still wants an international deal to provide Ukraine with the German-made tanks that Kyiv says it needs in its fight against Russia but whose transfer needs Germany's consent, British foreign minister James Cleverly said.

PHOTO: REUTERS



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার

বিভাগীয় বন কর্মকর্তার কার্যালয়

সামাজিক বন বিভাগ, ফরিদপুর।

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