

Shooting at Grocery Store in Arkansas Kills Three, Wounds 10 Others



Damage can be seen to a front window law enforcement officers work the scene of a shooting at the Mad Butcher grocery store in Fordyce, Ark., Friday, June 21, 2024.

ARKANSAS (AP) – A shooter who opened fire at a grocery store in Arkansas left the store and parked cars riddled with bullet holes as bystanders ducked for cover both indoors and in the parking lot, killing 3 people and wounding 10 others, authorities said.

The wounded included two law enforcement officers who exchanged fire with the shooter, state police said. The shooting occurred about 11:30 a.m. at the Mad Butcher grocery store in Fordyce, a city of about 3,200 people located 65 miles (104 kilometers) south of Little Rock.

“It’s tragic, our hearts are broken,” Col. Mike Hagar, director of State Police and public safety secretary,

told reporters.

Neither the officers’ nor the suspected shooter’s injuries were life threatening. The remaining injuries ranged from “not life-threatening to extremely critical,” Hagar said.

It’s the latest mass shooting where a grocery store is its backdrop. A white supremacist in 2022 killed 10 Black people at a Buffalo supermarket. That shooting came a little more than a year after one at a Boulder, Colorado, supermarket, where 10 people were killed.

Police did not immediately say whether the shooting occurred inside or outside the store. Police did not identify the suspected shooter or the victims, but said they expected to release more information Friday night.

Roderick Rogers, a member of the city council, said he called the county sheriff when employees at his restaurant nearby notified him of the shooting.

Rogers said when he got there, he saw people running for cover in every direction, even one running to the hospital nearby.

“People were just jumping into cars to get to safety,” Rogers said.

Video posted on social media showed at least one person lying in the parking lot, while another captured multiple gunshots ringing out.

Amiya Doherty said she was in her mother’s car in the grocery store’s parking lot when she heard what she was thought was fireworks. When she saw a man holding a gun and firing, she said she ducked out of view.

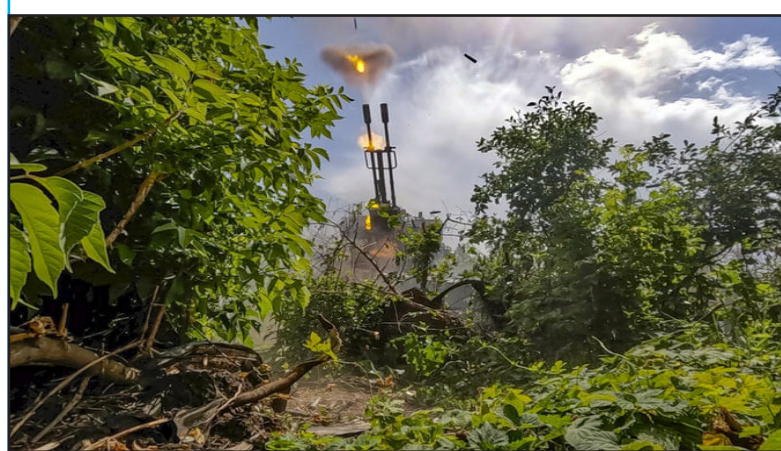
“I held my sister’s hand and I told her I love her,” Doherty told Little Rock television station KATV.

Images from reporters on the scene showed a slew of bullet holes in the grocery store’s window, and spent shell casings strewn throughout the parking lot. In video footage, local and state agencies could be seen responding to the scene, with at least one medical helicopter landing nearby.

Arkansas Gov. Sarah Huckabee Sanders said she had been briefed on the shooting.

The White House said President Joe Biden has been briefed on the shooting and his team will continue to keep him updated.

Russia Launches ‘Massive Attack’ on Ukraine’s Energy Facilities



Russian soldiers fire an anti-aircraft gun at an undisclosed location in Ukraine on June 21, 2024.

KYIV (AP) – At least two people were killed in Ukraine’s second city, Kharkiv, in Russian shelling on Saturday afternoon, local officials said.

The shelling hit an area of “dense residential development,” according to city mayor Ihor Terekhov. He said that 18 people were wounded, along with the two dead reported by regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov.

Russia launched a new barrage of missiles and drones in an overnight attack on Ukraine, officials in Kyiv said Saturday, damaging energy facilities in the southeast and west and injuring at least two workers.

Ukraine is struggling with a new wave of rolling blackouts after relentless Russian attacks on en-

ergy infrastructure that started three months ago took out half the country’s power generation capacity. In its eighth major attack on energy facilities overnight, Russia fired 16 missiles and 13 drones, the Ukrainian air force said.

Ukraine’s air defenses intercepted 12 of the 16 missiles and all 13 drones launched by Russia, the air force said.

State-owned power grid operator Ukrenergo said the strikes damaged equipment at facilities in southeastern Zaporizhzhia and the western Lviv region.

Two energy workers were injured in Zaporizhzhia when a fire broke out at an energy facility, according to

regional Gov. Ivan Fedorov.

With no major changes reported along the 1,000-kilometer (600-mile) front line, where a recent push by the Kremlin’s forces in eastern and northeastern Ukraine has made only incremental gains, both sides have taken aim at infrastructure targets, seeking to curb each other’s ability to fight in a war that is now in its third year.

Moscow’s overnight attack on Zaporizhzhia and Lviv follows Ukrainian military strikes on three oil refineries in southern Russia overnight into Friday.

Air defenses destroyed five drones over the Sea of Azov and the country’s western Bryansk and Smolensk regions, the Russian Ministry of Defense said. A man was killed in shelling of Russia’s Belgorod region, which borders Ukraine, according to regional Gov. Vyacheslav Gladkov.

The governor of eastern Ukraine’s Donetsk region said Saturday that Russian attacks had killed five people and wounded seven the previous day.

In the Russia-controlled part of the region, Gov. Denis Pushilin said three people were killed and four were injured in shelling by Ukrainian forces Saturday morning.

A policeman was killed in the partly occupied region of Kherson as a result of a Russian drone attack on a checkpoint, the Ukrainian National Police said.

UK’s Nigel Farage: West Provoked Russia Into Ukraine War



Nigel Farage says Russia was provoked into Ukraine war.

LONDON (Reuters) – Nigel Farage, the leader of Britain’s right-wing Reform UK party, said the eastward expansion of the European Union and NATO had provoked Russian President Vladimir Putin’s war on Ukraine.

The remarks, made in an interview with the BBC aired late on Friday, drew strong criticism across the British political spectrum ahead of a July 4 election in which Farage’s party is predicted to win millions of votes.

Farage said he stood by comments made shortly after Moscow’s February 2022 war on Ukraine, when he posted on social media that the move was a “consequence of EU and NATO expansion”. He said he had been predicting a war in Ukraine as early as 2014.

“It was obvious to me that the ever-eastward expansion of NATO and the European Union was giving this man a reason to his Russian people to say, ‘They’re coming for us again’ and to go to war,” Farage said in Friday’s BBC interview.

“We provoked this war ... of course it’s his (Putin’s) fault - he’s used what we’ve done as an ex-

cuse.”

Russia casts its special military operation in Ukraine as part of a broader struggle with the West, which it says wants to bring Russia to its knees.

Farage’s decades of campaigning against Britain’s membership of the EU and mass immigration has made him one of the country’s most recognizable politicians.

His surprise entry into the election race has further hit Conservative Prime Minister Rishi Sunak’s hopes of closing the center-left Labour Party’s opinion poll lead.

Even though Reform is unlikely to win many seats in parliament, it could split the right-of-center vote across the country. The party held only one seat in the last parliament, which it gained when a Conservative lawmaker defected.

Farage’s remarks on Ukraine drew ire.

Farage later posted on X: “Putin was wrong to invade a sovereign nation, and the EU was wrong to expand eastward. The sooner we realize this, the closer we will be to ending the war and delivering peace.”

Bangladesh Denies Entry to Rohingya Muslims Fleeing Myanmar

DHAKA (Dispatches) – Bangladesh will not take in any more Rohingya fleeing violence in neighboring Myanmar, Mizanur Rahman, Bangladesh’s refugee relief and repatriation commissioner, said on Saturday, amid reports that people from the areas affected by fighting have been gathering on the border.

Concerns that a war between Myanmar’s junta and the opposition ethnic-minority Arakan Army would trigger a new wave of refugees seeking safety in Bangladesh have been on the rise over the past few months.

Clashes between Myanmar’s military-controlled government forces and insurgents in Rakhine and Chin States started in late October 2023 with a multi-pronged offensive against the junta, which has been in control of the country since early 2021.

Most of the Rohingya — hundreds of thousands of whom fled to Bangladesh following a brutal military crackdown and persecution in 2017 — come from Rakhine. One of the most heavily Rohingya-populated areas in the state, Maungdaw, has been under the control of the Arakan Army, which last week warned it was expecting the junta to attempt to recapture it.

“On the other side of the border in Myanmar, a fierce gunbattle is

happening and, every day, people are dying. Maungdaw town is a predominantly Rohingya-inhabited area,” Rahman told Arab News.

“We have heard that (some) Rohingyas have tried to enter Bangladesh ... (they) have gathered on the border on the Myanmar side, mainly near the Teknaf subdistrict under Cox’s Bazar.”

More than a million Rohingya Muslims currently live in squalid camps in Bangladesh’s Cox’s Bazar, turning the coastal district into the world’s largest refugee settlement.

Rahman said Bangladesh cannot receive more refugees and will not allow any more Rohingya to enter the country from Myanmar.

“The Rohingyas living in Cox’s Bazar camps are very anxious about the safety and fate of their relatives living in Maungdaw and the surrounding area,” he said.

“(But) we can’t receive any more Rohingyas, as Bangladesh is already overburdened with more than 1 million. Our stand is that not a single more Rohingya will enter our land.”

The UN estimates that 95 percent of Rohingya refugees are dependent on humanitarian assistance, which has been dropping since 2020, despite urgent pleas for donations by the World Food Program and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees.

News in Brief

PARIS (AFP) – Christian Tein, a pro-independence leader in the French Pacific territory New Caledonia will be held in France after being charged Saturday over unrest last month, his lawyer said. Tein was one of at least three pro-independence activists facing a transfer in custody to mainland France. Tein, the head of Cellule de Coordination des Actions de Terrain (CCAT), will be sent almost 17,000 kilometers (10,500 miles) to France with the group’s communications chief Brenda Wanabo. An investigating magistrate charged Tein in New Caledonia’s capital Noumea on Saturday. He was the first from a group of 15 people arrested Wednesday to be charged over the unrest, in which nine people died, including two police. Hundreds more were wounded, and around 1.5 billion euros (\$1.6 billion) of damage was inflicted during the protests. Authorities did not immediately say what charges Tein faces.

MOGADISHU (Xinhua) – The African Union Peace and Security Council (AUPSC) has called for a phased approach to the withdrawal of peacekeepers from Somalia to avoid a potential security vacuum. The AUPSC strongly backed Somalia’s request made in May for a phased approach to the Phase 3 drawdown of the African Union Transition Mission in Somalia (ATMIS) to enable Mogadishu to maintain half of the troops that were expected to withdraw by the end of June. “The AUPSC notes that the exit of AU Transition Mission in Somalia needs to be carefully harmonized with the follow-on mission that replaces it, including the harmonization of Troop Contribution Countries (TCCs), to ensure that there is no security gap between Dec. 31, 2024 and Jan. 1, 2025,” AUPSC said in a communique released by ATMIS Saturday. During its meeting, the AUPSC said the ongoing offensive operations against the al-Shabab terror group and the full implementation of the Phase 3 drawdown could lead to capability gaps that may have significant implications for the security of Somalia and the wider region.

ATHENS (Reuters) – A man has died as several forest fires fanned by gale-force winds battered Greece’s southern tip and forced evacuations, the fire brigade said. The 55-year-old man was injured in a blaze in the region of Iliia on the Peloponnese peninsula and died at a hospital, said a fire service official. Some 120 firefighters, assisted by dozens of engines, were deployed to tame forest fires in Achaia region, which spread fast to the nearby district of Iliia and raged uncontrolled. “All forces are making a superhuman effort to tame them,” amid winds of up to 120 kph (75 mph), Greek fire brigade spokesperson Vasilis Vathrakogiannis said, as about 45 wildfires broke out in the country within a few hours. Wildfires are common in the Mediterranean country, but they have become more devastating as summers have become hotter, drier and windier, which scientists relate to climate change. Residents of several villages in the fire-afflicted areas were told to flee their homes, while some used small buckets to assist in firefighting. Greek television showed the interior of a stone house gutted by fire.

ROME (AP) – The Italian coast guard has recovered 14 more bodies from last week’s shipwreck in the Ionian Sea off the southern Italian coastline, bringing to 34 the number of known victims from the sinking. Dozens are still missing and presumed dead. The bodies were transferred to a port in Calabria. Three coast guard ships were active in the air-and-sea search, some 190 kilometers (120 miles) from shore. Survivors reported that the motorboat had caught fire, causing it to capsize off the Italian coast overnight last Sunday, about eight days after departing from Turkey with about 75 people from Syria and Iraq on board, according to the UN refugee agency and other UN organizations. Eleven survivors were being treated on shore. The latest deaths bring to more than 800 people who have died or went missing and are presumed dead crossing the central Mediterranean so far this year, an average of five dead a day, the UN agencies said.

NEW DELHI (Reuters) – The death toll has climbed to 54 from consumption of tainted liquor in India’s southern state of Tamil Nadu, with more than 100 people still in hospital, a government official said on Saturday. Nearly 200 people have been treated since Wednesday for vomiting, stomach aches and diarrhoea, after drinking liquor spiked with methanol in the district of Kallakurichi, about 250 km (150 miles) from Chennai, the state capital. Law enforcement officials investigating the incident have arrested seven people, said M.S. Prasanth, a senior district official, adding that follow-up action was being taken against liquor sellers and brewers in the district. Deaths from illegally produced alcohol, often called country liquor, are a regular occurrence in India.

BEIJING (CCTV) – A satellite developed by France and China has blasted off on a hunt for the mightiest explosions in the universe. On Saturday, the 930kg (2,050-pound) satellite carrying four instruments – two French, two Chinese – took off at about 3pm (07:00 GMT) aboard a Chinese Long March 2C rocket from a base in Xichang, in the southwestern Chinese province of Sichuan. Developed by engineers from both countries, the Space Variable Objects Monitor (SVOM) will seek out gamma-ray bursts, the light from which has travelled billions of light years to reach Earth. Gamma-ray bursts generally occur after the explosion of huge stars – those more than 20 times as big as the sun – or the fusion of compact stars. The extremely bright cosmic beams can give off a blast of energy equivalent to more than that of a billion suns.

U.S. Aircraft Carrier Arrives in South Korea Amid Tensions With North Korea

PYONGYANG (Dispatches) – A nuclear-powered United States aircraft carrier has arrived in South Korea for three-nation exercises aimed at stepping up military training, days after North Korea and Russia signed a mutual defence pact.

“The U.S. Navy’s aircraft carrier Theodore Roosevelt ... arrived at the Busan Naval Base on the morning of June 22,” the South Korean Navy said in a statement.

The carrier is expected to participate in joint exercises with South Korea and Japan this month. Pyongyang has always decried similar combined drills as rehearsals for an invasion.

The leaders of the three nations had agreed at a summit in August 2023 to hold annual military training drills.

The arrival of the USS Theodore Roosevelt strike group comes a day after South Korea summoned the Russian ambassador to protest against deal reached between Russian President Vladimir Putin and North Korean leader Kim Jong Un this week. The pact pledges mutual defense assistance in the event of war.

Putin visited North Korea for the first time in 24 years.

South Korea claims the agreement between the two nations poses a threat to its security and warned that it could consider sending arms to Ukraine to help fight off the Russian war as a response.

Putin, however, noted that the relations between Russia and North Korea are based on “equality and mutual respect,” adding that a new document

has been prepared for stable and long-term relations between North Korea and Russia.

The two Koreas have been locked in a tit-for-tat “balloon war”, with an activist in the South confirming on Friday that he had floated more balloons carrying north.

Pyeongyang has already sent more than a thousand balloons carrying rubbish southwards, and Kim’s powerful sister Kim Yo Jong warned on Friday that the North is likely to retaliate.

North Korea’s state news agency KCNA also said the countries’ partnership is an “engine for accelerating the building of a new multi-polar world” and Putin’s visit demonstrates the invincibility and durability of their friendship and unity.”