United States: Four injured in Los Angeles school shooting

On Thursday morning, February 1, at Salvador Castro Middle School in the Westlake District, Los Angeles (LA), California, US, four students were injured when a gun went off in a girl's backpack, according to police. LA police took a suspect into custody, a twelve-year-old female student, and recovered the gun at the scene.

The four injured students were transported to a local hospital. A fifteen-year-old boy suffered a gunshot wound to the head and was recovering according...
to a Los Angeles County-USC Medical Centre spokesperson on Wednesday. A fifteen-year-old girl was shot in the wrist, and two other students were grazed. The girl and two other students were hospitalised for their injuries.

Police officials charged the twelve-year-old girl with negligent discharge of a firearm and she was taken to a juvenile detention centre. Police said they did not believe the shooting was intentional, but suspected the girl had the gun in her backpack and it fired off when the bag dropped on the ground.

The Westlake middle school is located near downtown LA and is located on the campus of Belmont High School and had an enrolment last year of 355 students.

India: Head of Delhi Commission on Women calls for prompt capital punishment for child rape

On Wednesday, January 31, following the rape in India's capital, New Delhi, of an eight-month-old girl, Swati Maliwal, head of the Delhi Commission for Women, announced she was beginning a 30-day Satyagrah Aandolan—a form of non-violent civil protest—to persuade the Government of India to impose the death penalty promptly when offenders rape children. She asked for others to join in her protest action.

As reported in the Indian press on Monday, the baby girl was initially in critical condition after she was raped on Sunday at her home in Subhash Nagar in western New Delhi while her parents were at work. According to the police and a statement by the baby's father to the agency Asian News International, when the mother returned, the baby was crying and was covered in blood. A police spokesman said the baby's 28-year-old cousin was arrested under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offenses Act and Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code.

After Ms Maliwal visited the baby's hospital, she tweeted: "How can Delhi sleep today when eight month baby has been brutally raped in Capital? Have we become so insensitive or we have simply accepted this as our fate?", and addressed Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding "stricter laws and more police resources" to combat rape. She said the baby's internal injuries were "horrific" and "inhuman" and had required three hours on the operating table to repair, and she could "still hear her screams and cries". Others responded with tweets calling the rape "monstrous" and "disgusting and disturbing".

In a tweeted statement on Wednesday announcing her protest action, Ms Maliwal demanded offenders who rape children should be executed within six months. "I will not go home for 30 days. I will work in the office..."
throughout the day and at night I will inspect different places of Delhi. I will do double work. I will sleep in the office only. I give 30 days' time to accept my demands." She also demanded a 14,000-person expansion of the Delhi Police and improvements to police software and forensics resources and reform of the prosecution department. She asked "people who understand the severity of such crimes and who really care for their kids" to join her in going house to house throughout Delhi to get the government to meet her demands.

Since the 2012 gang rape and murder of a student on a Delhi bus, there have been widespread protests in India against rape culture and calls for heavier penalties for rape. In response the government has made the law stricter and introduced dedicated 'fast-track' courts. Problems persist. There have been other press reports of child rape in the country in recent years, including the kidnapping and rape of a three-month-old in Hyderabad in 2015 and the kidnapping and rape of an eleven-month-old in Delhi in 2016. National Crime Records Bureau 2016 statistics list 19,765 child rapes, an 82 per cent increase over the previous year.

Football: Giroud leaves Arsenal to sign eighteen-month deal with cross-town rivals Chelsea

On Wednesday, January 31, English football club Chelsea FC announced signing French forward Olivier Giroud from cross-town rivals Arsenal FC on an eighteen-month contract. The deal is reportedly worth about £18 million. Olivier Giroud is to wear jersey number 18, the club announced via their website.

31-year-old Giroud joined The Gunners in 2012. Since then, the Frenchman has played 253 games for Arsenal and scored 105 goals. During his tenure at the Emirates Stadium, Giroud has won three FA Cups. He has also won the Community Shield trophy with Arsenal.

Giroud remarked on joining The Blues, "Chelsea is one of the biggest teams in the Premier League. They have won maybe the most trophies in the last six or seven years. It's a massive club and I am proud to sign for Chelsea, and I'm looking forward to playing."

Chelsea loaned Belgian forward Michy Batshuayi to German club Borussia Dortmund. Giroud's departure from Arsenal was announced shortly after Arsenal announced signing Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from Dortmund for about £56 million making him the costliest player in Arsenal's history.

Afghanistan: Ambulance suicide attack kills about 100 people in Kabul

On Saturday, January 27, an ambulance laden with explosives was driven past a police checkpoint in Afghanistan's capital Kabul. As the ambulance entered a "secure zone" of the city the ambulance detonated. According to the latest updates, at least one hundred people were killed and around 200 injured. The Taliban has claimed responsibility for the attack.

The blast occurred near midday local time. The ambulance had cleared one checkpoint, but was found out at a second checkpoint. It was here the driver detonated the explosives before police could stop him. This is according to Interior Ministry spokesman Nasrat Rahimi, who also said the nearby ministry building was the apparent target. The driver had claimed to be taking a patient to Jamhuriat Hospital. Mirwais Yasini, a member of the National Assembly, was nearby when it happened. He agreed that the Interior Ministry was the intended target, however, most of the victims were people in the busy streets, he told Reuters.
Wahid Majrooh of the Ministry of Public Health confirmed the number of causalities. Witnesses told the BBC that the streets were crowded at the time of the explosion. Dejan Panic, who works for Italian-based Emergency, coordinates a trauma center which treated dozens of the wounded and called it a "massacre" when speaking to Reuters.

United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres' office released a statement: "Indiscriminate attacks against civilians are a serious violation of human rights and humanitarian laws, and can never be justified."

Chief executive of Afghanistan, Abdullah Abdullah wrote on Twitter: "We condemn this terrorist act and share the sorrows and loses of our people. Our priority and focus right now is to help those in need and provide the best treatment for those wounded."

Zabiullah Mujahid, a spokesperson for the Taliban in Afghanistan, claimed responsibility on behalf of the fundamentalist group.

Tadamichi Yamamoto, head of the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan, said in a statement: "I am particularly disturbed by credible reports that the attackers used a vehicle painted to look like an ambulance, including bearing the distinctive medical emblem, in clear violation of international humanitarian law."

**Football: Arsenal signs Aubameyang from Dortmund**

On Wednesday, January 31, English football club Arsenal FC announced signing Gabonese striker Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang from German club Borussia Dortmund (BVB) on "a long-term contract" which runs until 2021. The deal is worth about £56 million, making Aubameyang the costliest player in the history of the club.

The 28-year-old striker joined Borussia in 2013 from French club Saint-Etienne, and since then, scored 141 goals in 213 matches for BVB. In German Bundesliga, he scored 98 goals, scoring one goal in 116 minutes on average. During his tenure at the Signal Iduna Park, the Gabonese captain won the 2017 DFB-Pokal (German Cup).

Aubameyang scored 31 goals in Bundesliga last season. Aubameyang was named 2016 Bundesliga player of the year. A year earlier, in 2015, he won African Footballer of the Year award. He has 56 international caps with Gabon and has netted 23 goals.

Via their official website, Arsenal announced Aubameyang is to wear jersey number 14, previously worn by Theo Walcott until last month when he moved to Everton FC. The Gabonese, who has already scored 21 goals in 24 games this season, reunites with Armenian midfielder Henrick Mkhitaryan. They were teammates at Dortmund until 2016, when Mkhitaryan moved to Manchester United. Mkhitaryan's transfer to the London club came in exchange of Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez moving from Arsenal to their rivals Manchester in a swap deal.

Dortmund had signed Belgian footballer Michy Batshuayi from Chelsea on loan before Aubameyang's deal was agreed upon. With Aubameyang's arrival, French forward Olivier Giroud moved to Arsenal's cross-town rivals Chelsea. In summer, Arsenal had signed Alexandre Lacazette for a then-club record fee of around £46.5 million.

**Koreas hold joint training session for Olympics**

On Sunday, January 28, female ice hockey players from North and South Korea joined one another for a training session before the upcoming Winter Olympics. Players from the two Koreas are to compete together as a united team for the events hosted in Pyeongchang, South Korea, which are scheduled to start on...
February 9; Seoul's Unification Ministry said. The cross-border gesture is part of diplomatic efforts to ease tensions on the divided Korean Peninsula and the team was approved by the International Olympic Committee.

The International Olympic Committee selected Pyeongchang in 2011 to host the event, marking South Korea's first opportunity since the 1988 Summer Olympics in Seoul. The earlier event was marred by violence as North Korea had bombed a South Korean flight several months prior, killing over 100 and boycotted the event. Inter-Korean relations have changed considerably in the ensuing thirty years, including the two sending unified teams for table tennis and youth football in other non-Olympic competitions.

The announcement that the two countries would compete together was a stated goal of South Korean President Moon Jae-in. Last year, he announced the proposal and the two nations went into discussion this month. After two weeks, they made the announcement to field a consolidated 35-strong team of ice hockey players and have joint skiing exercises with both team coaches involved.

According to Yonhap News Agency estimates, about 80% of South Koreans support dialogue, but the move to have a joint team has been controversial. Over 10,000 South Korean citizens sent a petition to South Korean President Moon opposing the union and a group of North Korean defectors held a protest at the South Korean National Assembly on January 24, tearing apart photos of the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-un. Public support for eventual reunification of the Korean peninsula has waned in recent years, with the younger generation more skeptical of the possibility.

### Football: Barça centre-back Piqué extends contract until 2022

On Monday, January 29, Catalan football club FC Barcelona officially announced the Spanish centre-back Gerard Piqué signed a contract extension which runs through June 2022. "If I complete this contract I will be 14 years as a professional at Barcelona [Si cumplo este contrato, serán 14 años de carrera profesional en el Barça]", the Spanish international said after the contract extension.

30-year-old Piqué joined Blaugrana through the youth ranks of La Masia in 1997 and made his professional debut for Barcelona on August 13, 2008. In his tenure at Camp Nou, the Spaniard international has won three UEFA Champions League titles, six Spanish LaLiga titles, five Copa del Rey trophies and three FIFA Club World Cups.

Making his international debut in 2009, a year after he returned to Spain after spending four years at Manchester United, Piqué has 94 international caps, and has won the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, as well as the UEFA Euro 2012 trophy with La Roja. He won the UEFA Champions League with Manchester United as well.

Piqué has played 425 games in the Catalan jersey and has won 25 trophies with the Barcelona club, five less than Andrés Iniesta and Lionel Messi, who have won the largest number of trophies in the Catalan colours.

After signing the contract extension, Piqué said, "I am really happy to be celebrating my extension because this is my home and since my return, my desire has been to end my career here [Estoy muy feliz de celebrar mi renovación porque aquí es mi casa y mi deseo ha sido retirarme aquí desde que he vuelto]." He added, "I can only see myself in a Barça shirt. If I had not
extended my contract then I would have stopped playing because I only play football because I play for Barça [Sólo me veo vistiendo la camiseta del Barça. Si no hubiera renovado dejaría de jugar al fútbol porque sólo me veo jugando con esta camiseta]”.

**Football: Manchester United announces extending Juan Mata's contract**

On January 30, English football club Manchester United announced Spanish midfielder Juan Mata has a one-year contract extension with the club. The club triggered the one-year-contract extension clause in Mata's contract which would keep Mata tied with the club until 2019.

Speaking about the Spaniard, Manchester United's manager José Mourinho said Mata is "[a]n important player for me; an important player for the club; an important player for the other players.” Juan Mata joined The Red Devils in 2014 on a four-and-half-year contract. Mata made the switch from London club Chelsea FC for then-club record transfer fee £37.1 million under David Moyes' management. Mourinho was Chelsea's manager that time.

As of Tuesday, the Spaniard played 172 matches and scored 39 goals for Manchester United, and featured this season in 26 games in all competitions. In his tenure at the Old Trafford, he has won the FA Cup, EFL League Cup as well as the UEFA Europa League trophy.

The 29-year-old midfielder's contract was previously set to expire at the end of the season. Manchester's veteran midfielder Michael Carrick is set to retire at the end of the season. Earlier in January, United signed Chilean forward Alexis Sanchez from another London club Arsenal FC, on the expense of Armenian midfielder Henrik Mkhitaryan in the swap deal. Mourinho, who has been in-charge of Manchester United for one and half years, said they "need to get a player to compensate the situation" of Carrick's retirement.

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