

Gunman killed by US Secret Service after opening fire near White House

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- Multiple US media identified the suspect as Nasire Best, 21, of Maryland

- The man never got close to Trump or the other guests attending the event.

AFP | Washington, United States



Police vehicles and armed Secret Service agents are seen near the White House in Washington, DC

A gunman opened fire near the White House on Saturday evening, with US Secret Service agents killing the assailant in a shoot-out during which a bystander was also struck, authorities said.

President Donald Trump was in the White House at the time -- on a day when he was working to negotiate a deal with Iran -- but was not impacted by the incident, Secret Service communications chief Anthony Guglielmi said in a statement.

The confrontation took place just after 6:00 pm (2200 GMT) when a man near the White House security perimeter "pulled a weapon from his bag and began firing."

"Secret Service Police returned fire striking the suspect who was transported to an area hospital where he was pronounced deceased. During the shooting one bystander was also struck by gunfire," Guglielmi

said, without giving details on the bystander's condition.

No Secret Service officers were hurt.

"Thank you to our great Secret Service and Law Enforcement for the swift and professional action taken this evening against a gunman near the White House, who had a violent history and possible obsession with our Country's most cherished

structure," Trump said on Truth Social early Sunday.

Multiple US media identified the suspect as Nasire Best, 21, of Maryland, reporting that Best had a history of mental health concerns and had multiple prior interactions with Secret Service members.

Police and security forces swarmed the scene, cordoning off access as National Guard troops blocked an AFP reporter

from entering the area in downtown Washington.

"We heard probably 20 to 25 what sounded like fireworks, but they're gunshots, and then everyone started running," Canadian tourist Reid Adrian told AFP.

Journalists who were on the White House North Lawn at the time said they were ordered to run and shelter in the press briefing room.

ABC News correspondent Selina Wang had been recording a video for social media when the gunfire broke out, capturing the sounds of the shots as she dove to the ground.

"It sounded like dozens of gunshots," she said on X.

Trump assassination attempts

Trump, 79, has been the target of three alleged assassination attempts, the most recent of which took place on April 25 when an armed man stormed a security checkpoint in a hotel where Trump was attending a media gala.

The man never got close to Trump or the other guests attending the event.

In July 2024, Trump was targeted during a campaign rally in Butler, Pennsylvania. A gunman killed an audience member and lightly wounded the then-candidate in the ear.

A few months later, another armed man was arrested on a

West Palm Beach golf course where Trump was playing a round.

"Thank God President Trump is safe," House Republicans said on X after the Saturday evening shooting.

"Endless gratitude to the Secret Service for their immediate, heroic response. Political violence has to stop."

Trump has cited security concerns as one of his reasons for building a ballroom at the White House, tearing down the East Wing after taking office again last year.

The \$400 million project currently under construction will feature, according to the New York real estate magnate, six floors below the highly secure "drone-proof" ballroom, including an underground military hospital.



According to historical archives, attempts have been made on the lives of roughly one in every four US presidents since 1865.

Chinese astronaut to spend a full year in orbit as Beijing ramps up Moon race

Agencies

China launched its Shenzhou-23 mission yesterday, which will see a Chinese astronaut spend a full year in orbit for the first time, a crucial step in Beijing's ambition to send humans to the Moon by 2030.

The Long March 2-F rocket was scheduled to lift off at 11:08pm (1508 GMT) from the Jiuquan launch centre in China's northwestern Gobi Desert, carrying three astronauts to the Tiangong space station.

China's Shenzhou missions have been sending trios of astronauts to the station for six-month stays since 2021.

The mission will mark the first spaceflight ever undertaken by an astronaut from Hong Kong: 43-year-old Li Jiaying (Lai Ka-ying in Cantonese), who previously worked for the Hong Kong police.

Other crew members include 39-year-old space engineer Zhu Yangzhu and 39-year-old Zhang Zhiyuan, a former air force pilot, who will be travelling into space for the first time.

The crew is set to carry out numerous scientific projects in life sciences, materials science,



Astronauts for China's Shenzhou-23 space mission Lai Ka-ying (L), Zhu Yangzhu (C) and Zhang Zhiyuan (R) wave during a press conference

fluid physics and medicine.

A key experiment of Shenzhou-23 will be the full-year stay in orbit by one of the crew in order to study the effects of a long stay in microgravity.

Year-long experiment

The experiment is part of China's preparations for future lunar missions, as well as missions to Mars.

The astronaut selected for this one-year mission will be named at a later date, depending on the progress of the Shenzhou-23 mission, a spokesperson for the Chinese space agency (CMSA)

said on Saturday.

The main challenges will be long-term effects on humans, including bone density loss, muscle wasting, radiation exposure, sleep disturbances, behavioural and psychological fatigue, said Richard de Grijis, an astrophysicist and professor at Macquarie University in Australia.

He also underlined the importance of reliable water and air recycling systems, as well as the ability to manage potential medical emergencies far from Earth.

China is "steadily" building operational experience for "sustained occupation" of its Tian-



The mission will mark the first spaceflight ever undertaken by an astronaut from Hong Kong

gong space station, and year-long missions are an important step towards future lunar and potentially deep-space ambitions, de Grijis told AFP.

"A year in orbit pushes both hardware and humans into a different operational regime compared with the shorter Shenzhou missions of the programme's earlier phases," he said.

Crews aboard Tiangong have until now largely remained in orbit for six months before being replaced.

The Shenzhou-23 mission is part of China's goal to land astronauts on the Moon before

2030, a race in which the United States is also competing with its Artemis programme.

Pakistani crew members

China is testing the equipment required for its goal, with an orbital test flight of its new Mengzhou spacecraft set for 2026.

The Mengzhou craft will replace the ageing Shenzhou line, and will carry China's astronauts to the Moon.

Beijing hopes to have built the first phase of a manned scientific base by 2035, known as the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS).

China also plans to welcome its first foreign astronaut, from Pakistan, aboard the Tiangong station by the end of this year.

The Asian giant has significantly expanded its space programmes over the last 30 years, injecting billions of dollars into the sector in order to catch up with the United States, Russia and Europe.

In 2019, China landed a spacecraft the Chang'e-4 probe on the far side of the Moon -- a world first.

Then in 2021, it landed a small rover on Mars.

China has been formally excluded from the International Space Station (ISS) since 2011, when the United States banned NASA from collaborating with Beijing, prompting the Asian giant to develop its own space station project.

Beijing is conducting the world's first human "artificial embryo" experiment in space, having sent samples of human stem cells to the Shenzhou-22 crew on the Tiangong this month, state media reported. The experiment is intended to study the long-term residence, survival and reproduction of human beings in space.