

A day after serial blasts, fresh explosion reported in Chinese county

01/10/2015 21:10 by admin

Beijing: Another explosion rocked south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region early Thursday, a day after a series of letter bombs exploded killing seven people and wounding 51 others.

The blast took place at 8 am local time in a house near the local highway administration bureau in Liucheng county in Liuzhou, state-run Xinhua news agency reported. Casualties are not immediately known, though the explosion caused damage to a six-story building, with bricks scattered around, the report said.

Meanwhile police have arrested a suspect in Wednesday's serial package bomb explosions. The 33-year-old, surnamed Wei, is from Dapu township in Guangxi Zhuang autonomous region. Wei hired others to help deliver the letter bombs, police said.

Liuzhou authorities have tightened supervision over delivery packages, with the local branch of state-owned mail delivery company China Post halting all its mail deliveries until Saturday. Police warned the public not to accept materials delivered by strangers, nor should they accept parcels received via unofficial channels.

Initial investigations suggest the explosions were caused by 17 package bombs, with blasts reported in more than a dozen locations, including government offices. The blasts apparently were triggered by devices placed inside express delivery packages, Xinhua said.

The blasts took place on the eve of China's National Day holiday. The Ministry of Public Security sent criminal investigators to the scene and said that it was treating the series of explosions as a criminal act, not terrorism, according to the Xinhua report.

Yesterday's explosions took place in at least 13 locations in rural Liucheng, including a shopping mall, a prison, a government building in Dapu township, a supermarket, a bus station and a hospital.

While the local government said the initial investigation indicates it was a criminal case, Dai Peng, director of the Criminal Investigation College at the People's Public Security University of China, said it might be too early to make such a conclusion, state-run China Daily reported.

The blasts might have exposed "loopholes of management of the express delivery industry," Dai said. He said the blasts might point to the need for real-name registration of both package senders and receivers.

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