

Jill Biden to visit Nashville after school shooting massacre

Washington, United States

U.S. First Lady Jill Biden will visit Nashville to attend a candlelight vigil for those killed in the mass shooting at a school there, the White House said.

The massacre by a former student at the Covenant School left three children and three staff dead, and once more opened the debate over gun control in the United States, where mass shootings are agonizingly common.

Biden, a lifelong educator, "will travel to Nashville, Tennessee to join a candlelight vigil to honor and mourn the lives of the victims of The Covenant School shooting," her spokesperson Vanessa Valdivia tweeted.

Two nine-year-old girls, a nine-year-old boy, two teachers and a school custodian died in the Monday attack.

Police have said that the shooter, 28-year-old Audrey Hale, was a former student of



People pay their respects at a makeshift memorial for victims at the Covenant School building at the Covenant Presbyterian Church following a shooting, in Nashville, Tennessee

the school who had been receiving treatment for an emotional disorder, but that the search for a motive is still ongoing.

Hale, who was also killed during the attack, was armed with two assault rifles and a handgun upon entering the small Christian academy of about 200 students.

Identified by police as a female who had used male pronouns on social media, the shooter had maps of the school and left a manifesto that suggested more attacks were planned.

In the wake of the shooting, President Joe Biden once again urged Congress to reinstate a national assault rifle ban, which

was in force from 1994 to 2004.

Efforts to ban the powerful weapons have run up against opposition from Republicans, staunch defenders of the constitutional right to bear arms.

The political deadlock endures despite an uproar over recurring school massacres and other mass shootings in the United States.



A heavily armed former student killed three young children and three staff in what appeared to be a carefully planned attack at a private elementary school in Nashville on March 27, before being shot dead by police. Chief of Police John Drake named the suspect as Audrey Hale, 28, who the officer later said identified as transgender.

Mexican president vows 'no impunity' for 38 migrants' fire deaths



A group of activists and migrants protest outside the Mexican Interior Ministry in Mexico City

Ciudad Juárez, Mexico

Mexico's president yesterday vowed there would be "no impunity" over the deaths of 38 migrants in a fire at a detention centre, as relatives waited desperately for news about the victims.

Authorities faced mounting scrutiny of their handling of the disaster after video surveillance footage appeared to show guards leaving as flames engulfed a cell with migrants trapped inside.

"We will not hide anything and there will be no impunity," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador told reporters after the blaze at a detention centre in Ciudad Juarez near the US border late Monday.

Those found to have been responsible for "causing this painful tragedy will be punished in conformity with the law," he said.

In the video, whose authen-

ticity was confirmed by the government, three guards seem to hurry away leaving migrants in their cell as flames spread and smoke fills the building.

"How is it possible that the Mexican authorities left human beings locked up with no way to escape the fire?" said Amnesty International's Americas director, Erika Guevara-Rosas.

The fire was "a consequence of the restrictive and cruel immigration policies" of Mexico and the United States, the rights group said.

Lopez Obrador said Tuesday that the migrants were believed to have started the fire themselves in a protest against deportations.

"They put mats at the door of the shelter and set them on fire as a protest, and did not imagine that it would cause this terrible tragedy," he said.

Top US general warns of high ammo use in event of major war

Washington, United States

America's top military officer warned yesterday that war between the United States and another major power would see "off the charts" munitions consumption and said there is work to be done to ensure the country is prepared.

Ukraine and Russia have fired huge amounts of artillery ammunition since Moscow invaded its neighbour in February 2022, sparking concerns about the amount the United States -- which has supplied large amounts of shells to Kyiv -- has on hand.

A "big lesson learned comes out of Ukraine, which is the incredible consumption rates of conventional munitions in what really is a limited regional war," General Mark Milley, the chair-



General Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

man of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the House Armed Services Committee.

"If there was a war on the Korean peninsula or a great power war between the United States and Russia, United States and

China, those consumption rates would be off the charts," he said.

"We've got a ways to go to make sure our... stockpiles are prepared for the real contingencies."

Milley's remarks came a day

after Undersecretary of the Army Gabe Camarillo said the United States aims to greatly expand the production of artillery shells.

"We're... investing in production capacity -- \$1.45 billion to expand the 155 mm artillery production from 14,000 a month to over 24,000 later this year, which includes a sixfold increase in production capacity by FY28 to over 85,000 units per month," he said at an Association of the United States Army symposium.

The country is also seeking to increase production of Javelin launchers and missiles as well as ammunition for HIMARS precision rocket launchers -- equipment that has played a key role in Ukraine's fight against Russian troops, Camarillo said.

FIFA strips Indonesia of Under-20 World Cup amid Israel row

Lausanne, Switzerland

FIFA announced yesterday it had removed Indonesia as hosts of this year's under-20 World Cup amid political turmoil over Israel's participation.

The decision was made "due to the current circumstances", FIFA said in a statement without specifying details.

"A new host will be announced as soon as possible, with the dates of the tournament currently remaining unchanged," it added.

The draw for 24-team tournament beginning on May 20 was due to be held on Friday in Bali, but FIFA cancelled the event last week without offering a reason



FIFA President Gianni Infantino

or setting a new date.

Indonesia and Israel do not have formal diplomatic relations, and support for the Pal-

estinian cause in the world's most populous Muslim-majority nation runs high, fuelling local opposition to hosting the

Israeli team.

As well as Bali's governor calling for Israel to be kicked out of the tournament, around a hundred conservative Muslim demonstrators marched in the capital Jakarta this month to protest its participation.

Indonesian officials earlier this week said any failure to host the tournament could result in sanctions that would leave them out of other international football competitions including qualifiers for the World Cup and the Asian Cup.

They said losing the tournament could result in trillions of rupiah (1 trillion rupiah = \$66 mn) in economic losses.

Man City owner named as new UAE vice-president

Dubai, United Arab Emirates

Manchester City's owner Sheikh Mansour bin Zayed Al Nahyan was named as vice-president of the United Arab Emirates in a shake-up of the oil-rich Gulf monarchy's top ranks yesterday.

The 52-year-old joins Dubai's ruler and UAE prime minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum as vice-president, nearly a year after his brother Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed was named as president.

The president also named his son Sheikh Khaled bin Mohamed bin Zayed as crown prince of Abu Dhabi, the richest of the UAE's seven emirates -- a post that has traditionally signified the next in line to the

presidency.

Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed, often known as "MBZ" and the UAE's long-time de facto ruler, was named as president last May after his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa died after ill health sidelined him for years.

His appointment prompted speculation over who would succeed him as Abu Dhabi crown prince, with either Sheikh Khaled or Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed, a brother of MBZ, tipped for the role.

Tahnoon bin Zayed, who is the UAE's national security adviser and chairman of the ADQ sovereign wealth fund, was named as deputy ruler of Abu Dhabi along with Hazza bin Zayed, another brother of the president.

Senate passes repeal of Iraq war authorizations

Washington, United States

U.S. senators advanced cross-party legislation yesterday to repeal authorizations for the wars in Iraq -- 20 years after American forces invaded the country to remove Saddam Hussein from power.

Both parties supported canceling the 2002 Authorization for Use of Military Force (AUMF) that empowered George W Bush to launch the invasion, as well as the 1991 version that allowed his father, George HW Bush, to attack Iraq after Saddam's forces invaded Kuwait.

"The United States, Iraq -- the entire world -- have changed dramatically since 2002, and it's time the laws on the books catch up with those changes," said Chuck Schumer, the leader of the Senate's Democratic majority.

"These AUMFs have outlived their use. These repeals will not harm our service members abroad, nor will it hinder our ability to keep Americans safe."

The repeals passed by 66 votes to 30, with 18 Republicans crossing the aisle to back the Democratic-led initiative.