

Biden to visit Middle East, meet Saudi leader marking policy shift

WASHINGTON US PRESIDENT Joe Biden will make history next month with a direct flight through Israel and Saudi Arabia where he will meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman...

to the Middle East as president and in addition to meetings with individual leaders in all three places, he will attend a regional Gulf Cooperation Council summit in Saudi Arabia.



shift. As a presidential candidate, Biden said the 2018 murder and dismemberment of Jamal Khashoggi — a Saudi-born US resident known for writing critical articles about Saudi rulers in The Washington Post — had made the coun-

'Recalibration of relations'

Biden's meeting with MBS will mark a controversial policy shift. "We can expect the president to see the crown prince," a US official said, while rejecting the notion that Biden was retreating from his principles.

officials stressed that the whole trip has broader diplomatic aims. Biden will engage with nearly a dozen leaders during the brief yet intense journey, demonstrating "the return of American leadership," a senior US official told reporters.

The tour starts with meeting Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in Israel, a country Biden first visited nearly 50 years ago as a young senator.

make history comes at the end. Biden's flight from Israel to Jeddah will be the first by a US president from Israel to an Arab state that does not recognize the country. In 2017, Trump made the journey in reverse.

After days of fierce battle, Russians control 80% of Severodonetsk city

All three bridges leading out of city destroyed; mass evacuation not possible now, says gov

Britons on death row: UK didn't ask for Russia help

Moscow: The Kremlin said on Tuesday that London had not asked Russia to intervene and help save two Britons sentenced to death by pro-Moscow separatist authorities in eastern Ukraine.



An aerial view shows destroyed houses after a strike in the town of Pryvillyia in the eastern Ukrainian region of Donbas on Tuesday | AFP

Kyiv recovers 64 Azovstal fighters' bodies

Kyiv: Ukraine said on Tuesday it had received the bodies of 64 soldiers who died defending Mariupol's steelworks in an exchange with Moscow that saw Ukraine returning the remains of Russian troops.

Pope says Russia's 'ferocious' invasion perhaps provoked

Vatican City: Pope Francis praised the "brave" Ukrainians defending themselves from Russia's "ferocious" onslaught in an interview published on Tuesday, but said the war was "perhaps in some way provoked" by NATO.

Azot plant evacuations planned for today: Moscow

MOSCOW The Russian army said it would establish a humanitarian corridor on Wednesday to evacuate hundreds of civilians from the Azot chemical plant in the city of Severodonetsk.

Azot plant evacuations planned for today: Moscow

"Guided by the principles of humanity, the Russian armed forces and the formations of the Lugansk People's Republic are ready to organise a humanitarian operation to evacuate civilians," the Russian defence ministry said on Tuesday.

Truckers refuse to back down on wage strike

Incheon: South Korean truck drivers staged an eighth day of protests on Tuesday over wages and rising fuel costs, further snarling global supply chains with a strike that officials say has caused more than \$1 billion in losses.

ASIA MATTERS



CAMBODIA

Phnom Penh: A Phnom Penh court convicted around 60 opposition figures, including an outspoken US-Cambodian activist, in a mass trial on Tuesday as long-serving leader Hun Sen cracks down on dissent ahead of national elections next year.

TAIWAN

Taipei refutes China's claim on strait

Taipei: Taipei on Tuesday condemned China for saying the Taiwan Strait is not international waters, and accused Beijing of trying to endanger regional peace with its territorial claim over it.

NATO leaders meet to discuss war

The Hague: NATO Secretary-General Jens Stoltenberg and a small group of leaders from alliance countries are meeting in the Netherlands to discuss Russia's war in Ukraine and to prepare for a summit in Spain later this month.

Russian troops control 80% of Severodonetsk city

RUSSIAN troops control about 80% of the fiercely contested eastern Ukrainian city of Severodonetsk and have destroyed all three bridges leading out of the city but Ukrainian authorities are still trying to evacuate some wounded residents, a regional official said Tuesday.

Russian forces have not yet blocked off the strategic city

About 12,000 people remain in Severodonetsk compared to its pre-war population of 100,000. More than 500 civilians are sheltering in the Azot chemical plant. In all, 70 civilians have been evacuated from the Luhansk region over the past 24 hours, the governor said.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a news conference

AP "The situation is difficult," Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said in a news conference.

Musk to address Twitter staff this week

WASHINGTON

BILLIONAIRE Elon Musk will address Twitter employees at a meeting this week, the company confirmed on Tuesday, in a first since launching his troubled \$44 billion bid for the social media platform.

Twitter referring to the gathering, said "We can confirm this is true and happening."

Since Musk's takeover move became public in April, Twitter has been roiled by uncertainty over its future but also by concerns about being led by the mercurial Tesla chief. Musk has

advocated a less restrictive approach to what users can post on Twitter and is on record saying he would lift the ban the platform slapped on former US president Donald Trump — a highly polarising decision.

The idea of Musk taking over Twitter has also stoked protest from critics who warn his stewardship will embolden hate groups.

Macron appeals for solid parliament majority

PARIS

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron appealed to voters on Tuesday to give him a "solid majority" in Sunday's parliamentary polls, warning against adding "French disorder to global disorder."



thetising the campaign by refusing any debate, he saw the second round as a done deal." Jean-Luc Melnchon, leader of the left-wing NUPES alliance, told Le Parisien daily.

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EXPRESS READ

UK defends Rwanda migrant deportation

London: The UK government on Tuesday defended its controversial policy to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, even as the entire senior leadership of the Church of England branded it shameful and immoral.