

# [***AP News in Brief at 11:04 p.m. EDT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BV1-H5K1-DYMD-6143-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Iran fires air defense batteries in provinces as explosions heard near Isfahan

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran fired air defense batteries early Friday morning after reports of explosions near a major airbase at the city of Isfahan, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

It remained unclear if the country was under attack. However, tensions remain high after Iran’s unprecedented missile-and-drone attack on Israel. One government official suggested sites may have been targeted by drones.

The Israeli military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

IRNA said the defenses fired across several provinces. It did not elaborate on what caused the batteries to fire, though people across the area reported hearing the sounds.

In particular, IRNA said air defenses fired at a major airbase in Isfahan, which long has been home to Iran's fleet of American-made F-14 Tomcats — purchased before the 1979 Islamic Revolution.

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12 jurors have been picked for Donald Trump's hush money trial. Selection of alternates is ongoing

NEW YORK (AP) — A jury of 12 people was seated Thursday in former President Donald Trump’s history-making hush money trial, propelling the proceedings closer to opening statements and the start of weeks of dramatic testimony.

The court quickly turned to selecting alternate jurors, with the process on track to wrap up by the end of the week. Prosecutors could begin presenting their case early next week.

The jury of Manhattanites includes a sales professional, a software engineer, a security engineer, a teacher, a speech therapist, multiple lawyers, an investment banker and a retired wealth manager.

The first-ever trial of a former American president is unfolding in New York during this year's race for the White House, meaning the presumptive Republican nominee will spend his days in court confronted by salacious and unflattering testimony about his personal life while simultaneously campaigning to reclaim the office he held for four years.

He's made clear his determination to use his legal jeopardy, already a central issue in the race against Democratic incumbent Joe Biden, to his advantage. After a full day of jury selection, he complained to reporters that he should have been out campaigning but was in court instead for what he said was a “very unfair trial.”

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Judge in Trump case orders media not to report where potential jurors work

NEW YORK (AP) — The judge in Donald Trump's hush money trial ordered the media on Thursday not to report on where potential jurors have worked and to be careful about revealing information about those who will sit in judgment of the former president.

Judge Juan Merchan acted after one juror was dismissed when she expressed concerns about participating in the trial after details about her became publicly known.

The names of the jurors are supposed to be a secret, but the dismissed juror told Merchan she had friends, colleagues and family members contacting her to ask whether she was on the case. “I don’t believe at this point I can be fair and unbiased and let the outside influences not affect my decision-making in the courtroom,” she said.

Merchan then directed journalists present in the courthouse not to report it when potential jurors told the court their specific workplaces, past or present. That put journalists in the difficult position of not reporting something they heard in open court.

Some media organizations were considering whether to protest having that onus placed on them. Generally, the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution bars judges from ordering journalists not to disclose what they hear and see in courtrooms open to the public, though there are exceptions, such as when military security is at stake.

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India starts voting in the world's largest election as Modi seeks a third term as prime minister

NEW DELHI (AP) — Millions of Indians began voting Friday in a six-week election that's a referendum on Narendra Modi, the populist prime minister who has championed an assertive brand of Hindu nationalist ***politics*** and is seeking a rare third term as the country's leader.

The voters began queuing up at polling stations hours before they were allowed in at 7 a.m. in the first 21 states to hold votes, from the Himalayan mountains to the tropical Andaman Islands. Nearly 970 million voters — more than 10% of the world’s population — will elect 543 members to the lower house of Parliament for five years during the staggered elections that run until June 1. The votes will be counted on June 4.

One voter said she came early to avoid the summer heat later in the day.

Prime Minister Modi urged people to vote in record numbers. “I particularly call upon the young and first-time voters to vote in large numbers. After all, every vote counts and every voice matters!” he said in a message on the social media platform X.

This election is seen as one of the most consequential in India’s history and will test the limits of Modi's political dominance.

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House leaders toil to advance Ukraine and Israel aid. But threats to oust speaker grow

WASHINGTON (AP) — House congressional leaders were toiling Thursday on a delicate, bipartisan push toward weekend votes to approve a $95 billion package of foreign aid for Ukraine, Israel and Taiwan, as well as several other national security policies at a critical moment at home and abroad.

Republican House Speaker Mike Johnson this week set in motion a plan to advance the package, which has been held up since October by GOP lawmakers resistant to approving more funding for Ukraine's fight against Russia. As the Republican speaker faced an outright rebellion from his right flank and growing threats for his ouster, it became clear that House Democrat Leader Hakeem Jeffries would have to lend help to Johnson every step of the way.

“This is a very important message we are going to send to the world this week, and I'm anxious to get it done,” Johnson said earlier Wednesday announcing his strategy.

The growing momentum for a bipartisanship dynamic, a rarity in the deeply divided Congress, brought rare scenes of Republicans and Democrats working together to assert U.S. standing on the global stage and help American allies. But it also sent Johnson's House Republican majority into fresh rounds of chaos.

Johnson's Republican leadership team, seizing on the opportunity to outflank hardline conservatives with Democratic support, raised the idea of quickly changing the procedural rules to make it harder to oust the speaker from office.

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First major attempts to regulate AI face headwinds from all sides

DENVER (AP) — Artificial intelligence is helping decide which Americans get the job interview, the apartment, even medical care, but the first major proposals to reign in bias in AI decision making are facing headwinds from every direction.

Lawmakers working on these bills, in states including Colorado, Connecticut and Texas, came together Thursday to argue the case for their proposals as civil rights-oriented groups and the industry play tug-of-war with core components of the legislation.

“Every bill we run is going to end the world as we know it. That’s a common thread you hear when you run policies,” Colorado’s Democratic Senate Majority Leader Robert Rodriguez said Thursday. “We’re here with a policy that’s not been done anywhere to the extent that we’ve done it, and it’s a glass ceiling we’re breaking trying to do good policy.”

Organizations including labor unions and consumer advocacy groups are pulling for more transparency from companies and greater legal recourse for citizens to sue over AI discrimination. The industry is offering tentative support but digging in its heels over those accountability measures.

The group of bipartisan lawmakers caught in the middle — including those from Alaska, Georgia and Virginia — has been working on AI legislation together in the face of federal inaction. On Thursday, they highlighted their work across states and stakeholders, emphasizing the need for AI legislation and reinforcing the importance for collaboration and compromise to avoid regulatory inconsistencies across state lines. They also argued the bills are a first step that can be built on going forward.

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US vetoes widely supported resolution backing full UN membership for Palestine

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — The United States vetoed a widely backed U.N. resolution Thursday that would have paved the way for full United Nations membership for Palestine, a goal the Palestinians have long sought and Israel has worked to prevent.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 12 in favor, the United States opposed and two abstentions, from the United Kingdom and Switzerland. U.S. allies France, Japan and South Korea supported the resolution.

The strong support the Palestinians received reflects not only the growing number of countries recognizing their statehood but almost certainly the global support for Palestinians facing a humanitarian crisis caused by the war in Gaza, now in its seventh month.

The resolution would have recommended that the 193-member U.N. General Assembly, where there are no vetoes, approve Palestine becoming the 194th member of the United Nations. Some 140 countries have already recognized Palestine, so its admission would have been approved, likely by a much higher number of countries.

U.S. deputy ambassador Robert Wood told the Security Council that the veto “does not reflect opposition to Palestinian statehood but instead is an acknowledgment that it will only come from direct negotiations between the parties."

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Legislation that could force a TikTok ban revived as part of House foreign aid package

WASHINGTON (AP) — Legislation that could ban TikTok in the U.S. if its China-based owner doesn’t sell its stake won a major boost late Wednesday when House Republican leaders included it in a package of bills that would send aid to Ukraine and Israel. The bill could be law as soon as next week if Congress moves quickly.

The TikTok legislation, which passed the House in March and has widespread support in both chambers, was included in the House package as leaders have worked to win votes for the foreign aid bills and after negotiations with the Senate over how long the Chinese technology firm ByteDance Ltd. would have to sell its stake in the app to continue operating in the United States. President Joe Biden has said he would sign the TikTok legislation if it reaches his desk.

The new version of the legislation won a key endorsement from Senate Commerce Committee Chairwoman Maria Cantwell, who said in a statement that she had successfully pushed to extend the period from six months to a year to give the company enough time to find a buyer. While the original bill had a six-month deadline for TikTok to be sold, the revised legislation would give nine months and a possible three-month extension if a sale was in progress.

“Extending the divestment period is necessary to ensure there is enough time for a new buyer to get a deal done,” said Cantwell, who had previously expressed doubts about the bill. ”I support this updated legislation.”

If Congress passes the TikTok bill, it would be an extraordinary and unusual moment in which both parties unite against one company – something lawmakers are usually reluctant to do. But the popular social media app has prompted widespread outrage on Capitol Hill, where there is bipartisan concern about Chinese threats to the United States and where few members use the platform themselves.

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Police arrest dozens of pro-Palestinian protesters at Columbia, including congresswoman's daughter

NEW YORK (AP) — New York police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University on Thursday and arrested more than 100 demonstrators, including the daughter of a prominent Minnesota congresswoman.

Several students involved in the protest said they also were suspended from Columbia and Barnard College, including Isra Hirsi, who is the daughter of Democratic U.S. Rep. Ilhan Omar.

Omar had questioned Columbia's president, Nemat Shafik, at a hearing Wednesday in Congress about the school’s targeting of pro-Palestinian protesters.

Police said 108 people, including Hirsi, were charged with trespassing at the private Ivy League institution. Two people were also charged with obstructing government administration.

New York Mayor Eric Adams said the city was asked in writing by university officials to remove the encampment.

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Allman Brothers Band co-founder and legendary guitarist Dickey Betts dies at 80

Dickey Betts, who died Thursday at age 80, really was born a ramblin’ man.

He left home at 16 to join the circus and became a renowned guitarist touring the world with the Allman Brothers Band. He wrote the group’s biggest hit, “Ramblin’ Man,” and remained on the road until he reached the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Betts died at his home in Osprey, Florida, his manager of 20 years, David Spero, said by phone. He had been battling cancer for more than a year and had chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, Spero said.

“He was surrounded by his whole family and he passed peacefully. They didn’t think he was in any pain,” he said.

Betts shared lead guitar duties with Duane Allman in the original Allman Brothers Band to help give the group its unique sound and create a new genre, Southern rock. The band blended blues, country, R&B and jazz with ’60s rock to produce a distinct sound that influenced a host of major acts, including Lynyrd Skynyrd, ZZ Top, Phish, Jason Isbell and Chris Stapleton, among many others.

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