

# [***AP News in Brief at 11:04 p.m. EDT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BX5-7011-DYMD-6274-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Biden and Netanyahu speak as pressure's on Israel over planned Rafah invasion and cease-fire talks

TEL AVIV, Israel — The White House on Sunday said U.S. President Joe Biden had again spoken with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as pressure builds on Israel and Hamas to reach a deal that would free some Israeli hostages and bring a cease-fire in the nearly seven-month-long war in Gaza.

The White House said that Biden reiterated his “clear position” as Israel plans to invade Gaza’s southernmost city of Rafah despite global concern for more than 1 million Palestinians sheltering there. The U.S. opposes the invasion on humanitarian grounds, straining relations between the allies. Israel is among the countries U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken will visit as he returns to the Middle East on Monday.

Biden also stressed that progress in delivery of humanitarian aid to Gaza be “sustained and enhanced,” according to the statement. The call lasted just under an hour, and they agreed the onus remains on Hamas to accept the latest offer in negotiations, according to a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity because the official wasn't authorized to comment publicly. There was no comment from Netanyahu's office.

A senior official from key intermediary Qatar, meanwhile, urged Israel and Hamas to show “more commitment and more seriousness" in negotiations. Qatar, which hosts Hamas' headquarters in Doha, was instrumental along with the U.S. and Egypt in helping negotiate a brief halt to the fighting in November that led to the release of dozens of hostages. But in a sign of frustration, Qatar this month said that it was reassessing its role.

An Israeli delegation is expected in Egypt in the coming days to discuss the latest proposals in negotiations, and senior Hamas official Basem Naim said in a message to The Associated Press that a delegation from the militant group will also head to Cairo. Egypt’s state-owned Al Qahera News satellite television channel said that the delegation would arrive on Monday.

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College protesters want ‘amnesty.’ At stake: Tuition, legal charges, grades and graduation

Maryam Alwan figured the worst was over after New York City police in riot gear arrested her and other protesters on the Columbia University campus, loaded them onto buses and held them in custody for hours.

But the next evening, the college junior received an email from the university. Alwan and other students were being suspended after their arrests at the “ Gaza Solidarity Encampment,” a tactic colleges across the country have deployed to calm growing campus protests against the Israel-Hamas war.

The students' plight has become a central part of protests, with students and a growing number of faculty demanding their amnesty. At issue is whether universities and law enforcement will clear the charges and withhold other consequences, or whether the suspensions and legal records will follow students into their adult lives.

Terms of the suspensions vary from campus to campus. At Columbia and its affiliated Barnard College for women, Alwan and dozens more were arrested April 18 and promptly barred from campus and classes, unable to attend in-person or virtually, and banned from dining halls.

Questions about their academic futures remain. Will they be allowed to take final exams? What about financial aid? Graduation? Columbia says outcomes will be decided at disciplinary hearings, but Alwan says she has not been given a date.

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Have you heard the one about Trump? Biden tries humor on the campaign trail

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Joe Biden is out to win votes by scoring some laughs at the expense of Donald Trump, unleashing mockery with the goal of getting under the former president's thin skin and reminding the country of his blunders.

Like a comic honing his routine, the Democratic president has been testing and expanding his jokes over the past few weeks. It started with jabs about his Republican opponent's financial problems, and now Biden regularly pokes fun at Trump's coiffed hair, his pampered upbringing and his attempt to make a few extra bucks by selling a special edition of the Bible.

The jokes are the latest attempt to crack the code on how to clap back at Trump, whose own insult comedy schtick has redrawn the boundaries of what is acceptable in modern ***politics***. Few have had much luck, whether they try to take the high road or get down and dirty with Trump, the presumptive Republican nominee for president.

“This is a constant challenge,” said Eric Schultz, a senior adviser to former President Barack Obama. Trump is “not someone who plays by the rules. So it’s up to Biden to figure out how to adapt and play by new rules of engagement.”

So far, Biden has been trying to thread a delicate needle to boost his chances of a second term. He uses humor to paint Trump as a buffoon unworthy of the Oval Office, but the president stops short of turning the election into a laughing matter.

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Donald Trump is running against Joe Biden. But he keeps bringing up another Democrat: Jimmy Carter

ATLANTA (AP) — As Donald Trump campaigns for a return to the White House, he often reaches back more than 40 years and seven administrations to belittle President Joe Biden by comparing him to 99-year-old Jimmy Carter.

Most recently, Trump used his first campaign stop after the start of his criminal hush money trial in New York to needle the 46th president by saying the 39th president, a recently widowed hospice patient who left office in 1981, was selfishly pleased with Biden's record.

“Biden is the worst president in the history of our country, worse than Jimmy Carter by a long shot,” Trump said in a variation of a quip he has used throughout the 2024 campaign, including as former first lady Rosalynn Carter was on her deathbed. “Jimmy Carter is happy,” Trump continued about the two Democrats, “because he had a brilliant presidency compared to Biden.”

It was once common for Republicans like Trump to lampoon Carter. Many Democrats, including Presidents Bill Clinton and Barack Obama, kept their distance for years, too, after a roiled economy, energy shortages and an extended American hostage crisis led to Carter’s landslide defeat in 1980. The negative vibes waned, though, with the passage of time and reconsideration of Carter’s legacy as a political leader, Nobel laureate and global humanitarian.

That leaves some observers, Democrats especially, questioning Trump’s attempts to saddle Biden with the decades-old baggage of a frail man who closed his public life last November by silently leading the mourning for his wife of 77 years.

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Tornadoes kill 4 in Oklahoma, leaving trail of destruction and thousands without power

SULPHUR, Okla. (AP) — Tornadoes killed four people in Oklahoma, including an infant, and left thousands without power Sunday after a destructive outbreak of severe weather flattened buildings in the heart of one rural town and injured at least 100 people across the state.

More than 20,000 people were still without electricity hours after tornadoes began late Saturday night. The destruction was extensive in Sulphur, a town of about 5,000 people, where a tornado crumpled many downtown buildings, tossed cars and buses and sheared the roofs off houses across a 15-block radius.

“You just can't believe the destruction,” Oklahoma Gov. Kevin Stitt said during a visit to the hard-hit town. “It seems like every business downtown has been destroyed.”

Stitt said about 30 people were injured in Sulphur, including some who were in a bar as the tornado struck. Hospitals across the state reported about 100 injuries, including people apparently cut or struck by debris, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management. An infant was among those killed, Hughes County Emergency Management Director Mike Dockrey told Oklahoma television station KOCO.

White House officials said President Joe Biden spoke to Stitt on Sunday and offered the full support of the federal government.

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Putin likely didn’t order death of Russian opposition leader Navalny, US official says

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. intelligence officials have determined that Russian President Vladimir Putin likely didn’t order the death of imprisoned opposition leader Alexei Navalny in February, according to an official familiar with the determination.

While U.S. officials believe Putin was ultimately responsible for the death of Navalny, who endured brutal conditions during his confinement, the intelligence community has found “no smoking gun” that Putin was aware of the timing of Navalny's death — which came soon before the Russian president's reelection — or directly ordered it, according to the official.

The official spoke on the condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

Soon after Navalny’s death, U.S. President Joe Biden said Putin was ultimately responsible but did not accuse the Russian president of directly ordering it.

At the time, Biden said the U.S. did not know exactly what had happened to Navalny but that “there is no doubt” that his death “was the consequence of something that Putin and his thugs did.”

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Passage of harsh anti-LGBTQ+ law in Iraq draws diplomatic backlash

BAGHDAD (AP) — Human rights groups and diplomats criticized a law that was quietly passed by the Iraqi parliament over the weekend that would impose heavy prison sentences on gay and transgender people.

U.S. State Department spokesperson Matthew Miller said in a statement that the law passed Saturday “threatens those most at risk in Iraqi society” and “can be used to hamper free-speech and expression.” He warned that the legislation could drive away foreign investment.

“International business coalitions have already indicated that such discrimination in Iraq will harm business and economic growth in the country,” the statement said.

British Foreign Secretary David Cameron called the law “dangerous and worrying.”

Although homosexuality is taboo in the largely conservative Iraqi society, and political leaders have periodically launched anti-LGBTQ+ campaigns, Iraq did not previously have a law that explicitly criminalized it.

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Deforestation in Indonesia spiked last year, but resources analyst sees better overall trend

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — From trees felled in protected national parks to massive swaths of jungle razed for palm oil and paper plantations, Indonesia had a 27% uptick in primary forest loss in 2023 from the previous year, according to a World Resources Institute analysis of deforestation data. But the loss is still seen as historically low compared to the 2010s, it said.

“Deforestation has been declining from six or so years ago, when there were peak rates,” said Rod Taylor, global director of the forests program at WRI. “It's good news and commendable for Indonesia.”

But others saw cause for concern in the uptick, and tied some of the more recent deforestation to the world's appetite for mining Indonesia's vast deposits of nickel, which is critical for the green energy transition.

The latest data from the University of Maryland's Global Land Analysis and Discovery laboratory was shared on Global Forest Watch — a platform run by WRI that provides data, technology and tools for monitoring the world’s forests.

A vast tropical archipelago stretching across the equator, Indonesia is home to the world’s third-largest rainforest, with a variety of endangered wildlife and plants, including orangutans, elephants and giant forest flowers. Some live nowhere else.

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Obstacles remain as women seek more leadership roles in America's Black Church

No woman had ever preached the keynote sermon at the Joint National Baptist Convention, a gathering of four historically Black Baptist denominations representing millions of people.

That changed in January when the Rev. Gina Stewart took the convention stage in Memphis, Tennessee, — the Southern city home to Christ Missionary Baptist Church where she serves as senior pastor — and delivered a rousing message, asserting that Jesus not only included women in his ministry, but identified with their suffering.

But what happened next put a spotlight on the obstacles women in Christian ministry continue to face as they carve out leadership space within the patriarchal culture of the Black Church in America. Several women pastors told The Associated Press that it should serve as the breaking point.

“This is an example of no matter how high you rise as a woman, you’re going to meet patriarchy at the top of the hill,” said Martha Simmons, founder of Women of Color in Ministry, which helps women navigate the process of getting ordained. “The next Norton Anthology of African American preaching is probably 20 years away, but that sermon will be in there.”

Despite the enthusiastic reception for Stewart, the original recording of her historic sermon disappeared from the convention’s Facebook page, setting off a social media firestorm – driven mostly by women – protesting its removal. A recording of the sermon later appeared, but it was followed by accusations the convention edited her closing remarks, which challenges the four allied denominations to support women in ministry.

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Candace Parker, a 3-time WNBA champion and 2-time Olympic gold medalist, announces retirement

Candace Parker always said she'd know when it would be time to retire. That day came Sunday.

The three-time WNBA champion and two-time Olympic gold medalist announced on social media that her career was over after 16 seasons.

“The competitor in me always wants 1 more, but it’s time,” Parker wrote in an Instagram post. "My HEART & body knew, but I needed to give my mind time to accept it.”

Parker, 38, had told The Associated Press in November she wanted to play another season if she could get healthy from a foot injury that kept her off the court last season. But she cautioned that she didn't want to “cheat the game,” or herself, and expressed the same in announcing her retirement ahead of the Aces' attempt to win a third title in a row. Parker has had 10 surgeries over her career.

“I promised I’d never cheat the game & that I’d leave it in a better place than I came into it. ... I always wanted to walk off the court with no parade or tour, just privately with the ones I love," she wrote. “What now was to be my last game, I walked off the court with my daughter. I ended the journey just as I started it, with her.”

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