

# [***AP News in Brief at 6:09 p.m. EDT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BWY-RGS1-JC5B-G0F7-00000-00&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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Arrests roil campuses nationwide ahead of graduation as protesters demand Israel ties be cut

Protests are roiling college campuses nationwide as administrators with graduation ceremonies next month face demands that schools cut financial ties to Israel against the backdrop of the Israel-Hamas war.

Many campuses were largely quiet by early afternoon Sunday, but about 275 people were arrested on Saturday at campuses including Indiana University at Bloomington, Arizona State University and Washington University in St. Louis. Those have pushed the number of arrests nationwide to nearly 900 since New York police removed a pro-Palestinian protest encampment at Columbia University and arrested more than 100 demonstrators on April 18.

Since then, students have dug in at dozens of pro-Palestinian encampments around the country, prompting a range of responses from administrators: arrests and criminal charges, student suspensions or simply continued pleas to leave. The plight of students has become a central part of protests, with both the students and a growing number of faculty demanding amnesty. At issue is whether the suspensions and legal records will follow students through their adult lives.

Faculty members at universities in California, Georgia and Texas have initiated or passed largely symbolic votes of no confidence in their leadership.

White House national security spokesman John Kirby said President Joe Biden “knows that there are very strong feelings” but would leave managing the protests to local authorities.

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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 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 remained without electricity 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 alone 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 or hurt from falls, according to the Oklahoma Department of Emergency Management.

The deadly weather in Oklahoma added to the dozens of reported tornadoes that wreaked havoc in the nation's midsection since Friday. On Sunday, authorities in Iowa said a man injured during a tornado that hit the town of Minden on Friday had died, according to local reports.

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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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African farmers look to the past and the future to address climate change

HARARE, Zimbabwe (AP) — From ancient fertilizer methods in Zimbabwe to new greenhouse technology in Somalia, farmers across the heavily agriculture-reliant African continent are looking to the past and future to respond to climate change.

Africa, with the world's youngest population, faces the worst effects of a warming planet while contributing the least to the problem. Farmers are scrambling to make sure the booming population is fed.

With over 60% of the world’s uncultivated land, Africa should be able to feed itself, some experts say. And yet three in four people across the continent cannot afford a healthy diet, according to a report last year by the African Union and United Nations agencies. Reasons include conflict and lack of investment.

In Zimbabwe, where the El Nino phenomenon has worsened a drought, small-scale farmer James Tshuma has lost hope of harvesting anything from his fields. It's a familiar story in much of the country, where the government has declared a $2 billion state of emergency and millions of people face hunger.

But a patch of green vegetables is thriving in a small garden the 65-year-old Tshuma is keeping alive with homemade organic manure and fertilizer. Previously discarded items have again become priceless.

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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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