

# [***AP News in Brief at 11:04 p.m. EDT***](https://advance.lexis.com/api/document?collection=news&id=urn:contentItem:6BRF-VWP1-DYMD-60NB-00000-00&context=1516831)

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**Body**

Israel finds the body of a hostage killed in Gaza, while talks will resume on a cease-fire

CAIRO — Israel's military said Saturday it had recovered the body of a 47-year-old farmer who was held hostage in Gaza, while negotiators prepared for another round of talks Sunday on brokering a cease-fire and securing the release of the remaining hostages, six months into the war.

Israel's army said it found the body of Elad Katzir and believed he was killed in January by militants with Islamic Jihad, one of the groups that entered southern Israel in the Oct. 7 attack, killed more than 1,200 people and took about 250 hostages. Katzir was abducted from Nir Oz, a border community that suffered some of the heaviest losses.

The discovery renewed pressure on Israel's government for a deal to get the remaining hostages freed, and thousands gathered in Tel Aviv to call for a deal as well as early elections. Hostages' families have long feared time is running out. At least 36 hostages have been confirmed dead. About half of the original number have been released.

“He could have been saved if a deal had happened in time," Katzir’s sister Carmit said in a statement. "Our leadership is cowardly and driven by political considerations, and that is why (a deal) did not happen.”

Israelis are divided on the approach by Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his government. A week ago, tens of thousands of Israelis thronged central Jerusalem in the largest anti-government protest since the war began.

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For families of hostages, it's a race against time as Israel's war reaches six-month mark

JERUSALEM (AP) — It’s the last wish of a dying mother, to be with her daughter once more. But six months into Israel's war against Hamas, time is running out for Liora Argamani, who hopes to stay alive long enough to see her kidnapped daughter come home.

“I want to see her one more time. Talk to her one more time,” said Argamani, 61, who has stage four brain cancer. “I don’t have a lot of time left in this world.”

Noa Argamani was abducted from a music festival Oct. 7 when Hamas-led militants stormed into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people and taking around 250 hostage. The video of her abduction was among the first to surface, images of her horrified face widely shared — Noa detained between two men on a motorcycle, one arm outstretched and the other held down as she screams “Don't kill me!”

There's been little news about Noa, 26. But in mid-January, Hamas released a video of her in captivity. She appears gaunt and under duress, speaking about other hostages killed in airstrikes and frantically calling on Israel to bring her and others home.

Half a year into Israel’s war, agonized families such as the Argamanis are in a race against time. In November, a weeklong cease-fire deal saw the release of more than 100 hostages. But the war is dragging on, with no end in sight and no serious hostage deal on the table. Israel says more than 130 hostages remain, with about a quarter of those believed dead, and divisions are deepening in the country over the best way to bring them home.

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Ecuadorian police broke into Mexico's embassy, sparking outrage. Why is this such a big deal?

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Diplomatic relations between Mexico and Ecuador dramatically imploded after Ecuadorian police burst into Mexico's embassy in Quito and arrested Jorge Glas, Ecuador's former vice president.

Glas, arrested late Friday, had been convicted on charges of bribery and corruption and remains under investigation for other potential crimes. Following the arrest, leaders from across the Americas voiced outrage at the incident and Mexico's president announced he was breaking diplomatic ties with Ecuador.

But in a region that's no stranger to political explosions, what has provoked such fierce outrage?

International law experts and leaders across the region have said that the move violated long-established international laws that few rulers have dared to breach. It's almost an unprecedented act. To date, there are only a tiny handful of cases of raids on embassies on the books.

By forcing their way into the Mexican embassy to make the arrest, Ecuadorian police effectively intruded onto Mexican sovereign territory, said Natalia Saltalamacchia, a professor on international relations at the Autonomous Technological Institute of Mexico. Mexican President Andrés Manuel López Obrador called the break-in “a flagrant violation of international law and the sovereignty of Mexico.”

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Democrats lean into border security as it shapes contest for control of Congress

WASHINGTON (AP) — With immigration shaping the elections that will decide control of Congress, Democrats are trying to outflank Republicans and convince voters they can address problems at the U.S. border with Mexico, embracing an issue that has traditionally been used against them.

The shift in strategy, especially from Democrats running in battleground states, comes as the Biden administration has struggled to manage an unprecedented influx of migrants at the Southwest border. Donald Trump, the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, has led his party in vilifying immigrants as “ poisoning the blood ” of the country and called for mass deportations of migrants. And as the GOP looks to flip control of the Senate, they are tying Democrats to President Joe Biden's handling of immigration.

The tactic has already figured large in elections like Arizona's Senate race, a seat Democrats almost certainly need to win to save their majority. Republican Kari Lake has repeatedly linked Rep. Ruben Gallego, the likely Democratic nominee, to Biden, telling the crowd at a March event that “there's really not a difference between the two."

Democrats are no longer shrugging off such attacks: They believe they can tout their own proposals for fixing the border, especially after Trump and Republican lawmakers rejected a bipartisan proposal on border security earlier this year.

“It gives some Democrats an opportunity to say, ‘Look, I’m here for solutions,'" Gallego said. "Clearly, the Republicans are here to play games. And so whether it’s Kari Lake or Donald Trump, they’re not interested in border security. They’re interested in the ***politics*** of border security. And, we’re here to actually do something about it.”

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Anonymous users are dominating right-wing discussions online. They also spread false information

NEW YORK (AP) — The reposts and expressions of shock from public figures followed quickly after a user on the social platform X who uses a pseudonym claimed that a government website had revealed “skyrocketing” rates of voters registering without a photo ID in three states this year — two of them crucial to the presidential contest.

“Extremely concerning,” X owner Elon Musk replied twice to the post this past week.

“Are migrants registering to vote using SSN?” Georgia Rep. Marjorie Taylor Greene, an ally of former President Donald Trump, asked on Instagram, using the acronym for Social Security number.

Trump himself posted to his own social platform within hours to ask, “Who are all those voters registering without a Photo ID in Texas, Pennsylvania, and Arizona??? What is going on???"

State election officials soon found themselves forced to respond. They said the user, who pledges to fight, expose and mock “wokeness,” was wrong and had distorted Social Security Administration data. Actual voter registrations during the time period cited were much lower than the numbers being shared online.

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New York City's skyscrapers are built to withstand most earthquakes

NEW YORK (AP) — The ground rumbled Friday beneath New York City, home to famous skyscrapers like the Empire State Building and One World Trade Center. Though buildings that can reach above 100 stories might seem especially vulnerable to earthquakes, engineering experts say skyscrapers are built with enough flexibility to withstand moderate shaking.

The 4.8 magnitude quake on Friday morning was centered about 45 miles (72 kilometers) west of the city in New Jersey. New York Gov. Kathy Hochul said Saturday there had since been at least 25 aftershocks, some of which were felt in New York City. But no major damage had been reported to the city's roads, mass transit system or its 1.1 million buildings.

Operators of the iconic 103-floor Empire State Building posted “I AM FINE” on Friday on the building's X account.

New York’s skyscrapers have been generally built to withstand winds and other impacts far greater than the earthquakes generally seen on the East Coast, said Elisabeth Malsch, a managing principal at Thornton Tomasetti, a New York engineering firm that’s done major work on the Empire State Building, Chrysler Building and the Brooklyn Bridge, among other major city landmarks.

“The earthquake that we design for is one that’s unlikely to happen. It’s a thousand-year event,” she explained. “So we don’t expect it to happen more than once in a thousand years.”

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Iranian commander renews vow to avenge Syria strike attributed to Israel that killed 2 generals

ISFAHAN, Iran (AP) — A top military commander Saturday renewed Iran's promise to retaliate after an airstrike earlier this week widely blamed on Israel destroyed Iran’s consulate in Syria, killing 12 people, including two elite Iranian generals.

Gen. Mohammad Bagheri, Iran’s joint chief of staff, told mourners gathered for the funeral of Gen. Mohammad Reza Zahdi that Iran will decide when and how to stage an “operation” to take revenge. Zahdi was the highest ranking commander slain in Monday’s attack.

“The time, type, plan of the operation will be decided by us, in a way that makes Israel regret what it did," he said. "This will definitely be done.”

The attack on an Iranian diplomatic compound was a significant escalation in a long-running shadow war between the two archenemies, and Israel has been bracing for an Iranian response.

In all, 12 people were killed in the strike: Seven Iranian Revolutionary Guard members, four Syrians and a Hezbollah militia member.

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Zach Edey and Purdue power their way into NCAA title game, beating N.C. State 63-50

GLENDALE, Ariz. (AP) — There was more than one team that came to the Final Four with a dream — more than one team hoping to add its own unforgettable chapter to college basketball's colorful history book.

Zach Edey and Purdue have been thinking big all year, and after snuffing out North Carolina State’s magical season with a 63-50 victory Saturday, it's the Boilermakers who find themselves a win away from the program’s first NCAA title.

“It's the one we've been talking about all year,” said Edey, the 7-foot-4 center who played all 40 minutes and finished with 20 points and 12 rebounds.

For the past three weeks, though, a lot of the country has been caught up in N.C. State. The Wolfpack, 11th-seeded dreamers, were dialing up a classic reboot of 1983, when they won nine straight postseason games to capture an unlikely title that left their frenetic coach, Jim Valvano, running onto the court looking for someone to hug.

In 2024, the Wolfpack went 9 for 9 under similar must-win conditions to get this far.

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Small town businesses embrace total solar eclipse crowd, come rain or shine on Monday

WAXAHACHIE, Texas (AP) — The last time a total solar eclipse passed through this Texas town, horses and buggies filled the streets and cotton fetched 9 cents a pound. Nearly 150 years later, one thing hasn’t changed: the threat of clouds blocking the view.

Overcast skies are forecast for Monday’s cosmic wonder across Texas, already packing in eclipse chasers to the delight of small town businesses.

As the moon covers the sun, daytime darkness will follow a narrow corridor — from Mexico’s Pacific coast to Texas and 14 other states all the way to Maine and the eastern fringes of Canada. The best U.S. forecast: northern New England.

Like other communities along the path of totality, Waxahachie, a half-hour’s drive south of Dallas, is pulling out all the stops with a weekend full of concerts and other festivities.

It’s the region’s first total solar eclipse since 1878. The next one won’t be for almost another 300 years.

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Farmers in India are hit hard by extreme weather. Some say expanding natural farming is the answer

GUNTUR, India (AP) — There's a pungent odor on Ratna Raju's farm that he says is protecting his crops from the unpredictable and extreme weather that's become more frequent with human-caused climate change.

The smell comes from a concoction of cow urine, an unrefined sugar known as jaggery, and other organic materials that act as fertilizers, pesticides and bad weather barriers for his corn, rice, leafy greens and other vegetables on his farm in Guntur in India's southern Andhra Pradesh state. The region is frequently hit by cyclones and extreme heat, and farmers say that so-called natural farming protects their crops because the soil can hold more water, and their more robust roots help the plants withstand strong winds.

Andhra Pradesh has become a positive example of the benefits of natural farming, and advocates say active government support is the primary driver for the state’s success. Experts say these methods should be expanded across India's vast agricultural lands as climate change and decreasing profits have led to multiple farmers' protests this year. But fledgling government support across the country for these methods means most farmers still use chemical pesticides and fertilizers, making them more vulnerable when extreme weather hits. Many farmers are calling for greater federal and state investment to help farms switch to more climate change-proof practices.

For many, the benefits of greater investment in natural farming are already obvious: In December, Cyclone Michaung, a storm moving up to 110 kilometers per hour (62 miles per hour) brought heavy rainfall across India's southeastern coast, flooding towns and fields. A preliminary assessment conducted a few weeks later found that 600,000 acres of crops were destroyed in Andhra Pradesh state.

On Raju's natural farm, however, where he was growing paddy at the time, “the rainwater on our farms seeped into the ground in one day,” he said. The soil can absorb more water because it's more porous than pesticide-laden soil which is crusty and dry. Planting different kinds of crops throughout the year — as opposed to the more standard single crop farms — also helps keep the soil healthy, he said.

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