

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 1 of 59

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Prairie Doc: "Colon Cancer Screening is Important"](#)
- [5- Winter Storm Watch](#)
- [6- SD SearchLight: After McCook Lake disaster, local officials ask Corps of Engineers to help with new flood plan](#)
- [10- EarthTalk - Safe Drinking Water Act](#)
- [11- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- Subscription Form](#)
- [18- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [19- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [20- News from the Associated Press](#)

Monday, March 31

Senior Menu: Pork cutlet, creamy noodles, California Blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.

School Lunch: Chicken breast, mashed potatoes.

First Allowable Day of Girls Golf

Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, April 1

Senior Menu: Hamburger gravy on rice, corn, peaches, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg Omelets

School Lunch: Hot dogs, chips.

NSU Indoor Track Meet, 3 p.m.

City Council meeting, 7 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1:30 p.m.

Wednesday, April 2

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon blue hotdish, Capri blend, vanilla pudding with oranges, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Cereal.

School Lunch: Chicken piccata, rice.

Groton Chamber meeting, City Hall, noon

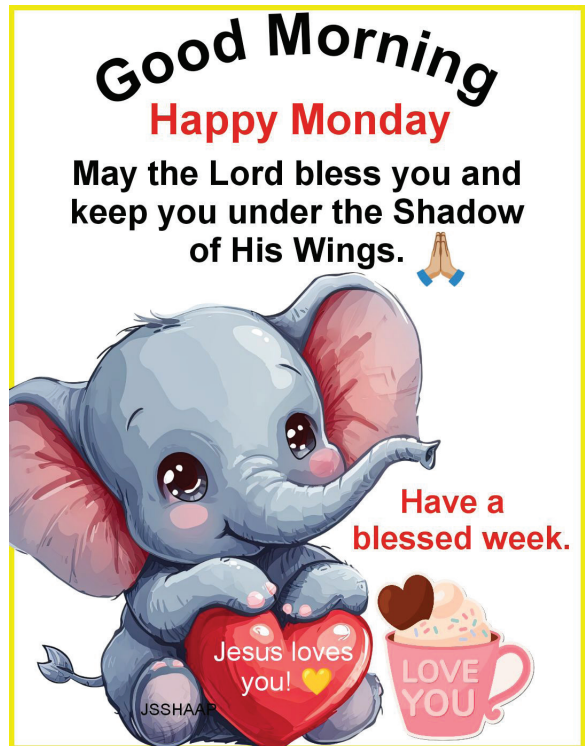
Emmanuel Lutheran: Confirmation, 4 p.m.; Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.; Soup Supper, 6 p.m. (League is host); worship, 7 p.m.

Groton United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445

Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Confirmation 3:45 p.m.; Supper, 6 p.m.; Lent Service, 7 p.m.

Thursday, April 3

Senior Menu: Salisbury steak, mashed potato with gravy, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Pancake on a stick.

School Lunch: Chicken nuggets, mashed potatoes.

State FFA Convention, SDSU

Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.

Friday, April 4

Senior Menu: Lemon baked fish, parsley buttered potatoes mixed vegetables, tropical fruit, whole wheat bread.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Fish nuggets, tri taters.

State FFA Convention, SDSU

Saturday, April 5

State FFA Convention, SDSU

Dueling Duo at Groton Legion, 6 p.m.

State DI in Pierre at Middle School

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 2 of 59

1440

Why 1440? The printing press was invented around the year 1440, spreading knowledge to the masses and changing the course of history. More facts: In every day, there are 1,440 minutes. We're here to make each one count.

Quake Death Toll Rises

The death toll from a devastating earthquake in the Southeast Asian country of Myanmar over the weekend rose to at least 1,600, with reports suggesting a significant number of victims remained buried alive. Rescue crews had largely not yet arrived in the most impacted areas, impeded by severely damaged roads and downed communications.

The 7.7 magnitude quake rocked buildings as far away as Bangkok (roughly 600 miles from the epicenter)—a number of viral videos quickly spread across social media, including people escaping a high-rise swimming pool and others running from a collapsing building. The disaster comes as Myanmar is in the grip of a yearslong civil war and a 2021 coup, with military leadership strictly limiting foreign assistance.

The broader region was hit with a number of aftershocks—read a breakdown of the seismological forces that caused the damage here.

A Chalky Final Four

The men's college basketball Final Four was set yesterday, with all four top seeds—Auburn, Duke, Houston, and Florida—advancing to the tournament semifinals. It marks the first time since 2008 that all four No. 1 seeds have advanced.

Top storylines for next weekend include whether Duke's Cooper Flagg, the consensus top draft pick this year, can continue his dominant performance. Separately, both Auburn's Bruce Pearl and Houston's Kelvin Sampson are looking for redemption years after being bounced from head coaching gigs for recruiting violations. The semifinals are slated for this Saturday, with conference foes Auburn and Florida facing off, followed by Duke taking on Houston.

The Final Four standing on the women's side will be determined tonight, with No. 1 Texas facing No. 2 TCU (7 pm ET, ESPN), followed by No. 1 USC (minus star JuJu Watkins) taking on No. 2 Connecticut (9 pm ET, ESPN). Yesterday, top-seeded UCLA punched its first Final Four ticket in program history, beating No. 3 LSU 72-65, while defending champion No. 1 South Carolina outlasted No. 2 Duke 54-50.

A Musk-Musk Deal

Elon Musk announced Friday that his artificial intelligence startup, xAI, would acquire his social media platform, X, in a deal valuing the network at about \$33B. Musk said xAI would pay \$45B for X while assuming \$12B in outstanding debt left over from his 2022 purchase of the company.

The move is the culmination of recent efforts by Musk to leverage X as a source of data to train large language models, most notably the xAI-owned Grok—the latest model of which can be used within the X ecosystem. The company also rapidly built a massive server farm outside Memphis, Tennessee, dedicated to training its AI models, amassing a reported 200,000 AI-specific processors in about seven months. It remains to be seen how or if the acquisition will change the user experience on X.

Separately, Musk has recently split his time between his companies and political efforts, joining a rally in support of Wisconsin Supreme Court candidate Brad Schimel (R) last night. The Tuesday election has become a proxy for the national political climate and has drawn \$81M in spending, a record for a judicial race.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 3 of 59

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Richard Chamberlain, longtime stage, film, and TV actor who also charted as a singer, dies of a stroke at age 90.

Rapper Young Scooter dies at age 39 after severely injuring leg while fleeing from police.

"A Working Man" upsets "Snow White" to lead slow box office with \$15M over the weekend; Disney's "Snow White" dropped 66% from its first to second weekend.

"Beautiful Girls" singer Sean Kingston and his mother found guilty of federal wire fraud charges; each faces a maximum of 20 years in prison at July sentencing.

Science & Technology

Top vaccine scientist resigns from Food and Drug Administration, accuses agency officials of misleading public on the topic; Peter Marks helped lead previous Trump administration's Operation Warp Speed during the pandemic.

NASA's Curiosity rover discovers the longest-chain carbon molecules on Mars found to date; such molecules are key ingredients in organic life on Earth.

AI startup Anthropic releases two papers investigating how large language models reason to produce answers; how the models arrive at realistic outputs using billions of parameters remains an open question.

Business & Markets

US stock markets drop sharply Friday (S&P 500 -2.0%, Dow -1.7%, Nasdaq -2.7%), driven by increased core consumer prices and trade policy uncertainty.

Athleisure brand Lululemon falls 15% after lowering 2025 expectations.

Frank founder Charlie Javice found guilty of defrauding JPMorgan Chase of \$175M; student loan assistance startup allegedly fabricated millions of user profiles to facilitate its acquisition by the bank.

China to issue a reported \$72B in capital injections to four of the country's largest banks in an effort to shore up their lending capacity.

Politics & World Affairs

Federal judges block executive orders from President Donald Trump targeting two law firms, Jenner & Block and WilmerHale, calling the directives retaliatory in nature.

Separate firm, Skadden, agrees to provide \$100M in pro bono work to administration-aligned causes during Trump's term to avoid executive order.

Columbia University's interim president resigns; move comes a week after the university agreed to a raft of policy changes over Trump administration's threat to pull \$400M in federal funding.

French court to deliver verdict against nationalist-populist opposition leader Marie Le Pen on embezzlement charges today; guilty verdict would bar Le Pen from elections for five years.

"Colon Cancer Screening is Important"

Colon cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in men and women. The lifetime risk of developing colon cancer is 1 in 24 for men and 1 in 26 for women. Early detection and treatment are instrumental at improving survival rates, and regular screening decreases the risk of colon cancer in the first place.

Colonoscopy remains the gold standard for colon cancer screening. While detecting cancer early on is important for survival from any cancer, detecting and removing precancerous polyps during a colonoscopy before they develop into cancer is the main reason regular screenings with colonoscopy have been found to reduce colon cancer rates.

During a colonoscopy, with a patient asleep or sedated under anesthesia, a long flexible scope with a light and a camera is used to look throughout the large intestine, the colon, for any polyps or abnormalities. Those polyps can be removed with a forceps or a loop at the time they are detected. Afterwards, patients are monitored, wake up, have something to eat, and are ready to proceed about their day.

Thankfully, a large majority of patients do not have any complications from colonoscopy. The complication rate depends on age and risk factors and the reason for the procedure. The overall rate is approximately 0.5%. The most serious complication risk, a perforation or tear in the colon, is about 1 in 1,000.

Of course, oftentimes the worst part of undergoing a colonoscopy is the preparation beforehand; getting cleaned out. This is important so the physician performing the procedure has a good, thorough look everywhere in the colon. While cumbersome, with new strategies for doing the prep, many people find this process less awful than they used to.

Stool tests have been an easier, cheap, non-invasive method for colon cancer screening for many years. Often these tests look for blood in your stool. The latest, more expensive option, Cologuard, checks for blood and DNA abnormalities, and is the most successful of the stool tests at detecting colon cancer, at 94%. However, it is only about 43% effective at detecting advanced adenomas, those precancerous polyps that are already getting larger and closer to becoming cancer. This limits the test's potential at preventing cancer.

The Cologuard test should not be used for people with risk factors such as a history of colon polyps or a family history of colon cancer. A positive test result should be followed up by a colonoscopy.

The FDA recently approved a new blood test for colon cancer screening. However, it only detected 83% of colon cancers, and only 13% of precancerous advanced adenomas. With this poor detection rate, out of 100 people with cancer, the blood test would falsely tell 17 people that they did not have cancer, and it would miss most precancerous polyps.

Ever since the Affordable Care Act in 2010, insurance companies have been required to cover colon cancer screening tests. This is because early detection not only saves lives but also saves money.

Each method has its own pros and cons, so please talk with your doctor regarding which screening method makes the most sense for you. In the end, "the best colon cancer screening method is the one that gets done."

Andrew Ellsworth, MD. is part of The Prairie Doc® team of physicians and currently practices family medicine at Avera Medical Group in Brookings, South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at www.prairiedoc.org, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube and Threads. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program on SDPB, providing health information based on science, built on trust.



Andrew Ellsworth, MD

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 5 of 59

Winter Storm Watch

**URGENT - WINTER WEATHER MESSAGE
National Weather Service Aberdeen SD
242 AM CDT Mon Mar 31 2025**

Brown-Marshall-Roberts-Day-Grant-
Including the cities of Aberdeen, Milbank, Webster, Britton, and Sisseton
242 AM CDT Mon Mar 31 2025

...WINTER STORM WATCH NOW IN EFFECT FROM TUESDAY MORNING THROUGH WEDNESDAY EVENING...

* WHAT...Mixed precipitation possible. Total snow accumulations around 6 inches or more and ice accumulations around a light glaze possible. Winds could gust as high as 35 mph.

* WHERE...Brown, Day, Grant, Marshall, and Roberts Counties.

* WHEN...From Tuesday morning through Wednesday evening.

* IMPACTS...Travel could be very difficult to impossible. Areas of blowing snow could significantly reduce visibility. The hazardous conditions could impact the Tuesday morning and evening commutes.

PRECAUTIONARY/PREPAREDNESS ACTIONS...

Monitor the latest forecasts for updates on this situation.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

After McCook Lake disaster, local officials ask Corps of Engineers to help with new flood plan

City works to refine flood mitigation while state works out prediction 'kinks'

BY: MAKENZIE HUBER - MARCH 30, 2025 10:49 AM

Nine months after historic flooding in McCook Lake wreaked havoc on homes, roads, trees and infrastructure, government officials are widening their focus from recovery efforts to prevention.

McCook Lake is a community of lakefront homes within North Sioux City in the southeastern corner of South Dakota, near the confluence of the Big Sioux and Missouri rivers.

Raging floodwaters that hit McCook Lake in June cost the city an estimated total of \$15 million in infrastructure repair, according to North Sioux City and Union County officials. Homeowners suffered millions in additional damage and received some assistance from federal disaster relief programs, although not enough in some cases to replace their losses. Some also lacked flood insurance.



Tree roots are exposed on March 27, 2025, at McCook Lake. Floodwaters carved channels several feet deep in the community during the June 2024 Big Sioux River flood. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

Local governments consider short-term, long-term mitigation plans

North Sioux City Administrator Jeff Dooley said the city is considering building greenways, culverts and storm sewer pipes along affected roads — capitalizing on some of the channels carved by the flood — to better direct future floodwaters into McCook Lake.

"Mother Nature has already plowed through there," Dooley said. The city is also exploring how to better convey floodwaters from McCook Lake to the Missouri River "where it doesn't harm anyone else."

Dooley said a proposal will be presented to the public in late April for input from area residents and city commissioners. He plans to "hit these concepts hard" before applying for a Federal Emergency Management Agency hazard mitigation grant program by the end of May.

"A lot of damage has been done, and we're doing our best to get out ahead of things," Dooley said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 7 of 59



A damaged house at McCook Lake sits alongside now empty lots on March 27, 2025. In December, North Sioux City demolished 20 homes damaged by the June 2024 Big Sioux River flood. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

South Dakota Searchlight)

timeline, he said.

Residents continue with recovery, lawmaker seeks to provide future relief

More than 100 homes were damaged in the McCook Lake flood, and 20 homes were demolished by North Sioux City in December. That's left pockets of empty lots around the north side of the lake.

Morgan Speichinger lives on North Shore Drive, an outlet off the lake's main road. Before the flood, her family couldn't see the lake because of the houses lining its shore. Then the raging floodwaters carved a channel toward the river in her family's backyard and through her neighbors' houses.

"We didn't have a lake view. Now, unfortunately, we do," she said.

Speichinger and her husband rented a skid-steer loader at the end of March to move some of the 66 truckloads of dirt donated by RP Constructors and the Dakota County Fire District to fill holes in their property and in empty neighboring lots.

"Any solution we come up with has to protect everybody."

Dooley does not have a cost estimate prepared for the plan yet.

In the long term, Dooley and other area officials are requesting the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to help reevaluate the current flood plan and develop new mitigation plans. The current plan, which uses levees to redirect floodwaters over Interstate 29 and into McCook Lake before they reach the rest of North Sioux City and nearby Dakota Dunes, was developed in 1976. Union County, North Sioux City and Sioux City wrote a letter to the Corps saying they will sponsor improvement projects recommended by the Corps.

While Dooley said the Corps of Engineers likely recognizes a nearly 50-year-old mitigation plan is outdated, he warned it'll probably take 10 to 15 years for a study's conclusions to come to reality. That's because the project will have a large study scope and a long construction



Floodwaters carved channels several feet deep into the ground at McCook Lake during the June 2024 Big Sioux River flood. A tree's roots remain exposed on March 27, 2025, while keeping a pocket of land intact. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

South Dakota Searchlight)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 8 of 59

Other volunteers, such as workers with Mitchell Electric, helped move dirt with vans and trailers.

"I love the help and volunteers willing to step up and help other people, but it's frustrating that we have to rely on our community to bring us back together," Speichinger said. "You don't see the city, county or state leadership out here, but they're the ones who should be helping."

Vermillion Republican Rep. Chris Kassin has visited McCook Lake several times, walking the lake and assessing damage done to his constituents' homes. Kassin led a failed effort to establish a fund for the cleanup and restoration of McCook Lake this legislative session.

Kassin plans to explore legislation to "find a creative solution" to offer state financial support to future natural disaster victims. He plans to work with the state Department of Public Safety, Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Department of Game, Fish and Parks to understand what options are available.

"It showed some gaps in the way we deal with disasters in the state and some of the lack of funding triggers or mechanisms that we might have to help people in need," Kassin said during a legislative panel Thursday at the University of South Dakota.

Speichinger said she and her family plan to remain in their home because they can't afford to move elsewhere. She said any mitigation plan North Sioux City presents should include an overhaul of the 1976 plan.



McCook Lake homeowner Morgan Speichinger watches volunteers fill neighboring lots with dirt and remove the stump of a tree on her property on March 28, 2025. Floodwaters carved channels several feet deep into the ground behind her house during the June 2024 Big Sioux River flood. Speichinger said the tree's root system diverted the raging waters away from her house, saving the property. (Makenzie Huber/South Dakota Searchlight)

State analyzes prediction and modeling failures

Tim Cowman is the state geologist and director of the South Dakota Geological Survey. In a meeting with the East Dakota Water Development District in late 2024, he said the Big Sioux River flooding came faster and harder than predicted by the National Weather Service. The flooding was caused by three days of rain June 20-22 in southeast South Dakota, surpassing 17 inches in some locations.

Cowman said the water started flowing over I-29 a mile before the levee.

"The flood would have happened at McCook Lake whether or not that levee was there," Cowman said.

Some residents including Speichinger say the levee over I-29 made the flooding at McCook Lake worse, that they were not properly informed of the plan to install it, and were not sufficiently warned about the potential effects. She, a group of other residents and their attorney have since served the state of South Dakota with a notice of a potential lawsuit over its role in constructing the levee, although no lawsuit has

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 9 of 59



An edited aerial photo outlines where a temporary levy was placed with the max flow path about a mile north of the levy during the June 2024 Big Sioux River flood in North Sioux City. (Courtesy of Tim Cowman)

yet been filed.

Cowman said future mitigation measures should plan for flood events like this more often.

"These are 100 and 500 year floods, but they happen every five years now," Cowman said.

Experts say factors in that change may include more severe precipitation due to climate change, the conversion of sponge-like prairies to farm fields, the installation of drain tile under fields to dump excess moisture into creeks and rivers, and urban sprawl that sends more runoff into waterways.

Cowman helps predict flooding impacts for the state with the South Dakota Flood Information System, which produces flood maps based on different scenarios, including peak flows and breached levees.

Cowman said predictions of the "magnitude" of flooding that struck McCook Lake should be more accurate in the future, because they'll include data from the 2024 flood.

He and his team met with the National Weather Service Missouri Basin River Forecast Center in Kansas City twice to "work out kinks" and understand modeling and timing failures.

"From the state's standpoint," Cowman said, "we're trying to make sure the river forecast center doesn't get fooled again on a flood of this magnitude down there."

Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota's Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was a 2024 finalist for the national Livingston Awards.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 10 of 59

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: If we've had the Safe Drinking Water Act in effect for 50 years already, why are so many municipalities having problems providing safe drinking water? – Mary Ford, New York, NY

The Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA), enacted in 1974 under President Gerald Ford, established the first comprehensive framework for regulating and protecting America's drinking water supply. This law ensured that the water reaching our homes is free from harmful contaminants and safe for consumption. It also gave the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) authority to regulate drinking water contaminants and allow states to take the lead role in enforcing the SDWA. However, despite the SDWA's provisions, many communities in the U.S. face challenges maintaining safe drinking water. Enforcement challenges and new pollutants have contributed to ongoing problems in water quality across these municipalities.

The SDWA, despite its successes, has struggled to keep pace with evolving challenges. Responsibility for enforcing the SDWA falls to state governments who have raised large concerns about environmental justice. Studies indicate that racial, ethnic and socioeconomic factors influence enforcement with under-resourced minority communities facing greater challenges in maintaining compliance with SDWA standards. These disparities are exacerbated by limited access to state and federal environmental programs like the SDWA, leaving vulnerable populations affected by contaminated drinking water. "In low-income communities, in Black communities and tribal communities, they're more worried about their water than most folks," says Julian Gonzalez, senior legislative counsel for the environmental group Earthjustice.

Increased contaminants in drinking water also pose challenges. Researchers conducted a study to evaluate private well water quality in Maryland, and analysis revealed that nearly half of the tested wells failed federal health-based drinking water standards. Since almost 44.5 million people across the U.S. rely on private wells, water testing and well maintenance could be required for public health safety. Additionally, studies conducted in Pennsylvania, Virginia and Wisconsin reported that around half of their private wells exceeded the SDWA contaminant standards. For municipalities to begin ensuring safer water for their citizens, regular monitoring of private wells and assessments of the water quality are needed.

Today, it is important to support policies that prioritize stricter regulations of the SDWA, and engage in efforts to protect our natural water resources from contamination. Individuals can participate in efforts to reduce pollution by disposing of hazardous waste properly and conserving water. "There's just been a lot of real progress in terms of requirements, minimum standards, monitoring that is required, the collection of data...We just know a lot more about our water sources, where we get our water from," Gonzales says.

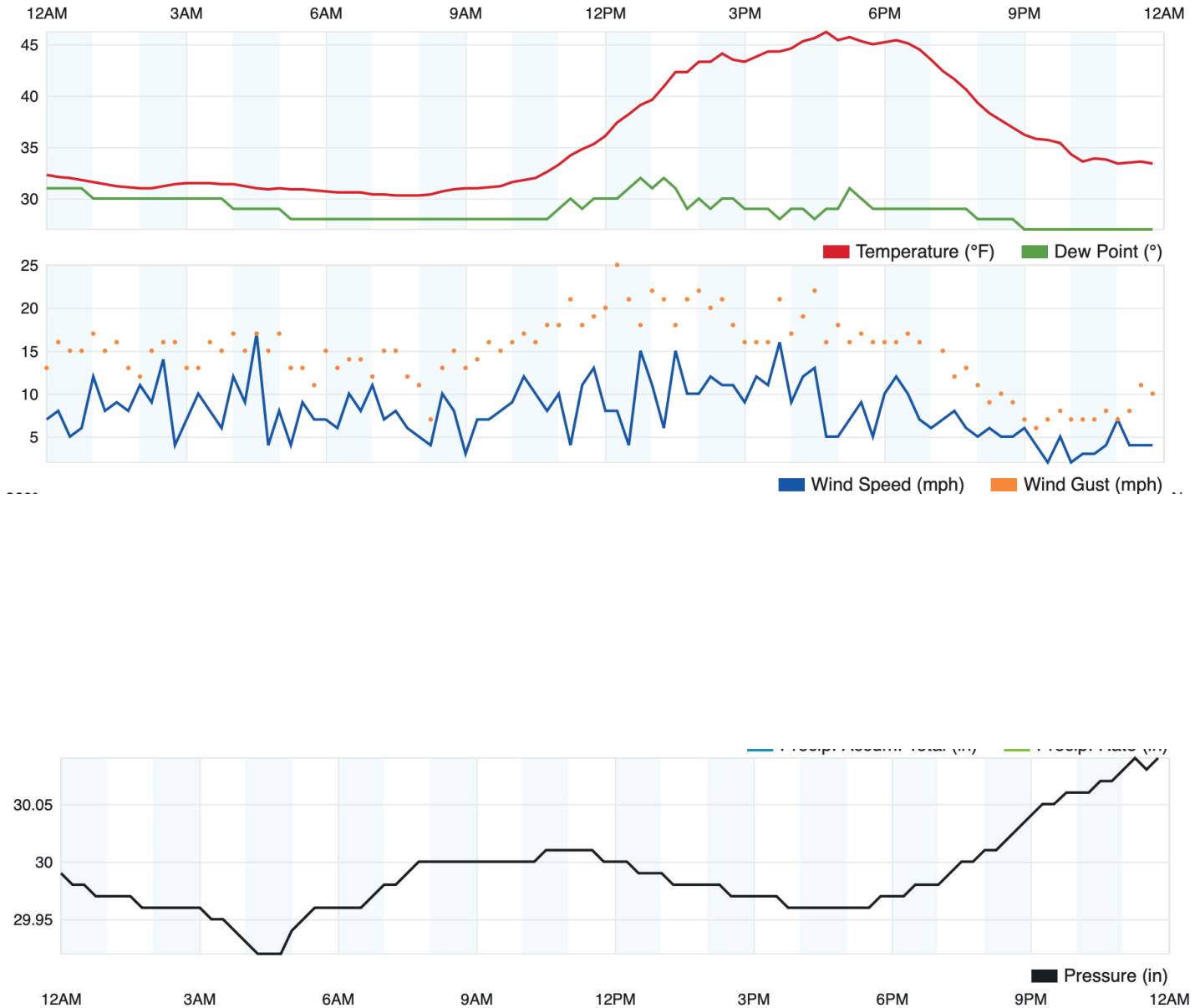


Despite the SDWA's provisions, many communities in the U.S. face challenges maintaining safe drinking water. Credit: Pexels.com.

Groton Daily Independent

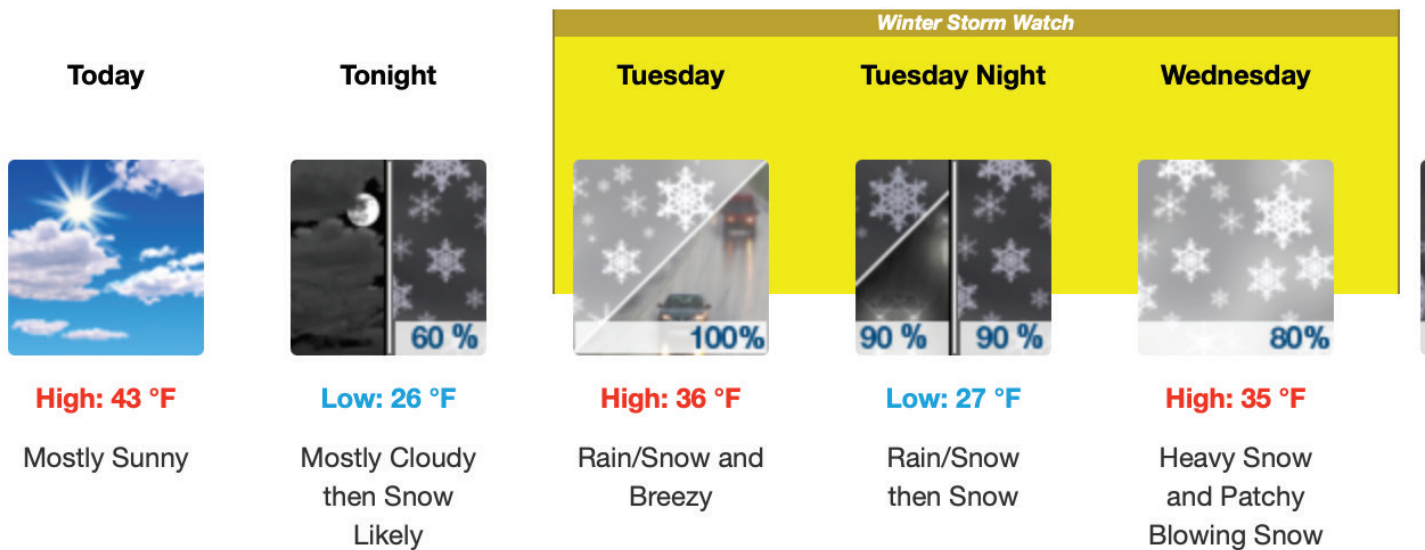
Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 11 of 59

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 12 of 59



Winter Storm Watch

March 30, 2025
3:42 PM

A Winter Storm Watch is in Effect from 7 PM Tuesday through 7 PM Wednesday.

Key Messages

- Rain and Snow possible Tuesday through Wednesday.
- **6 inches or more snow** most likely over **northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota** Tuesday night through Wednesday.
- The heaviest precipitation is expected to fall Wednesday morning, although timing may change.
- There is a **high level of uncertainty** in snowfall totals due to the potential for precipitation to fall as both rain and snow.



Important Updates

- This is the first update.

Next Scheduled Briefing

- Early Monday morning.



National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

A Winter Storm Watch is in Effect from 7 PM Tuesday through 7 PM Wednesday. Rain and snow are possible, and 6" or more of snow are likely over northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota. There is a high level of uncertainty with this forecast, so continue to monitor the forecast for the latest updates.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 13 of 59

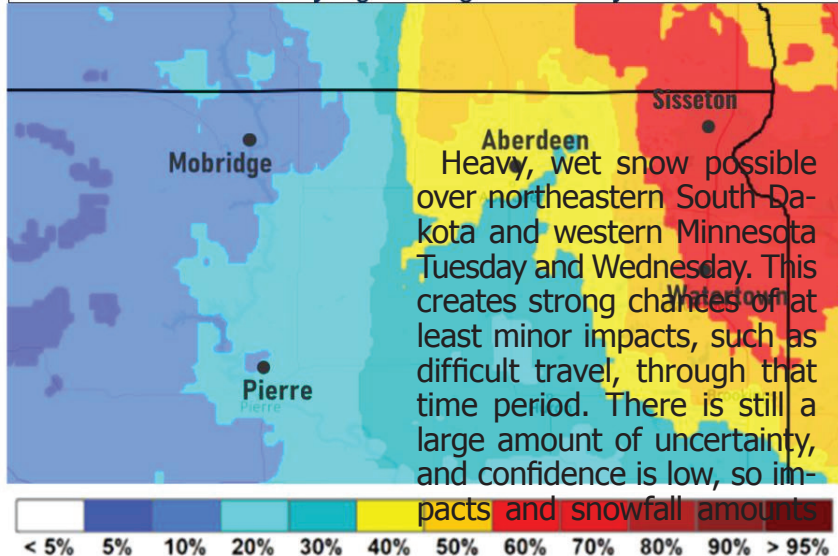


Winter Storm Watch

March 30, 2025
3:42 PM

Snow and blowing snow may create travel impacts Tuesday & Wednesday.

Chance of at least Minor Impacts Tuesday Night through Wednesday



What Are The Impacts?

- **Heavy, wet snow possible** mainly over northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota **Tuesday and Wednesday**.
- Wind may combine with high snowfall rates Wednesday morning to reduce visibility, making travel difficult.

What's Uncertain?

- How temperatures will impact precipitation type, given that rain and snow will both be possible.
- Specific **snowfall amounts**.

What You Can Do



Continue to monitor the latest forecast from reliable/reputable sources... especially if you have travel plans Tuesday and Wednesday!

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Heavy, wet snow possible over northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota Tuesday and Wednesday. This creates strong chances of at least minor impacts, such as difficult travel, through that time period. There is still a large amount of uncertainty, and confidence is low, so impacts and snowfall amounts are likely to change.



Wind Gust Forecast

March 30, 2025
3:42 PM

Gusty winds & falling snow to reduce visibility



- Winds out of the east Tuesday will shift out of the north Wednesday.
- Gusts up to 40 miles per hour possible Tuesday night and again Wednesday afternoon.



Patchy Blowing Snow possible Wednesday.

Winds may combine with falling snow Wednesday morning to significantly reduce visibilities, especially over northeastern South Dakota and western Minnesota.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
U.S. Department of Commerce

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

	4/1 Tue				4/2 Wed				4/3 Thu	
	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am	12pm	6pm	12am	6am
Aberdeen	23	30	32	30	28	31	32	29	20	17
Britton	23	33	36	35	32	31	31	28	23	18
Chamberlain	28	35	36	31	22	29	35	28	16	12
Clark	29	36	39	37	33	30	31	29	23	18
Eagle Butte	37	35	33	30	29	35	36	30	20	15
Eureka	32	36	37	33	29	31	33	29	20	16
Gettysburg	31	33	35	31	26	31	32	28	20	16
McIntosh	35	35	35	31	25	33	33	30	18	14
Milbank	17	28	32	30	28	25	28	26	23	21
Miller	28	35	35	31	24	30	32	28	21	16
Mobridge	29	31	31	29	24	29	29	26	17	13
Murdo	32	32	31	28	26	35	35	29	17	14
Pierre	29	30	31	28	21	29	31	26	14	10
Redfield	28	36	36	32	25	30	33	29	22	17
Sisseton	22	31	32	31	30	28	29	28	25	23
Watertown	23	31	36	35	31	29	30	28	24	20
Webster	25	35	39	38	35	31	32	29	25	22
Wheaton	20	30	33	32	31	28	28	25	23	21

Maximum Wind Gust Forecast (mph)

Winds out of the east Tuesday will shift to be out of the north on Wednesday, gusting up to 40 miles per hour. Patchy blowing snow is possible, especially when combined with high rates of snowfall Wednesday morning.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 14 of 59

Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 46 °F at 4:45 PM

Low Temp: 30 °F at 7:10 AM

Wind: 25 mph at 12:05 PM

Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 12 hours, 49 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 86 in 1946

Record Low: 0 in 1899

Average High: 50

Average Low: 26

Average Precip in March.: 0.89

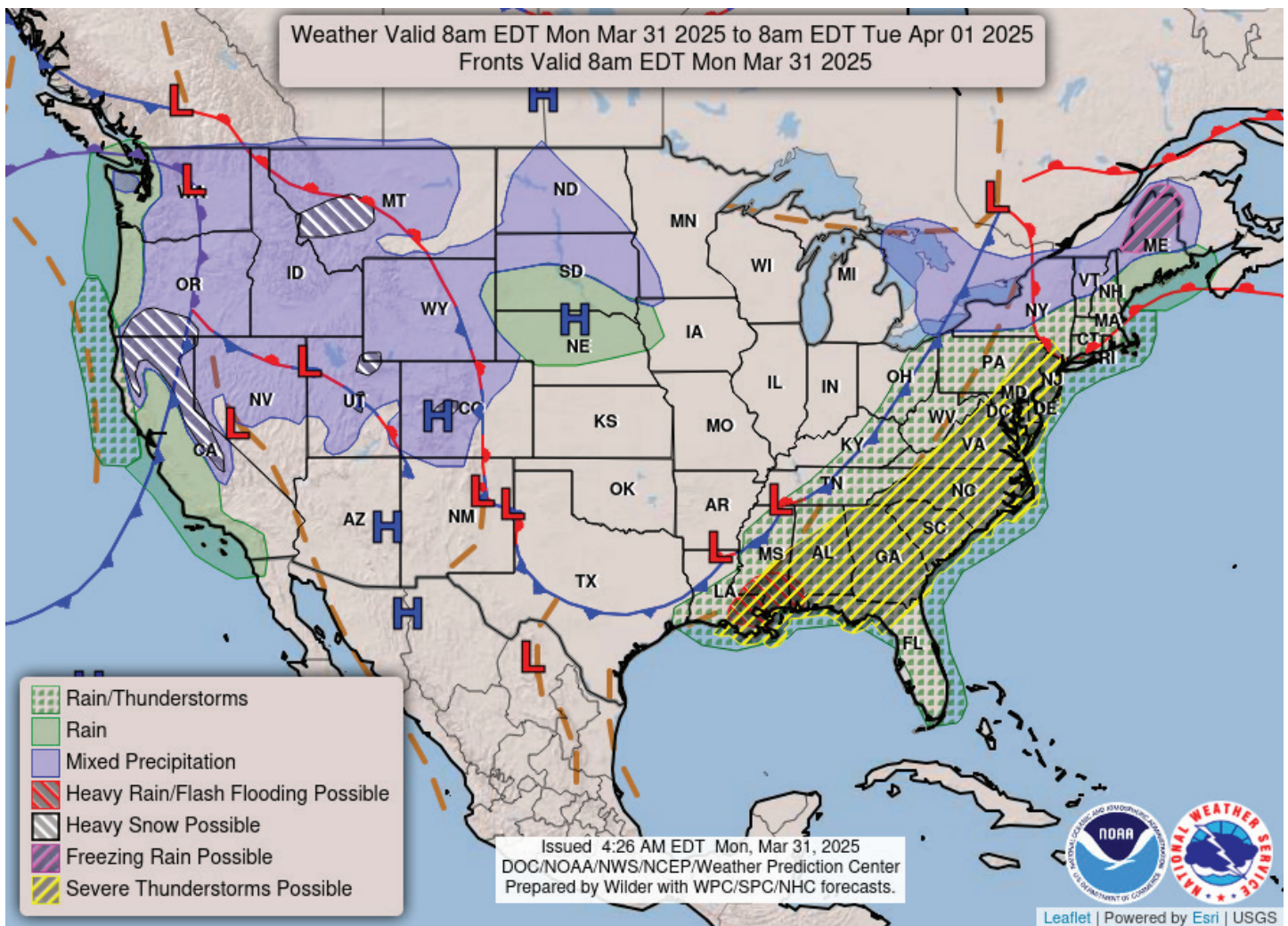
Precip to date in March.: 0.18

Average Precip to date: 2.06

Precip Year to Date: 0.63

Sunset Tonight: 8:00:55 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:09:58 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 15 of 59

Today in Weather History

March 31st, 1967: Heavy snow of 6 to 15 inches combined with 30 to 50 mph winds caused blizzard conditions across most of northeast South Dakota. Many people were stranded, especially along Interstate 29 and Highway 12. In Hamlin County, a man was injured when his snowmobile struck a snowplow in Bryant in the early evening. Also, in the early afternoon, 4 miles west of Lake Norden on Highway 28, a car crossed the lane and hit a semi. The vehicle was destroyed with thousands of dollars of damage to the semi. The driver of the vehicle was injured. Many schools were let out early on the 31st and were canceled for April 1st. Many activities and sports events were either postponed or canceled. Some snowfall amounts included 6 inches at Doland, Conde, and Castlewood, 7 inches at Turton and Clear Lake, 8 inches at Clark and Britton, 9 inches at Bryant and Webster, 10 inches near Peever, and 11 inches at Summit. Snowfall amounts of a foot or more included 12 inches at Watertown and Big Stone City, 13 inches at Victor, the Waubay NWR, and Sisseton, 14 inches at Wilmot, and 15 inches at Milbank.

March 31st, 2014: A strong surface low-pressure area moving across the region brought mixed precipitation to the area, including rain, freezing rain, sleet, snow, and thunder. As the precipitation changed over to all snow, northwest winds increased substantially to 30 to 40 mph with gusts to 50 to 60 mph, causing widespread blizzard conditions. Much of the area received a coating of ice with trace amounts up to a tenth of an inch, with several locations receiving up to 2 inches of sleet. Snowfall amounts from 2 to as much as 10 inches occurred with this storm. The precipitation changed to snow in the morning out west and into the late afternoon hours across the east. The light snow did not end in the eastern portion of South Dakota until the early morning hours of April 1st. Many schools, government offices, and businesses were closed or canceled early. Travel was not advised across much of the region, with Interstate 29 being closed from Brookings to the North Dakota border. Click [HERE](#) for more information reports.

1890 - Saint Louis, MO, received 20 inches of snow in 24 hours. It was the worst snowstorm of record for the St Louis. (David Ludlum)

1954 - The temperature at Rio Grande City, TX, hit 108 degrees, which for thirty years was a U.S. record for the month of March. (The Weather Channel)

1962 - A tornado struck the town of Milton, FL, killing 17 persons and injuring 100 others. It was the worst tornado disaster in Florida history. (David Ludlum)

1973 - A devastating tornado took a nearly continuous 75 mile path through north central Georgia causing more than 113 million dollars damage, the highest total of record for a natural disaster in the state. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - March went out like a lion in the northeastern U.S. A slow moving storm produced heavy snow in the Lower Great Lakes Region, and heavy rain in New England. Heavy rain and melting snow caused catastrophic flooding along rivers and streams in Maine and New Hampshire. Strong southerly winds ahead of the storm gusted to 62 mph at New York City, and reached 87 mph at Milton MA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - March went out like a lion in eastern Colorado. A winter-like storm produced 42 inches of snow at Lake Isabel, including 20 inches in six hours. Fort Collins reported 15 inches of snow in 24 hours. Winds gusted to 80 mph at Centerville UT. Albuquerque NM received 14 inches of snow. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Afternoon thunderstorms produced severe weather from North Carolina to Pennsylvania. Thunderstorm winds gusted to 76 mph at Cape Henry VA. While squalls blanketed northwest Pennsylvania with up to 9 inches of snow, thunderstorms in eastern Pennsylvania produced golf ball size hail at Avondale. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - The month of March went out just as it came in, like a lamb. Marquette MI, which started the month with a record high of 52 degrees, equalled their record for the date with a reading of 62 degrees. (The National Weather Summary)

2010 - Jacksonville, Florida's, record streak of days with high temperatures below 80 degrees comes to an end at 105 days. It was also Jacksonville's first 80 degree reading of the year. The previous latest first 80 degree day was on March 14, 1978.



HIDDEN BY MASKS

Early in the history of Greek drama, the theaters had no scenery, and the actors wore no costumes. When they performed, the actors would carry a mask on stage, and when it was time for their part, they would hold the mask in front of their faces and speak.

The word "hypocrisy" came from Greek drama and refers to 'one who is expressing feelings, beliefs and values that belong to someone else.' In Scripture the hypocrite is a pretender: one who is acting a part, one who is false, tells lies or is godless. They are with us today - speaking, acting and expressing words they do not believe - and behaving differently from who they really are. Times have changed but hypocrites have not.

Jesus despised hypocrites with a passion. He spoke of the hypocrites who loved to pray publicly so others could see them and think that they were living a religious life. On another occasion, He told the hypocrites to get the log out of their own eyes and stop criticizing others for having a speck in theirs. He also spoke of the Pharisees and advised people to beware of their self-righteous, hypocritical, and spiritless behavior.

John wrote, "If someone says 'I belong to God' but does not obey His commands he is a liar." If what we do or say is not consistent with what God requires of us, we must ask God for forgiveness, repent, and change. There is no room for hypocrites in the Kingdom of God.

Prayer: Forgive us, Father, when we have disobeyed Your commands and professed what we did not possess. May our lives be as honest as was Your Son's life. In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: If someone says 'I belong to God' but does not obey His commands he is a liar. 1 John 2:4

We all need the encouragement, comfort, and peace that comes through God's grace. Our daily devotionals, known as Seeds of Hope, have been a means through which thousands of people have experienced this grace. Each devotional comes from God's Word and we pray this good "seed" finds good soil in your heart. Our aim is that the Seeds of Hope will be a great source of daily encouragement to you and that God will use them to draw you near to Him

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 17 of 59

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.5% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White \$48.99/year
- ☐ Colored \$79.88/year
- ☐ Colored \$42.60/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly* \$31.95/year

* The E-Weekly is a PDF file emailed to you each week. It does not grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to paperpaul@grotonsd.net

Groton Daily Independent www.397news.com Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to the GDI/Video Archives.

- ☐ 1 Month \$15.98
- ☐ 3 Months..... \$26.63
- ☐ 6 Months..... \$31.95
- ☐ 9 Months..... \$42.60
- ☐ 12 Months..... \$53.25

Name: _____

Mailing Address: _____

City _____

State, Zip Code _____

Phone Number _____

The following will be used for your log-in information.

E-mail _____

Password _____

Pay with Paypal. Type the following into your browser window:

paypal.me/paperpaul

Pay with Venmo: @paperpaul Phone Number to Confirm: 7460

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 18 of 59



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.28.25

2 9 31 60 63 23

MegaPlier: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$29,000,000

NEXT 1 Days 16 Hrs 34 Mins
DRAW: 42 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.29.25

2 21 33 46 52 8

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$28,180,000

NEXT 15 Hrs 49 Mins 43
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.30.25

19 20 27 36 39 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT 16 Hrs 4 Mins 43
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.29.25

3 15 20 26 30

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$84,000

NEXT 2 Days 16 Hrs 4 Mins
DRAW: 43 Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.29.25

7 11 14 26 59 10

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 33 Mins 43
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 03.29.25

7 11 21 53 61 2

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$20,000,000

NEXT 16 Hrs 33 Mins 43
DRAW: Secs

PREVIOUS RESULTS

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 19 of 59

Upcoming Groton Events

03/22/2025 Spring Vendor Fair at the GHS Gym 10am-2pm
03/29/2025 Men's Singles Bowling Tournament at the Jungle 10am, 1pm & 4pm
04/05/2025 Dueling Duo Baseball/Softball Fundraiser at the Legion Post #39, 6-11:30pm
04/06/2025 Pancake Sunday, Historical Society Fundraiser, 10am-1pm, Community Center
04/12/2025 Lion's Club Easter Egg Hunt at the City Park 10am Sharp
04/12/2025 Groton Firemens Spring Social at the Fire Station 7pm-12:30am (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
05/03/2025 Lion's Club Spring Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
05/12/2025 High School Girls Golf Meet at Olive Grove
05/26/2025 Memorial Day Services Groton Union Cemetery with lunch at Legion Post #39, 12pm
06/07/2025 Day of Play
06/13/2025 SDSU 4 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
06/21/2025 Groton Triathlon
06/23/2025 Ladies 2 Person Scramble at Olive Grove
07/04/2025 Firecracker Couples Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
07/09/2025 Legion Auxiliary #39 Salad Buffet & Dessert Bar at the Groton Legion 11am-1pm
07/11-13/25 2025 VFW 12U Class B State Baseball Tournament
07/13/2025 Lion's Club Summer Fest/Car Show at the City Park 9am-4pm
07/16/2025 Men's Pro Am Golf at Olive Grove
07/25/2025 Ferney Open Scramble Golf at Olive Grove
08/01/2025 Wine on Nine Fundraiser at Olive Grove
08/09/2025 2nd Annual Celebration in the Park/Rib Cook-Off 1-9:30pm
08/14/2025 Family Fun Fest, Downtown Main Street 5:30-7:30pm (2nd Thursday)
08/23/2025 Glacial Tournament at Olive Grove
09/05/2025 Homecoming Parade 1pm
09/06/2025 Lion's Club Fall Citywide Rummage Sale 8am-3pm
09/07/2025 Sunflower Classic Couples Scramble at Olive Grove
10/10/2025 Lake Region Marching Band Festival 10am
10/11/2025 Pumpkin Fest 10am-3pm City Park
10/31/2025 Downtown Trick or Treat 4-6pm
11/27/2025 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center 11:30am-1:30pm
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

French far-right leader Marine Le Pen is barred from seeking public office for embezzlement

By SYLVIE CORBET Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — French far-right leader Marine Le Pen strode out of a French court as the chief judge on Monday barred her from seeking public office after she was found guilty of embezzling EU funds.

The judge hasn't yet said how long Le Pen will be ineligible for running for public office.

Le Pen didn't wait around to find out. In a moment of high drama, she got up and left, walking out of the court and then the courthouse before she was driven away.

THIS IS A BREAKING NEWS UPDATE. AP's earlier story follows below.

PARIS (AP) — A French court found Marine Le Pen guilty on Monday in an embezzlement case but didn't immediately say what her sentence might be and how it might impact the far-right leader's political future.

Le Pen, sitting in the front row in the Paris court, showed no immediate reaction as the chief judge declared her guilty. She later repeatedly nodded her head in disagreement as the judge went into greater detail, saying Le Pen's party had illegally used European Parliament money for its own benefit. "Incredible," she whispered at one point.

The judge also handed down guilty verdicts to eight other current or former members of her party who, like her, previously served as European Parliament lawmakers.

Le Pen and her co-defendants face up to 10 years in prison. They can appeal, which would lead to another trial.

The biggest concern for Le Pen is that the court may declare her ineligible to run for office "with immediate effect" — even if she appeals. That could prevent her from running for president in 2027. She has described such scenario as a "political death."

The verdict was shaping up as a resounding defeat for Le Pen and her party. As well as finding her and eight other former European lawmakers guilty of embezzling public funds, the court also handed down guilty verdicts to 12 other people who served as parliamentary aides for Le Pen and what is now the National Rally party, formerly the National Front.

The chief judge, who read the ruling delivered by her and two other justices, said Le Pen had been at the heart of "a system" that her party used to siphon off EU parliament money. The judge said Le Pen and other co-defendants didn't enrich themselves personally. But the ruling described the embezzlement as "a democratic bypass" that deceived the parliament and voters.

Le Pen and 24 other officials from the National Rally were accused of having used money intended for European Union parliamentary aides to pay staff who worked for the party between 2004 and 2016, in violation of the 27-nation bloc's regulations. Le Pen and her co-defendants denied wrongdoing.

Le Pen, 56, was runner-up to President Emmanuel Macron in the 2017 and 2022 presidential elections, and her party's electoral support has grown in recent years.

During the nine-week trial that took place in late 2024, she argued that ineligibility "would have the effect of depriving me of being a presidential candidate" and disenfranchise her supporters.

"There are 11 million people who voted for the movement I represent. So tomorrow, potentially, millions and millions of French people would see themselves deprived of their candidate in the election," she told the panel of three judges.

If Le Pen cannot run in 2027, her seeming natural successor would be Jordan Bardella, Le Pen's 29-year-old protégé who succeeded her at the helm of the party in 2021.

Le Pen denied accusations she was at the head of the system meant to siphon off EU parliament money to benefit her party, which she led from 2011 to 2021. She argued instead that it was acceptable to adapt the work of the aides paid by the European Parliament to the needs of the lawmakers, including some political work related to the party.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 21 of 59

Hearings showed that some EU money was used to pay for Le Pen's bodyguard — who was once her father's bodyguard — as well as her personal assistant.

Prosecutors requested a two-year prison sentence and a five-year period of ineligibility for Le Pen.

Le Pen said she felt they were "only interested" in preventing her from running for president.

Global shares slump and gold hits a record high as investors fret over tariffs

By JUNZHE JIANG Associated Press

HONG KONG (AP) — Global shares slumped on Monday, with benchmarks in Tokyo and Taiwan falling more than 4%, while the price of gold hit a record high, trading at \$3,154 an ounce.

Investors have pulled back and sought traditional safe havens like gold as worries build over a potentially toxic mix of worsening inflation and a slowing U.S. economy because households are afraid to spend due to the deepening trade war that has escalated under U.S. President Donald Trump.

The future for the S&P 500 sank 1%, while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average dropped 0.7%.

European markets opened lower. Britain's FTSE 100 slid 1% to 8,576.54, and France's CAC 40 declined 1.1% to 7,829.09.

Germany's DAX fell 1.1% to 22,222.99.

Thailand's SET lost 1.3% after a powerful earthquake centered in Myanmar rattled the region, causing widespread destruction in the country, also known as Burma, and less damage in places like Bangkok.

Shares in Italian Thai Development, developer of a partially built 30-story high-rise office building under construction that collapsed, tumbled 27%. Thai officials said they are investigating the cause of the disaster, which left dozens of construction workers missing.

Stock markets worldwide appear shaky as a Wednesday deadline approaches for more tariffs. Trump has dubbed it "Liberation Day," when he will roll out tariffs tailored to each of the United States' trading partners.

Many of the countries that run trade surpluses with the U.S. and depend heavily on export manufacturing are in Asia, Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

"Asia is ground zero. Of the 21 countries under USTR (U.S. Trade Representative) scrutiny, nine are in Asia," he noted.

Tokyo's benchmark fell 4.1% to 35,617.56, while the Hang Seng in Hong Kong lost 1.3% to 23,119.58.

The Shanghai Composite index declined 0.5% to 3,335.75.

In South Korea, the Kospi fell 3% to 2,481.12, while Australia's S&P/ASX 200 sank 1.7%, closing at 7,843.40.

Taiwan's Taixex lost 4.2%.

On Friday, the S&P 500 dropped 2% to 5,580.94, for one of its worst days in the last two years. It was its fifth losing week in the last six.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 715 points, or 1.7%, to 41,583.90, and the Nasdaq composite fell 2.7% to 17,322.99.

Lululemon Athletica led the market lower with a drop of 14.2%, even though the seller of athletic apparel reported a stronger profit for the latest quarter than analysts expected.

Oxford Industries, the company behind the Tommy Bahama and Lilly Pulitzer brands, likewise reported stronger results for the latest quarter than expected but still saw its stock fall 5.7%.

One of the main worries hitting Wall Street is that President Donald Trump's escalating tariffs may cause U.S. households and businesses to freeze their spending. Even if the tariffs end up being less painful than feared, all the uncertainty may filter into changed behaviors that hurt the economy.

A report Friday showed all types of U.S. consumers are growing more pessimistic about their future finances. Two out of three expect unemployment to worsen in the year ahead, according to a survey by the University of Michigan. That's the highest reading since 2009, and it raises worries about a job market that's been a linchpin keeping the U.S. economy solid.

A separate report also raised concerns after it showed a widely followed, underlying measure of inflation

was a touch worse last month than economists expected.

The Fed could return to cutting interest rates, like it was doing late last year, in order to give the economy and financial markets a boost. But such cuts would also push upward on inflation, which has been sticking above the Fed's 2% target.

The economy and job market have been holding up so far, but if they were to weaken while inflation stays high, it would produce a worst-case scenario called "stagflation." Policy makers in Washington have few good tools to fix it.

In other dealings early Monday, U.S. benchmark crude oil added 44 cents to \$69.80 per barrel. Brent crude oil gained 46 cents to \$73.22 per barrel.

The U.S. dollar fell to 149.13 Japanese yen from 149.84 yen. The euro was unchanged at \$1.0830.

Middle East latest: Israel's Netanyahu nominates a new domestic security chief

By The Associated Press undefined

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has nominated a new domestic security chief, after he moved to fire the current one over a crisis of confidence that critics say was politically motivated.

Netanyahu on Monday nominated former Navy commander Vice Adm. Eli Sharvit to lead the agency, which surveils and thwarts attacks from Palestinian militant groups.

Earlier this month, Netanyahu moved to fire Shin Bet chief Ronen Bar, a step that sparked an uproar in Israel. Netanyahu said he lost faith in Bar over Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attacks and disagreements over ceasefire negotiations.

But critics said the dismissal undermined Israel's independent state institutions and came at a problematic time, as Bar and the agency were investigating links between the Gulf state of Qatar and close advisers to Netanyahu.

Israel's High Court froze Bar's dismissal pending further hearings but cleared the way for Netanyahu to interview candidates for the job.

Here's the latest:

Israeli police arrest 2 suspects linked to investigation into ties between Qatar and Netanyahu

Israeli police say they have arrested two suspects in connection with an investigation into ties between the Gulf Arab state of Qatar and the office of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The case is under a sweeping gag order and police did not name the suspects in their announcement on Monday.

The investigation is looking into accusations that Qatar, which is a key mediator between Israel and Hamas, hired people in Netanyahu's orbit to manage public relations campaigns.

The alleged Qatar links are also being investigated by the country's internal security agency.

Netanyahu moved to dismiss the agency's head earlier this month, saying he had lost confidence in the official in part because of the security failures leading up to Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023 attack.

Critics accuse Netanyahu of trying to derail the Qatar probe and undermine state institutions that check his authority.

Israeli military orders evacuation of most of Rafah

The Israeli military on Monday issued sweeping evacuation orders covering most of the southern city of Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

Israel ended a ceasefire and renewed its air and ground war against the Hamas militant group earlier this month.

Israel launched a major operation in Rafah, on the border with Egypt, last May, leaving large parts of it in ruins.

Israeli forces seized a strategic buffer zone along the border and did not withdraw from it as called for in the ceasefire agreement. Israel said it needed to maintain a presence there to prevent weapons smuggling.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 23 of 59

Former Israeli hostage calls on Trump to end war in Gaza

A former Israeli hostage who learned upon his release that his wife and two young children were killed in captivity in Gaza called on U.S. President Donald Trump to bring an end to the war in Gaza.

In his first media interview since being freed in a ceasefire last month, Yarden Bibas told CBS' 60 Minutes on Sunday that Trump was "the only one" who can convince Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Hamas to halt the renewed fighting.

He said as a hostage, as he was held in Hamas' underground tunnels, Israeli strikes were terrifying. "You're afraid for your life," he said. "Everything could collapse at any moment." He said his captors, who had taunted him over his family's fate, told him "you'll get a new wife. New kids. Better wife. Better kids." "Please stop the war and help bring all the hostages back," Bibas called on Trump.

UN releases footage from Gaza operation to recover first responders killed by Israeli forces

The United Nations has released footage from the operation to recover 15 first responders killed by Israeli forces in the Gaza Strip.

The footage released Sunday showed members of the Civil Defense, first responders who operate under the Hamas-run government, exhuming a body from a mound of sand. The body was wearing the same orange vest as the rescuers.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies called it the deadliest attack on its workers since 2017.

Israel said its forces opened fire on several vehicles that raised suspicions by advancing without headlights or emergency signals. The military said a Hamas operative and eight other militants were among those killed.

The United Nations humanitarian office said eight Red Crescent workers, six members of the Civil Defense and a U.N. worker were killed.

The shooting occurred when Israeli forces launched a surprise ground incursion into the Tel al-Sultan neighborhood of Rafah on March 23.

Bangkok to review quake safety after collapse of high-rise leaves dozens missing

By JERRY HARMER, JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI and ELAINE KURTENBACH Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — Thai authorities said Monday they are investigating why a single office tower under construction in Bangkok collapsed during an earthquake Friday that otherwise caused limited damage in the capital.

Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt visited the site as heavy equipment pulled away rubble from the 30-story building in hopes of finding survivors among the 78 people still missing.

He said it is most urgent to first concentrate on finding whoever might be saved. "Even one life saved is worth all the effort, so I think we have to move on, carry on," he said.

But in the longer run it's important to ensure building safety in the city, which has millions of people living and working in thousands of high-rise buildings. The magnitude 7.7 quake centered more than 800 miles (1,200 kilometers) away killed more than 1,700 people in Myanmar and at least 18 in Thailand, most at the Bangkok construction site near the popular Chatuchak Market.

"What's important in the long-term and medium-term, I think we need to find the root cause so at least we can learn some lessons and improve building regulations," he said. "In the end, we will have some results that will improve safety in Bangkok."

Shares in the property developer handling the project, Italian Thai Development, sank 27% on Monday as questions were raised about the high-rise's design, enforcement of construction safety codes, and the state-run Chinese contractor building the structure, the State Audit Office building.

Interior Minister Anutin Charnvirakul, whose family owns one of Thailand's largest construction conglomerates, told reporters he ordered an investigation committee to be set up and to report the results back to him within seven days.

He pointed to three possible factors: the designer, the inspectors or the builders.

"We will definitely find the true reasons as to why this building has collapsed, because it's all scientific," Anutin said.

Although it does not sit near a geologic fault, Bangkok is built on relatively unstable alluvial soil, on the banks of the Chao Phraya River. The city has long been sinking under the weight of its many tall buildings, leading authorities to restrict the use of groundwater to help reduce subsidence.

The Myanmar quake Friday gave the city an unusually long and strong jolt, causing water from rooftop pools to cascade down skyscrapers, light-rail trains to rock on their tracks, and millions of people to flee homes and apartment buildings. Many people waited for hours to see if their homes and offices were safe.

Most other damage in the city appeared to be superficial, such as fallen ceiling panels and fittings and cracked plaster.

Deaths from devastating earthquake in Myanmar climb past 1,700

By DAVID RISING Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The death toll from the earthquake that hit Myanmar has risen to more than 1,700 as more bodies have been pulled from the rubble, the country's military-led government said Monday.

Government spokesman Maj. Gen. Zaw Min Tun told state-run MRTV that another 3,400 have been injured and more than 300 were missing. The military had previously reported 1,644 dead but did not provide specific figures in its update.

The 7.7 magnitude earthquake hit at midday Friday, causing widespread damage, including in the capital Naypitaw and the second largest city, Mandalay.

It was the time of Friday prayers for the country's Muslim minority during the holy month of Ramadan, and some 700 worshippers were killed when mosques collapsed, said Tun Kyi, a member of the steering committee of the Spring Revolution Myanmar Muslim Network. It was not clear whether they were already included in the official count of casualties.

Tun Kyi said some 60 mosques were damaged or destroyed when the earthquake struck, and videos posted on The Irrawaddy online news site showed several mosques toppling during the quake, and people fleeing from the areas.

In Mandalay, 270 monks were taking a religious exam at the U Hla Thein monastery when the quake hit, crumpling the building.

Rescue workers at the scene Monday said 70 were able to escape, but 50 have already been found dead and 150 are still unaccounted for.

Little is known about the damage in many places

The true number of people killed and injured across the regions hit is thought to be possibly many times the official figures, but with telecommunication outages and extreme challenges to movement around the country, little is known about the damage in many areas.

"We're really not clear on the scale of the destruction at this stage," Lauren Ellery, deputy director of programs in Myanmar for the International Rescue Committee, told The Associated Press.

There is a state of emergency in six regions, and Ellery said her teams on the ground and their local partners are currently assessing where needs are the greatest, while providing emergency medical care, humanitarian supplies and other assistance.

"They were talking about a town near Mandalay where 80% of the buildings were reportedly collapsed, but it wasn't in the news because telecommunications have been slow," she said.

"Even in areas where there isn't so much impact, our partner reported to us on Saturday that there were landslides stopping them reaching one of the villages."

The earthquake, centered near Mandalay — a city of some 1.5 million, brought down buildings and damaged other infrastructure like the city's airport.

An artificial intelligence analysis of satellite images of Mandalay by Microsoft's AI for Good Lab showed 515 buildings with 80%-100% damage and another 1,524 with between 20% and 80% damage. Another

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 25 of 59

180,004 buildings had between 0% and 20% damage, and the AI4G Lab noted that the assessment was a "preliminary guide and will require on-the-ground verification."

The World Health Organization said it has reports of three hospitals destroyed and 22 partially damaged in the region.

"The scale of deaths and injuries is not yet fully understood and the numbers are expected to increase," the U.N. agency said in a report.

"The earthquake's devastation has overwhelmed healthcare facilities in the affected areas, which are struggling to manage the influx of injured individuals. There is an urgent need for trauma and surgical care, blood transfusion supplies, anesthetics, essential medicines, and mental health support."

A lack of heavy machinery has slowed search and rescue operations, forcing many to slowly search for survivors by hand in the relentless heat, with daily temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit).

Myanmar's neighbors and allies are among those lending aid

International rescue teams from several countries are now on the scene, including from Russia, China, India and several Southeast Asian countries.

On Sunday, an Indian team jackhammered through slabs of fallen concrete at one site in Mandalay, cutting rebar reinforcement with an angle grinder powered by a portable generator as they sought to reach lower levels.

They could be seen bringing out one covered body and loading it into an ambulance.

The European Union, Britain, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea and others have announced millions of dollars in aid, either directly or through local partners and international organizations.

U.S. President Donald Trump has said Washington would help, but so far there has been no known assistance to Myanmar.

A small number of American military personnel were sent to assist in Bangkok, where the earthquake shook the Thai capital and killed at least 18 people, many at a construction site where a partially built high-rise collapsed.

Another 33 have been reported injured and 78 missing, primarily at the construction site near the popular Chatuchak market.

Heavy equipment was shut down and authorities urged onlookers to be silent as they used machines to try and detect any signs of life from under the rubble.

Bangkok Governor Chadchart Sittipunt told reporters at the scene that signs had been detected Sunday night, though experts could not determine whether it had been machine error.

Nonetheless, he said he still had hope survivors would be found.

"Even if one life is saved, it is worth all the effort," he said.

Myanmar, also known as Burma, sits on the Sagaing Fault, a major north-south fault that separates the India plate and the Sunda plate.

The earthquake occurred when a 200-kilometer (125-mile) section of the fault ruptured, causing widespread damage along a wide swath of territory down the middle of the country, including Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago regions and Shan State.

Beyond the earthquake damage, rescue efforts are complicated by the bloody civil war roiling much of the country, including in quake-affected areas. In 2021, the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking what has since turned into significant armed resistance.

Government forces have lost control of much of Myanmar, and many places are dangerous or impossible for aid groups to reach. More than 3 million people have been displaced by the fighting and nearly 20 million are in need, according to the United Nations.

Ellery, of the International Rescue Committee, noted that the area worst hit by the earthquake was already seriously damaged by flooding last year in which many lost homes, and is also where many of the country's internally displaced people have sought refuge.

Since the earthquake, many people have been sleeping outside, either because their homes have been destroyed or they are worried that the continuing aftershocks might bring them down.

With the monsoon rains starting in May, finding people shelter was going to be a major challenge going

ahead, she said.

"But right now we're focused on the immediate response," she said.

Israeli military orders evacuation of most of Gaza's southern city of Rafah

By WAFAA SHURAFU Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — The Israeli military on Monday issued sweeping evacuation orders covering most of Rafah, indicating it could soon launch another major ground operation in the southern-most city in the Gaza Strip.

Israel ended its ceasefire with the Hamas militant group and renewed its air and ground war earlier this month. At the beginning of March it cut off all supplies of food, fuel, medicine and humanitarian aid to the territory's roughly 2 million Palestinians to pressure Hamas to accept changes to the truce agreement.

The evacuation orders appeared to cover nearly all of the city and nearby areas. The military ordered Palestinians to head to Muwasi, a sprawl of squalid tent camps along the coast. The orders came during Eid al-Fitr, a normally festive Muslim holiday marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

Israel launched a major operation in Rafah, on the border with Egypt, last May, leaving large parts of it in ruins. The military seized a strategic corridor along the border as well as the Rafah crossing with Egypt, Gaza's only gateway to the outside world that was not controlled by Israel.

Israel was supposed to withdraw from the corridor under the ceasefire it signed with Hamas in January under U.S. pressure, but it later refused to, citing the need to prevent weapons smuggling.

Israel has vowed to intensify its military operations until Hamas releases the remaining 59 hostages it holds — 24 of whom are believed to be alive. Israel has also demanded that Hamas disarm and leave the territory, conditions that were not included in the ceasefire agreement and which Hamas has rejected.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that Israel would take charge of security in Gaza after the war and implement U.S. President Donald Trump's proposal to resettle Gaza's population in other countries, describing it as "voluntary emigration."

That plan has been universally rejected by Palestinians, who view it as forcible expulsion from their homeland, and human rights experts say it would likely violate international law.

Hamas, meanwhile, has insisted on implementing the signed agreement, which called for the remainder of the hostages to be released in exchange for a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli pullout. Negotiations over those parts of the agreement were supposed to have begun in February but only preliminary talks have been held.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, rampaging through army bases and farming communities and killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. The militants took another 251 people hostage, most of whom have since been released in ceasefires or other deals.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed more than 50,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not say how many were civilians or combatants. At its height, the war had displaced some 90% of Gaza's population, with many fleeing multiple times.

Large areas of Gaza have been completely destroyed, and it's unclear how or when anything will be rebuilt.

Declining Eid travel and spending in Indonesia and discrimination in India dampen holiday spirit

By NINIEK KARMINI Associated Press

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP) — The usual festive mood of Eid al-Fitr holiday to mark the end of the Islamic holy month of Ramadan has been subdued in Indonesia this year as people grapple with soaring prices for food, clothing and essential goods.

Consumer spending ahead of the biggest religious holiday for Muslims, which was celebrated on Sunday in Indonesia, has declined compared to the previous year, with a predicted slowdown in cash circulation

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 27 of 59

due to fewer travelers.

Each year in Indonesia, nearly three-quarters of the population of the world's most populous Muslim-majority country travel for the annual homecoming known locally as "mudik" that is always welcomed with excitement.

People pour out of major cities to return to villages to celebrate the holiday with prayers, feasts and family gatherings. Flights are overbooked and anxious relatives weighed down with boxes of gifts form long lines at bus and train stations for the journey.

But this year the Transportation Ministry said Eid travelers reached 146 million people, a 24% drop from last year's 194 million travelers.

The Indonesian Chamber of Commerce and Industry projects that money circulation during Eid will reach 137.97 trillion rupiah (\$8.33 billion), down from 157.3 trillion last year. The weakening purchasing power is also reflected in Bank Indonesia's Consumer Confidence Index which dipped to 126.4 in February from 127.2 in January.

Bhima Yudistira, executive director of the Center for Economic and Law Studies, or Celios, said those trends indicate the economy is under strain, driven by economic hardship, coupled with currency depreciation and mass layoffs in manufacturing.

"These have weakened both corporate earnings and workers' incomes that suppress consumer spending," Yudistira said, adding he "expects a less vibrant festive season."

He said the festive spirit has been stifled by harsh economic realities, as soaring prices and dwindling incomes force residents to prioritize survival over celebration.

Traditionally household consumption is a key driver of Indonesia's GDP. It contributed over 50% to the economy last year, helping push annual growth to 5.11%. However, consumer spending in 2025 is expected to be more subdued, Yudistira said.

Despite the downturn, the government remains optimistic that the Ramadan and Eid momentum will support economic growth in the first quarter of 2025.

"Eid usually boosts the economy through increased spending," Chief Economic Affairs Minister Airlangga Hartarto said ahead of the Islamic holiday.

The government recently introduced incentives to stimulate economic activity, including airfare and toll road fee discounts, nationwide online shopping events, direct cash assistance for 16 million households, electricity bill reductions for low-consumption customers, and tax exemptions for labor-intensive sectors.

"With these programs in place, the government hopes to sustain consumer spending and support economic stability," Hartarto said.

The situation has also affected Endang Trisilowati, a mother of four, who said her family had to scale down their festivities budget.

"Honestly, the economic hardship is affecting us," Trisilowati said. She described how she used to cook different dishes every Eid and invite neighbors, but now she can only afford a simple meal for her family.

"Many have resorted to just finding a way to eat on that festivity, but the spirit is low," she said.

Muslims in India grapple with discrimination

In India, Muslims are marking the celebration of Eid with special prayers, family gatherings and festive meals.

The holiday comes as the minority community faces vilification by hardline Hindu nationalists. Muslim groups are also protesting against a proposal by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government to change laws governing Muslim land endowments.

The government says it wants to weed out corruption and mismanagement in hundreds of thousands of Muslim land endowments. But Muslim groups say the proposal pending approval in India's parliament is discriminatory.

Muslims, who comprise 14% of India's 1.4 billion population, are the largest minority group in the Hindu-majority nation.

Modi's Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party launched a nationwide initiative called "Saugat-e-Modi," or "Modi's gift," during Ramadan that is expected to provide food and clothes to over 3 million underprivi-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 28 of 59

leged Muslims to celebrate Eid.

In New Delhi, thousands assembled in the Jama Masjid, one of the country's largest mosques, to offer Eid prayers. Families came together early Monday morning and many people shared hugs and wishes.

"This is a day of giving and receiving love. Even if you meet an enemy, meet them with love today," said 18-year-old student Mohammed Nooruddin.

US armored vehicle missing in Lithuania pulled from swamp but fate of 4 soldiers is still unknown

By LIUDAS DAPKUS Associated Press

VILNIUS, Lithuania (AP) — A U.S. armored vehicle that went missing in Lithuania has been retrieved from a swamp after a six-day search but there is still no information about the fate of the four American soldiers who were on board, Lithuanian officials said Monday.

"The armored vehicle was pulled ashore at 4:40 a.m., the towing operation is complete, Lithuanian Military Police and US investigators continue their work," Defense Minister Dovilė Šakalienė said Monday morning in a post on Facebook.

The soldiers were on a training exercise at the massive General Silvestras Žukauskas training ground in the town of Pabradė when they and their vehicle were reported missing in the early hours of Tuesday morning, the U.S. army said.

"Until the investigators have more details, we need to stay calm and focused, and keep in mind the sensitivity of the situation and the concerns of the soldiers' families," Šakalienė posted on Facebook.

She made clear to reporters that the first information about fate of the soldiers will be delivered by the U.S. army.

The soldiers, all from 1st Brigade, 3rd Infantry Division, were conducting tactical training when they went missing.

Hundreds of Lithuanian and U.S. soldiers and rescuers took part in the search through the thick forests and swampy terrain around Pabradė, which lies just 10 kilometers (6 miles) west of the border with Belarus. The M88 Hercules armored vehicle was discovered on Wednesday submerged in 4.5 meters (15 feet) of water.

A large-scale recovery operation got underway but "water, thick mud and soft ground around the site have complicated recovery efforts and have required specialized equipment to drain water from the side and stabilize the ground" in order to pull the 70-ton vehicle ashore, the army said.

Trump says he's considering ways to serve a third term as president

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla. (AP) — President Donald Trump said Sunday that "I'm not joking" about trying to serve a third term, the clearest indication he is considering ways to breach a constitutional barrier against continuing to lead the country after his second term ends at the beginning of 2029.

"There are methods which you could do it," Trump said in a telephone interview with NBC News from Mar-a-Lago, his private club.

He elaborated later to reporters on Air Force One from Florida to Washington that "I have had more people ask me to have a third term, which in a way is a fourth term because the other election, the 2020 election was totally rigged." Trump lost that election to Democrat Joe Biden.

Still, Trump added: "I don't want to talk about a third term now because no matter how you look at it, we've got a long time to go."

The 22nd Amendment, added to the Constitution in 1951 after President Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected four times in a row, says "no person shall be elected to the office of the President more than twice."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 29 of 59

Any attempt to remain in office would be legally suspect and it is unclear how seriously Trump might pursue the idea. The comments nonetheless were an extraordinary reflection of the desire to maintain power by a president who had violated democratic traditions four years ago when he tried to overturn the election he lost to Biden.

"This is yet another escalation in his clear effort to take over the government and dismantle our democracy," said a statement from Rep. Daniel Goldman, a New York Democrat who served as lead counsel for Trump's first impeachment. "If Congressional Republicans believe in the Constitution, they will go on the record opposing Trump's ambitions for a third term."

Steve Bannon, a former Trump strategist who runs the right-wing "War Room" podcast, called for the president to run again during a speech at the Conservative Political Action Conference last month.

"We want Trump in '28," he said.

Kayla Thompson, a 30-year-old former paralegal in Wisconsin, said she would "absolutely" like Trump to serve another term.

"America needs him. America is headed in the right direction and, if he doesn't do it, we're probably headed backwards," said Thompson, who was attending a campaign event Sunday with Elon Musk in Green Bay for a state Supreme Court race.

Jeremy Paul, a constitutional law professor at Boston's Northeastern University, said "there are no credible legal arguments for him to run for a third term."

NBC's Kristen Welker asked Trump if one potential avenue to a third term was having Vice President JD Vance run for the top job and "then pass the baton to you."

"Well, that's one," Trump responded. "But there are others too. There are others."

"Can you tell me another?" Welker asked.

"No," Trump replied.

Vance's office did not immediately respond to a request for comment from The Associated Press.

Derek Muller, a professor of election law at Notre Dame, noted that the 12th Amendment, which was ratified in 1804, says "no person constitutionally ineligible to the office of President shall be eligible to that of Vice-President of the United States."

Muller said that indicates that if Trump is not eligible to run for president again because of the 22nd Amendment, he is not eligible to run for vice president, either.

"I don't think there's any 'one weird trick' to getting around presidential term limits," Muller said.

In addition, pursuing a third term would require extraordinary acquiescence by federal and state officials, not to mention the courts and voters themselves.

He suggested that Trump is talking about a third term for political reasons to "show as much strength as possible."

"A lame-duck president like Donald Trump has every incentive in the world to make it seem like he's not a lame duck," he said.

Trump, who would be 82 at the end of his second term, was asked whether he would want to keep serving in "the toughest job in the country" at that point.

"Well, I like working," the president said.

Trump suggested that Americans would go along with a third term because of his popularity. He falsely claimed to have "the highest poll numbers of any Republican for the last 100 years."

Gallup data shows President George W. Bush reaching a 90% approval rating after the attacks on Sept. 11, 2001. His father, President George H.W. Bush, hit 89% following the Gulf War in 1991.

Trump has maxed out at 47% in Gallup data during his second term, despite claiming to be "in the high 70s in many polls, in the real polls."

Trump has mused before about serving longer than two terms before, generally with jokes to friendly audiences.

"Am I allowed to run again?" he said during a House Republican retreat in January.

Representatives for the congressional leadership — House Speaker Mike Johnson, R-La., House Democratic leader Hakeem Jeffries of New York, Senate Majority Leader John Thune, R-S.D., and Senate Democratic

leader Chuck Schumer of New York — did not immediately respond to requests for comment from the AP.

Judge weighs request to withhold investigation records in deaths of Gene Hackman and wife

By MORGAN LEE Associated Press

SANTA FE, N.M. (AP) — A New Mexico court is weighing whether to block the disclosure of an array of records from an investigation into the deaths of actor Gene Hackman and his wife, Betsy Arakawa, at the request of the couple's estate.

Santa Fe-based Judge Matthew Wilson scheduled a hearing Monday to consider a request from estate representative Julia Peters to seal photos, video and documents to protect the family's constitutional right to privacy. The court put a temporary hold on the release of records pending the hearing.

The partially mummified remains of Hackman and Arakawa were found in their Santa Fe home on Feb. 26, when maintenance and security workers showed up at the home and alerted police. Authorities have confirmed Hackman, 95, died of heart disease with complications from Alzheimer's disease about a week after his wife's death. Hackman may have been unaware Arakawa, 65, was dead.

Her cause of death was listed as hantavirus pulmonary syndrome, which is a rare, rodent-borne disease.

New Mexico's open records law blocks public access to sensitive images, including depictions of dead bodies. Experts also say some medical information is not considered public record under the state Inspection of Public Records Act.

Peters has emphasized the possibly shocking nature of photographs and video in the investigation and potential for their dissemination by media in the bid to block them from being released.

The Hackman family estate's lawsuit also seeks to block the release of autopsy reports by the Office of the Medical Investigator and death investigation reports by the Santa Fe County Sheriff's Office.

The bulk of death investigations by law enforcement and autopsy reports by medical investigators are typically considered public records under state law in the spirit of ensuring government transparency and accountability.

Authorities unraveled the mysterious circumstances of the couple's deaths and described their conclusions at a March 7 news conference without releasing most related written and photographic records.

One of the couple's three dogs, a kelpie mix named Zinna, also was found dead in a crate in a bathroom closet near Arakawa. Two other dogs survived.

The written request to seal the records notes the couple placed "a significant value on their privacy and took affirmative vigilant steps" to safeguard it during their lives, including after they moved to Santa Fe and Hackman retired. The state capital is known as a refuge for celebrities, artists and authors.

Arakawa had no children, while Hackman is survived by three children from a previous marriage. Privacy likely also will play a role as the couple's estate is settled. According to probate court documents, Hackman signed an updated will in 2005 leaving his estate to his wife, while the will she signed that same year directed her estate to him. With both of them dying, management of the estate is in Peters' hands.

A request is pending to appoint a trustee to administer assets in two trusts associated with the estate. Without trust documents being made public, it's unclear who the beneficiaries are and how the assets will be divided.

Attorneys who specialize in estate planning in New Mexico say it's possible more details could come out if there were any legal disputes over the assets. Even then, they said, the parties likely would ask the court to seal the documents.

Rain turns to ice, cuts power in Great Lakes region while Tennessee braces for wild weather

By The Associated Press undefined

Freezing rain brought down trees and power lines in Michigan and Wisconsin, cutting electricity for thousands of people Sunday in the upper Great Lakes region, while forecasters said severe weather was on its way to Tennessee.

Winds topping 70 mph (112 kph) were possible for the middle of Tennessee, with a chance of tornadoes as well as hail as large as 2 inches (5 centimeters) Sunday night, the National Weather Service said.

"Have your safe place cleaned out just in case," forecasters said on social platform X.

More than 400,000 power outages were reported in Michigan, Indiana and Wisconsin. Churches that had power, as well as schools and fire halls, were turned into warming centers as utilities worked to restore electricity, a job that will likely stretch into Monday in small communities and rural pockets.

The Weather Service office in Gaylord, Michigan, was in the middle of it, saying on X: "Accumulations range here from a half inch to nearly a whole inch of ice!"

Despite the calendar showing spring, "it's still winter," said Ryan Brege, managing director of the Alpena County, Michigan, Road Commission, 250 miles (402 kilometers) north of Detroit.

Alpena Power said nearly all of its 16,750 customers — homes and businesses — were in the dark. Many churches without power in Wisconsin and Michigan were forced to cancel Sunday services.

"We pray that everyone stays safe!" said Calvary Lutheran Church in Merrill, Wisconsin.

Jesika Fox said she and her husband drove more than 40 minutes from their home in Alpena, Michigan, to find fuel for a generator. Her family lost power Saturday night but kept the house warm by using a fan to circulate heat from a gas-burning stove.

"We just passed a veterinary clinic. The entire front corner of the building was taken out by a tree," said Fox, 36.

Sarah Melching, emergency services manager in nearby Presque Isle County, said virtually the entire county — population 13,200 — has no power.

"There are trees still falling down. It's kind of ruthless out there," Melching said.

Authorities in South Carolina reported progress Sunday in controlling wildfires in the Blue Ridge mountains. The Table Rock and Persimmon Ridge fires have burned about 17 square miles (44 square kilometers). Mandatory evacuations were ordered Saturday for some residents of Greenville County.

"Thank you for the prayers. They're being heard. There's rain in the air," said Derrick Moore, operations chief for the firefighting Southern Area Blue Team.

Elon Musk hands out \$1 million payments after Wisconsin Supreme Court declines request to stop him

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and SCOTT BAUER Associated Press

GREEN BAY, Wis. (AP) — Elon Musk gave out \$1 million checks on Sunday to two Wisconsin voters, declaring them spokespeople for his political group, ahead of a Wisconsin Supreme Court election that the tech billionaire cast as critical to President Donald Trump's agenda and "the future of civilization."

"It's a super big deal," he told a roughly 2,000-person crowd in Green Bay on Sunday night, taking the stage in a yellow cheesehead hat. "I'm not phoning it in. I'm here in person."

Musk and groups he supports have spent more than \$20 million to help conservative favorite Brad Schimel in Tuesday's race, which will determine the ideological makeup of a court likely to decide key issues in a perennial battleground state. Musk has increasingly become the center of the contest, with liberal favorite Susan Crawford and her allies protesting Musk and what they say is the influence he wants to have on the court.

"I think this will be important for the future of civilization," he said. "It's that's significant."

He noted that the state high court may well take up redistricting of congressional districts, which could

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 32 of 59

ultimately affect which party controls the U.S. House.

"And if the (Wisconsin) Supreme Court is able to redraw the districts, they will gerrymander the district and deprive Wisconsin of two seats on the Republican side," Musk said. "Then they will try to stop all the government reforms we are getting done for you, the American people."

A unanimous state Supreme Court on Sunday refused to hear a last-minute attempt by the state's Democratic attorney general to stop Musk from handing over the checks to two voters, a ruling that came just minutes before the planned start of the rally.

Two lower courts had already rejected the legal challenge by Democrat Josh Kaul, who argues that Musk's offer violates a state law. "Wisconsin law prohibits offering anything of value to induce anyone to vote," Kaul argued in his filing. "Yet, Elon Musk did just that."

But the state Supreme Court, which is currently controlled 4-3 by liberal justices, declined to take the case as an original action. The court gave no rationale for its decision.

Kaul had no immediate comment on the court's order.

Musk's attorneys argued in filings with the court that Musk was exercising his free speech rights with the giveaways and any attempt to restrict that would violate both the Wisconsin and U.S. constitutions.

The payments are "intended to generate a grassroots movement in opposition to activist judges, not to expressly advocate for or against any candidate," Musk's attorneys argued in court filings.

Musk's political action committee used a nearly identical tactic before the presidential election last year, offering to pay \$1 million a day to voters in Wisconsin and six other battleground states who signed a petition supporting the First and Second amendments. A judge in Pennsylvania said prosecutors failed to show the effort was an illegal lottery and allowed it to continue through Election Day.

Liberals currently hold a 4-3 majority on the court. All four liberal justices have endorsed Dane County Judge Susan Crawford, the Democratic-backed candidate.

Musk's attorneys, about four hours before the rally was to begin, asked that two liberal justices who have campaigned for Crawford — Jill Karofsky and Rebecca Dallet — recuse themselves from the case. His attorneys argued their work for Crawford creates "the specter of inappropriate bias." If they did recuse, that would leave the court with a 3-2 conservative majority.

Both justices rejected the request and said they would spell out their reasons why at a later date.

One of the court's conservative justices has endorsed Schimel, who wore a "Make America Great Again" hat while campaigning Sunday.

Schimel said in a national television interview that he does not control "any of the spending from any outside group, whether it's Elon Musk or anyone else" and that all Trump asked was whether he would "reject activist judges" and follow the law.

"That's exactly what I've committed to anybody, whether it's President Trump, Elon Musk or any donors and donors or supporters or voters in Wisconsin. That's my commitment," Schimel told "Fox News Sunday."

The contest has shattered national spending records for a judicial election, with more than \$81 million in spending.

It comes as Wisconsin's highest court is expected to rule on abortion rights, congressional redistricting, union power and voting rules that could affect the 2026 midterms and the 2028 presidential election in the state.

US airstrikes pound Yemen's capital overnight, killing at least 1, Houthi rebels say

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Suspected U.S. airstrikes struck around Yemen's rebel-held capital overnight into Monday morning, and the Iranian-backed Houthis said at least one person was killed.

The full extent of the damage and possible casualties wasn't immediately clear. The attacks followed a night of airstrikes early Friday that appeared particularly intense compared to other days in the campaign

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 33 of 59

that began March 15.

The strikes around Sanaa, Yemen's capital held by the Houthis since 2014, also wounded four others, the rebels said. Their al-Masirah satellite news channel aired footage of broken glass littering homes after the concussive blast of the bombs, but continued not to show the targets of the attacks — suggesting the sites had a military or intelligence function.

An Associated Press review has found the new American operation against the Houthis under President Donald Trump appears more extensive than those under former President Joe Biden, as the U.S. moves from solely targeting launch sites to firing at ranking personnel as well as dropping bombs in cities.

The new campaign of airstrikes, which the Houthis now say have killed at least 59 people, started after the rebels threatened to begin targeting "Israeli" ships again over Israel blocking aid entering the Gaza Strip. The rebels in the past loosely defined what constitutes an Israeli ship, meaning other vessels could be targeted.

The Houthis had targeted over 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two vessels and killing four sailors from November 2023 until January of this year. They also launched attacks targeting American warships, though none has been hit so far.

The attacks greatly raised the Houthis' profile as they faced economic problems and launched a crack-down targeting any dissent and aid workers at home amid Yemen's decadelong stalemated war that has torn apart the Arab world's poorest nation.

Trump finds fault with both Putin and Zelenskyy as he tries to push for deal to end war in Ukraine

By CHRIS MEGERIAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump lashed out at both Vladimir Putin and Volodymyr Zelenskyy on Sunday, expressing frustration with the Russian and Ukrainian leaders as he struggles to forge a truce to end the war.

Although Trump insisted to reporters that "we're making a lot of progress," he acknowledged that "there's tremendous hatred" between the two men, a fresh indication that negotiations may not produce the swift conclusion that he promised during the campaign.

Trump began voicing his criticisms in an early morning interview with NBC News while he was at Mar-a-Lago, his private club in Florida. He said he was "angry, pissed off" that Putin questioned Zelenskyy's credibility.

The Russian leader recently said that Zelenskyy lacks the legitimacy to sign a peace deal and suggested that Ukraine needed external governance.

Trump said he would consider adding new sanctions on Russia, which already faces steep financial penalties, and using tariffs to undermine its oil exports.

The Republican president rarely criticizes Putin, and he's previously attacked Zelenskyy's credibility himself. For example, Trump has suggested that Ukraine caused the war that began with a Russian invasion three years ago, and he's insisted that Zelenskyy should hold elections even though it's illegal under Ukraine's constitution to do so during martial law.

On his flight back to Washington on Sunday evening, Trump reiterated his annoyance toward Putin but somewhat softened his tone.

"I don't think he's going to go back on his word," he said. "I've known him for a long time. We've always gotten along well."

Asked when he wanted Russia to agree to a ceasefire, Trump said there was a "psychological deadline."

"If I think they're tapping us along, I will not be happy about it," he said.

Trump soon pivoted to criticize Zelenskyy.

"He's trying to back out of the rare earth deal," Trump said, referring to negotiations over U.S. access to critical minerals in Ukraine. "And if he does that he's got some problems. Big, big problems."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 34 of 59

Trump and Zelenskyy were supposed to sign the deal when the Ukrainian leader visited the White House. However, their meeting ended with acrimony that played out in front of television cameras in the Oval Office.

Trump suggested on Sunday that Zelenskyy wanted to "renegotiate the deal" to get better security guarantees.

"He wants to be a member of NATO," he said. "Well, he was never going to be a member of NATO. He understands that."

The U.S. has been pushing for a comprehensive ceasefire deal between Russia and Ukraine to peacefully end their 3-year-old war.

Russia has effectively rejected a U.S. proposal for an immediate and full 30-day halt in the fighting, and the feasibility of a partial ceasefire on the Black Sea was thrown into doubt after Kremlin negotiators imposed far-reaching conditions.

Trump's comments on Putin come after weeks of intense pressure on Ukraine to agree to a ceasefire.

Russian drones hit Ukraine's 2nd largest city Kharkiv

Meanwhile, Russian drones hit a military hospital, shopping center and apartment blocks in Ukraine's second-largest city of Kharkiv, killing two people and wounding dozens.

Ukraine's General Staff denounced the "deliberate, targeted shelling" of the military hospital late Saturday. Among the casualties were service members who were undergoing treatment, it said. Regional Gov. Oleh Syniehubov said those killed were a 67-year-old man and a 70-year-old woman.

According to Ukrainian government and military analysts, Russian forces are preparing to launch a fresh military offensive in the coming weeks to maximize pressure on Kyiv and strengthen the Kremlin's negotiating position in ceasefire talks.

Ukraine's air force reported that Russia fired 111 exploding drones and decoys in the latest wave of attacks overnight into Sunday. It said 65 of them were intercepted and another 35 were lost, likely having been electronically jammed.

Zelenskyy said Sunday that over the past week "most regions of Ukraine" came under Russian attack. Writing on X, he said "1,310 Russian guided aerial bombs, over 1,000 attack drones — mostly 'Shaheds' — and nine missiles of various types, including ballistic ones" had been launched against Ukraine.

Zelenskyy also repeated his assertion that "Russia is dragging out the war," echoing comments he made Thursday in Paris that Russia is prolonging ceasefire talks "just to buy time and then try to grab more land."

Russia's Ministry of Defense, meanwhile, said its air defense systems shot down six Ukrainian drones. It also claimed Sunday that its troops had taken control of a village in Ukraine's partly occupied Donetsk region. The Russian claim could not be independently verified, and Ukraine did not comment.

Auburn completes sweep of No. 1 seeds into Final Four, beating Michigan State 70-64

By CHARLES ODUM AP Sports Writer

ATLANTA (AP) — Johni Broome held his injured right arm through most of Auburn's Elite Eight postgame celebration.

That didn't keep the star forward from climbing a ladder to cut down the net he then wore around his neck.

Broome had 25 points and 14 rebounds and Auburn took command with 17 unanswered points in the first half to beat Michigan State 70-64 on Sunday and complete a sweep of No. 1 seeds advancing to the Final Four.

"You talk about delivering again at the biggest moments," Auburn coach Bruce Pearl said of Broome.

Auburn (32-5) earned its second Final Four trip, while Michigan State (30-7) fell short in its bid to send coach Tom Izzo to his ninth national semifinal. Pearl also led Auburn to its only previous Final Four appearance, in 2019.

The South Region champion Tigers, the top overall seed in the NCAA Tournament, became the last of the No. 1 seeds to advance to the Final Four — joining Florida, Duke and Houston.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 35 of 59

Auburn will face Florida, which beat Texas Tech 84-79 in the West Region final, in an all-Southeastern Conference semifinal on Saturday in San Antonio.

"Unfortunately there will only be one SEC team playing for the national championship," Pearl said, also wearing a net around his neck.

Jaxon Kohler led the Spartans with 17 points and 11 rebounds. Jaden Akins had 15 points.

Broome fell on his right arm while attempting to block a shot with 10:37 remaining and left the game. He was escorted to the locker room for a quick examination. Broome, the Associated Press SEC player of the year and a first-team All-America selection, appeared to hurt his right elbow on the fall.

Broome returned with 5:29 remaining, drawing an immediate ovation from Auburn fans. He had the elbow wrapped and sank a 3-pointer less than a minute later. He also grabbed a rebound with one hand.

"It was a scary moment," Broome said. "I went down but my team had my back."

Broome said he was told by a team doctor "nothing serious" was wrong with the elbow, which appeared to bend at an ugly angle on his fall.

"I bet he'll be sore tomorrow," Pearl said.

Broome made 10 of 13 shots from the field, including each of his two 3-pointers.

"That's why he's an All-American," Izzo said. "That's why he's a player of the year candidate. Did a hell of a job. ... We did most of the things we wanted to do except guard Broome a little better."

Auburn was the only Elite Eight team to win each of its first three March Madness games by double digits, including its 78-65 Sweet 16 victory over Michigan. Michigan State rallied for a 73-70 win over Mississippi in the Sweet 16.

The Spartans led 8-6 before the Tigers took command with the 17-0 run. The Spartans were held scoreless for 5:46 while missing 10 consecutive shots during the Auburn run.

A 3-pointer by Broome capped the run for a 23-8 lead.

Auburn led 33-24 at halftime. The Spartans pulled within five points at 35-30 early in the second half but got no closer.

Top seeds — and selection committee — shine

It's the first time all top seeds have reached the Final Four since 2008, which was the only previous year of all No. 1-seeded semifinalists since seeding began in 1979. And higher-seeded teams went 12-0 in regional semifinals and finals for the first time since the tournament expanded in 1985.

"That means the people that get the criticism ... the selection committee, must have done a damn good job," Izzo said.

Added Pearl: "I think the four teams that advanced are the four best teams in the country and that doesn't always happen."

Pride in the Spartans

Izzo, who won the 2000 national championship and was participating in his 27th consecutive NCAA Tournament with Michigan State, said he was proud of his players' "connectivity and camaraderie."

"For the 30th year (as coach), I don't know if I've ever been prouder of a team," the 70-year-old Izzo said. "It was a tear-jerking locker room because they knew they spilled it all and yet we started off poorly. ... We just couldn't recover from that 17-0 run."

Takeaways

Michigan State: Coen Carr, who received his first career start against Ole Miss, was back in the lineup against the Tigers. The forward, a native of Stockbridge near Atlanta, earned the nod after scoring 15 points against the Rebels, while 7-foot center Szymon Zapala, normally a starter, returned in a reserve role against Auburn after not playing against Ole Miss. Carr scored four points against Auburn while Zapala had two points in 14 minutes.

Auburn: Miles Kelly had three field goals in the 17-0 run. After making back-to-back jumpers to start the run, Kelly added a steal and 3-pointer. He finished with eight points. Tahaad Pettiford scored 10.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 36 of 59

Greenland prime minister says US will not get Greenland

By The Associated Press undefined

The prime minister of Greenland pushed back Sunday against assertions by U.S. President Donald Trump that America will take control of the island territory.

Greenland, a huge, resource-rich island in the Atlantic, is a self-governing territory of Denmark, a NATO ally of the United States. Trump wants to annex the territory, claiming it's needed for national security purposes.

"President Trump says that the United States 'will get Greenland.' Let me be clear: The United States will not get it. We do not belong to anyone else. We decide our own future," Jens-Frederik Nielsen said in a Facebook post.

Nielsen's post comes a day after the U.S. president told NBC News that military force wasn't off the table with regard to acquiring Greenland.

In Saturday's interview, Trump allowed that "I think there's a good possibility that we could do it without military force."

"This is world peace, this is international security," he said, but added: "I don't take anything off the table."

Greenland's residents and politicians have reacted with anger to Trump's repeated suggestions, with Danish leaders also pushing back.

Trump also said "I don't care," when asked in the NBC interview what message this would send to Russian President Vladimir Putin, who has invaded Ukraine and annexed several of its provinces in defiance of international law.

Iran has rejected direct negotiations with the US in response to Trump's letter

By JON GAMBRELL and AMIR VAHDAT Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's president said Sunday that the Islamic Republic rejected direct negotiations with the United States over its rapidly advancing nuclear program, offering Tehran's first response to a letter that U.S. President Donald Trump sent to the country's supreme leader.

President Masoud Pezeshkian said that Iran's response, delivered via the sultanate of Oman, left open the possibility of indirect negotiations with Washington. However, such talks have made no progress since Trump in his first term unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018.

In the years since, regional tensions have boiled over into attacks at sea and on land. Then came the Israel-Hamas war in the Gaza Strip, which saw Israel target militant group leaders across Iran's self-described "Axis of Resistance." Now, as the U.S. conducts intense airstrikes targeting the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels of Yemen, the risk of military action targeting Iran's nuclear program remains on the table.

"We don't avoid talks; it's the breach of promises that has caused issues for us so far," Pezeshkian said in televised remarks during a Cabinet meeting. "They must prove that they can build trust."

The U.S. State Department, responding to Pezeshkian, said that "President Trump has been clear: the United States cannot allow Iran to acquire a nuclear weapon."

"The president expressed his willingness to discuss a deal with Iran," it added. "If the Iranian regime does not want a deal, the president is clear, he will pursue other options, which will be very bad for Iran."

Trump talked about dealing with Iran while flying from Florida to Washington on Sunday evening. "We'll see if we can get something done," he told reporters. "And if not, it's going to be a bad situation."

"I would prefer a deal to the other alternative which I think everybody in this plane knows what that is, and that's never going to be pretty," he said.

Iran's position hardens after Trump's letter

Having Pezeshkian announce the decision shows just how much has changed in Iran, since his election a half-year ago after he campaigned on a promise to reengage with the West.

Since Trump's election and the resumption of his "maximum pressure" campaign on Tehran, Iran's rial

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 37 of 59

currency has gone into a freefall. Pezeshkian had left open discussions up until Iran's 85-year-old Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei came down hard on Trump in February and warned talks "are not intelligent, wise or honorable" with his administration. The Iranian president then immediately toughened his own remarks on the U.S.

Meanwhile, there have been mixed messages coming from Iran for weeks. Videos from Quds, or Jerusalem, Day demonstrations on Friday had people in the crowds instructing participants to only shout: "Death to Israel!" Typically, "Death to America" was also heard.

A video of an underground missile base unveiled by Iran's hard-line paramilitary Revolutionary Guard also showed its troops stepping on an Israeli flag painted on the ground — though there was no American flag as often seen in such propaganda videos.

But Press TV, the English-language arm of Iranian state television, published an article last week that included listing U.S. bases in the Middle East as possible targets of attack. The list included Camp Thunder Cove on Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean, where the U.S. is basing stealth B-2 bombers likely being used in Yemen.

"The Americans themselves know how vulnerable they are," warned Iranian parliamentary speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf on Friday. "If they violate Iran's sovereignty, it will be like a spark in a gunpowder depot, setting the entire region ablaze. In such a scenario, their bases and their allies will not be safe."

However, Tehran's two recent direct attacks on Israel with ballistic missiles and drones caused negligible damage, while Israel responded by destroying Iranian air defense systems.

Iran's rejection is the latest in tensions over nuclear program

Trump's letter arrived in Tehran on March 12. Though announcing that he wrote it in a television interview, Trump offered little detail on what he exactly told the supreme leader.

"I've written them a letter saying, 'I hope you're going to negotiate because if we have to go in militarily, it's going to be a terrible thing,'" Trump said in the interview.

The move recalled Trump's letter-writing to North Korean leader Kim Jong Un in his first term, which led to face-to-face meetings, but no deals to limit Pyongyang's atomic bombs and a missile program capable of reaching the continental U.S.

The last time that Trump tried to send a letter to Khamenei, through the late Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe in 2019, the supreme leader mocked the effort.

Trump's letter came as both Israel and the United States have warned they will never let Iran acquire a nuclear weapon, leading to fears of a military confrontation as Tehran enriches uranium at near weapons-grade levels of 60% purity — something only done by atomic-armed nations.

Iran has long maintained its program is for peaceful purposes, even as its officials increasingly threaten to pursue the bomb. A report in February, however, by the Vienna-based International Atomic Energy Agency, the U.N.'s nuclear watchdog, said that Iran has accelerated its production of near weapons-grade uranium.

Iran's reluctance to deal with Trump likely also takes root in his ordering the attack that killed Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani in a Baghdad drone strike in January 2020. The U.S. has said Iran plotted to assassinate Trump over that prior to his election this November, something Tehran denied though officials have threatened him.

Houston's defense carries Cougars into 7th Final Four with 69-50 March Madness win over Tennessee

By MICHAEL MAROT AP Sports Writer

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Houston's relentless, harassing defense had Tennessee's shooters dancing around. Now, the Cougars are two-stepping it back to Texas.

L.J. Cryer finished with 17 points, Emanuel Sharp scored 14 of his 16 points in the second half and the nation's stingiest defense delivered a historic NCAA Tournament performance, leading top-seeded Houston past second-seeded Tennessee 69-50 on Sunday for the Midwest Region title and its seventh trip to the Final Four.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 38 of 59

Next up is Cooper Flagg and five-time national champion Duke on Saturday in San Antonio, just a 3 1/2-hour drive from Houston's campus. First, the Cougars wanted to savor the journey they took to this net-cutting celebration, one that failed to materialize each of the past two seasons when they were eliminated in the Sweet 16 as a No. 1 seed.

"It's a good feeling knowing what we've been through," Sharp, the region's most outstanding player, said of Houston's first Final Four appearance since 2021. "A lot of people doubted us."

The Cougars (34-4) broke the school's single-season record for wins, extended the nation's longest active winning streak to 17 games and gave coach Kelvin Sampson a third chance to reach his first national championship game.

Houston has played on college basketball's biggest stage twice, losing title games in 1983 to N.C. State and in 1984 to Georgetown during the Phi Slama Jama era.

They're back this time thanks to Sharp, who made two of his four 3-pointers in quick succession to thwart a second-half charge from Tennessee.

Chaz Lanier and Jordan Gainey scored 17 points apiece for the Volunteers (30-8), who again fell short of the program's first Final Four appearance. Coach Rick Barnes' team was also eliminated in a regional final last year.

Houston won this one with a familiar formula.

The nation's top scoring defense held the Vols to 15 first-half points, the fewest in an Elite Eight game since 1979. It was also the lowest first-half scoring total by any No. 1 or No. 2 seed in a tourney game since seeding began that same year.

"I feel like we always want to throw the first punch," said Milos Uzan, who scored four points after making the decisive basket against Purdue. "Emanuel was able to get a jump ball early. I feel like that shook those guys up a little bit and it was super important to keep our foot on their neck."

The Cougars stayed locked in even when the Vols could have cut the deficit to single digits in the second half. The nation's top 3-point shooting team quickly extended the margin back to 17.

How bad was it for the Vols?

They made only 6 of 28 shots in the first 20 minutes and missed their first 14 3s before Zakai Zeigler finally ended the drought with 38 seconds left to make it a 34-15 game, an all but insurmountable advantage. Tourney teams that trailed by 19 or more points at halftime fell to 0-244 all-time.

Tennessee's top scorers, Lanier and Zeigler, were a combined 5 of 27 from the field. Zeigler had five points and five assists.

"When Zakai came off, it hurt me because I knew how much he cared. He said, 'I'm sorry,'" Barnes said. "He's got nothing to be sorry about because he gave us everything. I know those guys. They know I'm an older guy, they know I'd love to win a national championship, but they have not one thing to hang their head down or be sorry about."

As the Vols head home, Houston is getting ready for this season's last dance — close to home.

"There's probably 16,000 Tennessee fans here," Sampson said when told the attendance was about 18,500. "That's awesome for Tennessee — jump on the interstate and get here. That's what we'll do next week — jump on the interstate and head down to San Antonio."

Points at a premium

Georgetown had the previous lowest-scoring first half in March Madness with 16 points in a second-round victory over SMU in 1984. That Hoyas team went on to win the national title. The paltry first-half total was matched by Miami in a 2013 Sweet 16 loss to Marquette and by Michigan in a 2019 Sweet 16 loss to Texas Tech.

Hello, friends

Peyton Manning watched his alma mater, Tennessee, from a courtside seat Friday. On Sunday, it was Jim Nantz's turn.

The longtime CBS Sports play-by-play man wore a sweatshirt from his alma mater, Houston. Nantz retired from calling NCAA Tournament games in 2023 but continues as the network's lead announcer for NFL games and, perhaps most notably, the Masters — which he hopes to continue calling through the

100th edition in 2036.

'Eid of sadness': Palestinians in Gaza mark Muslim holiday with dwindling food and no end to war

By WAFAA SHURAF, MOHAMMAD JAHJOUH and TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Palestinians in Gaza marked the normally festive Eid al-Fitr on Sunday with rapidly dwindling food supplies and mourning for several children killed in Israel's latest airstrikes.

There was anger as the bodies of 14 emergency responders were recovered in the southern city of Rafah a week after an Israeli attack, which the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies called the "single most deadly attack on Red Cross Red Crescent workers anywhere in the world since 2017."

Many Palestinians prayed outside demolished mosques to mark the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan. It's supposed to be a joyous occasion when families feast and purchase new clothes for children, but most of Gaza's 2 million people are just trying to survive.

"It's the Eid of sadness," Adel al-Shaer said after attending prayers amid rubble in the central town of Deir al-Balah. "We lost our loved ones, our children, our lives and our futures."

Twenty members of his extended family have been killed by Israeli strikes, including four young nephews a few days ago, he said and began to cry.

Israel ended the ceasefire with Hamas and resumed the 17-month war earlier this month with a surprise bombardment that killed hundreds, after the militant group refused to accept changes to the truce reached in January. Israel has not allowed food, fuel or humanitarian aid to enter Gaza for a month.

"There is killing, displacement, hunger and a siege," said Saed al-Kourd, a worshipper. "We go out to perform God's rituals in order to make the children happy, but as for the joy of Eid? There is no Eid."

Arab mediators are trying to get the truce back on track. Hamas said Saturday it had accepted a new proposal from Egypt and Qatar. Israel said it made a counter-proposal in coordination with the United States, which has also been mediating. Details were not immediately known.

Emergency workers' bodies found

The Palestinian Red Crescent Society said the bodies of eight of its emergency medical technicians, and five members of Gaza's Civil Defense, were recovered a week after they and their ambulances vanished in Rafah during heavy fire.

The PRCS said a ninth colleague was still missing, adding that the targeting of medics "cannot be seen as anything other than a war crime."

Gaza's Health Ministry asserted that some of the bodies had been bound and shot in the chest, and it called on the United Nations and other international organizations to investigate and hold Israel accountable.

Israel's military on Sunday said its troops had opened fire on vehicles "advancing suspiciously" without emergency signals or movement coordinated in advance. It asserted that nine "terrorists" had been killed.

Netanyahu lays out conditions for ending the war

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would continue military operations while negotiating. He rejected claims that Israel does not want to end the war, while laying out conditions that go far beyond the ceasefire agreement and have been rejected by Hamas.

"Hamas will disarm. Its leaders will be allowed out. We will look out for the general security in the Gaza Strip and allow for the realization of (President Donald) Trump's plan," Netanyahu told a Cabinet meeting.

Trump has proposed that Gaza's population be resettled in other countries so the U.S. can redevelop Gaza for others. Palestinians say they do not want to leave their homeland. Human rights experts say the plan would likely violate international law.

Israeli strikes on Sunday morning killed at least 16 people, including nine children and three women, according to Nasser Hospital in the southern city of Khan Younis.

Two girls appeared to be wearing new clothes purchased for the holiday, according to an Associated

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 40 of 59

Press cameraman, including spotless sneakers.

On Sunday evening, a strike hit a tent in Deir al-Balah and killed at least two people, according to an AP journalist at the hospital.

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed into Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and taking 251 hostages. Hamas is still holding 59 captives — 24 believed to be alive.

Israel's offensive has killed over 50,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which does not distinguish between civilians and combatants in its tally. Israel says it has killed around 20,000 militants, without providing evidence, and blames civilian deaths on Hamas because it operates in densely populated areas.

Israel approves controversial project in West Bank

Netanyahu's security Cabinet approved the construction of a road for Palestinians in the occupied West Bank. Critics say it will open the door for Israel to annex a key area just outside Jerusalem, further undermining the feasibility of a future Palestinian state.

Netanyahu's office said the project is meant to streamline travel for Palestinians in communities near the large Jewish settlement of Maaleh Adumim.

Peace Now, an Israeli anti-settlement watchdog group, said the road will divert Palestinian traffic outside of Maaleh Adumim and the surrounding area known as E1, a tract of open land deemed essential for the territorial contiguity of a future state.

That will make it easier for Israel to annex E1, according to Hagit Ofran, a settlement expert with the group, because Israel can claim there is no disruption to Palestinian movement.

Critics say Israeli settlements and other land grabs make a contiguous future state increasingly impossible. Several roads in the West Bank are meant for use by either Israelis or Palestinians, which international rights groups say is part of an apartheid system, allegations Israel rejects.

Israel captured the West Bank, Gaza and east Jerusalem in the 1967 Mideast war. The Palestinians want all three for their future state. A two-state solution is widely seen as the only way to resolve the decades-old conflict.

Trump's promised 'Liberation Day' of tariffs is coming. Here's what it could mean for you

By JOSH BOAK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump says Wednesday will be "Liberation Day" — a moment when he plans to roll out a set of tariffs that he promises will free the United States from foreign goods.

The details of Trump's next round of import taxes are still sketchy. Most economic analyses say average U.S. families would have to absorb the cost of his tariffs in the form of higher prices and lower incomes. But an undeterred Trump is inviting CEOs to the White House to say they are investing hundreds of billions of dollars in new projects to avoid the import taxes.

It is also possible that the tariffs are short-lived if Trump feels he can cut a deal after imposing them.

"I'm certainly open to it, if we can do something," Trump told reporters. "We'll get something for it."

At stake are family budgets, America's prominence as the world's leading financial power and the structure of the global economy.

Here's what you should know about the impending trade penalties:

What exactly does Trump plan to do?

He wants to announce import taxes, including "reciprocal" tariffs that would match the rates charged by other countries and account for other subsidies. Trump has talked about taxing the European Union, South Korea, Brazil and India, among other countries.

As he announced 25% auto tariffs last week, he alleged that America has been ripped off because it imports more goods than it exports.

"This is the beginning of Liberation Day in America," Trump said. "We're going to charge countries for doing business in our country and taking our jobs, taking our wealth, taking a lot of things that they've

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 41 of 59

been taking over the years. They've taken so much out of our country, friend and foe. And, frankly, friend has been oftentimes much worse than foe."

In an interview Saturday with NBC News, Trump said it did not bother him if tariffs caused vehicle prices to rise because autos with more U.S. content could possibly be more competitively priced.

"I hope they raise their prices, because if they do, people are gonna buy American-made cars," Trump said. "I couldn't care less because if the prices on foreign cars go up, they're going to buy American cars."

Trump has also suggested that he will be flexible with his tariffs, saying he will treat other nations better than they treated the United States. But he still has plenty of other taxes coming on imports.

The Republican president plans to tax imported pharmaceutical drugs, copper and lumber. He has put forth a 25% tariff on any country that imports oil from Venezuela, even though the United States also does so. Imports from China are being charged an additional 20% tax because of its role in fentanyl production. Trump has imposed separate tariffs on goods from Canada and Mexico for the stated reason of stopping drug smuggling and illegal immigration. Trump also expanded his 2018 steel and aluminum tariffs to 25% on all imports.

Some aides suggest the tariffs are tools for negotiation on trade and border security; others say the revenues will help reduce the federal budget deficit. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick says they will force other nations to show Trump "respect."

What could tariffs do to the US economy?

Nothing good, according to most economists. They say the tariffs would get passed along to consumers in the form of higher prices for autos, groceries, housing and other goods. Corporate profits could be lower and growth more sluggish. Trump maintains that more companies would open factories to avoid the taxes, though that process could take three years or more.

Economist Art Laffer estimates the tariffs on autos, if fully implemented, could increase per vehicle costs by \$4,711, though he said he views Trump as a smart and savvy negotiator. The investment bank Goldman Sachs estimates the economy will grow this quarter at an annual rate of just 0.6%, down from a rate of 2.4% at the end of last year.

Mayor Andrew Ginther of Columbus, Ohio, said on Friday that tariffs could increase the median cost of a home by \$21,000, making affordability more of an obstacle because building materials would cost more.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro told "Fox News Sunday" that the auto tariffs would raise \$100 billion annually and the other tariffs would bring in about \$600 billion per year, or about \$6 trillion over 10 years. As a share of the economy, that would be the largest tax increase since World War II, according to Jessica Riedl, a senior fellow at the Manhattan Institute, a conservative think tank.

Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent has suggested that tariffs would be a one-time price adjustment, rather than the start of an inflationary spiral. But Bessent's conclusion rests on tariffs being brief or contained, rather than leading other countries to retaliate with their own tariffs or seeping into other sectors of the economy.

"There is a chance tariffs on goods begin to filter through to the pricing of services," said Samuel Rines, a strategist at WisdomTree. "Auto parts get more expensive, then auto repair gets more expensive, then auto insurance feels the pressure. While goods are the focus, tariffs could have a longer-term effect on inflation."

How are other nations thinking about the new tariffs?

Most foreign leaders see the tariffs as destructive for the global economy, even if they are prepared to impose their own countermeasures.

Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney said Trump's tariff threats had ended the partnership between his country and the United States, even as the president on Friday talked about his phone call with Carney in relatively positive terms. Canada already has announced retaliatory tariffs.

French President Emmanuel Macron said the tariffs were "not coherent" and would mean "breaking value chains, creating inflation in the short term and destroying jobs. It's not good for the American economy, nor for the European, Canadian or Mexican economies." Yet Macron said his nation would defend itself

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 42 of 59

with the goal of dismantling the tariffs.

Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum has avoided the tit-for-tat responses on tariffs, but she sees it as critical to defend jobs in her country.

The Chinese government said Trump's tariffs would harm the global trading system and would not fix the economic challenges identified by Trump.

"There are no winners in trade wars or tariff wars, and no country's development and prosperity are achieved through imposing tariffs," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakun said.

How did Trump land on it being called 'Liberation Day'?

Based off Trump's public statements, April 2 is at least the third "liberation day" that he has identified.

At a rally last year in Nevada, he said the day of the presidential election, Nov. 5, would be "Liberation Day in America." He later gave his inauguration the same label, declaring in his address: "For American citizens, Jan. 20, 2025, is Liberation Day."

His repeated designation of the term is a sign of just how much importance Trump places on tariffs, an obsession of his since the 1980s. Dozens of other countries recognize their own form of liberation days to recognize events such as overcoming Nazi Germany or the end of a previous political regime deemed oppressive.

Trump sees his tariffs as providing national redemption, but the slumping consumer confidence and stock market indicate that much of the public believes the U.S. economy will pay the price for his ambitions.

"I don't see anything positive about Liberation Day," said Phillip Braun, a finance professor at Northwestern University's Kellogg School of Management. "It's going to hurt the U.S. economy. Other countries are going to retaliate."

Trump roars down multiple paths of retribution as he vowed. Some targets yield while others fight

By ERIC TUCKER and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The executive order directed at one of the country's most prestigious law firms followed a well-worn playbook as President Donald Trump roared down the road to retribution.

Reaching beyond government, Trump has set out to impose his will across a broad swath of American life, from individuals who have drawn his ire to institutions known for their own flexes of power and intimidation.

Which is how the Paul Weiss, a storied New York law firm that since its 1875 birth has advanced the cause of civil rights, shepherded the legal affairs of corporate power brokers and grown into a multi-billion-dollar multinational enterprise, came to learn it was in trouble. The reason: One of its former attorneys had investigated Trump as a Manhattan prosecutor.

Trump ordered that federal security clearances of the firm's attorneys be reviewed for suspension, federal contracts terminated and employee access to federal buildings restricted. Yet the decree was soon averted in the most Trumpian of ways: with a deal.

After a White House meeting with the firm's chairman yielded a series of commitments, including \$40 million worth of legal work to support administration causes, the executive order was rescinded, but not without a backlash from a legal community that saw the resolution as a capitulation.

The episode showed not only Trump's use of the power of the presidency to police dissent and punish adversaries but also his success in extracting concessions from law firms, academia, Silicon Valley and corporate boardrooms. These targets were suddenly made to fear for their futures in the face of a retribution campaign that has been a defining feature of his first two months in office.

Just one day after Paul Weiss' deal, Columbia University disclosed policy changes under the threat of losing billions of dollars in federal money. A week later, the venerable law firm of Skadden, Arps, Slate, Meagher & Flom cut a deal of its own before it could be hit by an executive order. Before that, ABC News and Meta reached multi-million-dollar settlements to resolve lawsuits from Trump.

"The more of them that cave, the more extortion that that invites," said Ty Cobb, a White House lawyer in Trump's first term who has since become a sharp critic. "You'll see other universities and other law firms

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 43 of 59

and other enemies of Trump assaulted and attacked into submission because of that.”

Some within the conservative legal community, by contrast, say the Republican president is acting within his right.

“It’s the president’s prerogative to instruct the executive branch to do business with companies, law firms or contractors that he deems trustworthy — and the converse is true too,” said Jay Town, a U.S. attorney from Alabama during Trump’s first term. “The president, as the commander in chief, can determine who gets a clearance and who doesn’t. It’s as simple as that.”

Some targets have not given in, with two law firms since the Paul Weiss deal suing to block executive orders. Yet no matter their response, the sanctioned firms have in most instances run afoul of the White House by virtue of association with prosecutors who previously investigated Trump.

If the negotiations have been surprising, consider that Trump telegraphed his approach during the campaign. “For those who have been wronged and betrayed, I am your retribution,” he told supporters in March 2023.

Less clear was: Retribution for what exactly? Against whom? By what means?

The answers would come soon enough.

One firm called Trump threat ‘an existential crisis’

Fresh off surviving four federal and state indictments that threatened to sink his political career, and investigations that shadowed his first term in office, Trump came straight for the prosecutors who investigated him and the elite firms he saw as sheltering them.

His Justice Department moved almost immediately to fire the members of special counsel Jack Smith’s team and some prosecutors who handled cases arising from the Capitol riot on Jan. 6, 2021.

The White House followed up with an executive order that stripped security clearances from the lawyers at the law firm of Covington & Burling who have provided legal representation for Smith amid the threat of government investigations. Covington has said it looks forward to “defending Mr. Smith’s interests.”

A subsequent order punished Perkins Coie for its representation of then-Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton during the 2016 campaign and its part in funding opposition research on Trump that took the form of a dossier containing unsubstantiated allegations about Trump’s ties to Russia.

Its business hanging in the balance, Perkins Coie hired Williams & Connolly, a Washington firm with an aggressive litigation style, to challenge the order. A federal judge said the administration’s action sent “chills down my spine” and blocked portions of it from taking effect. That decision could have been a meaningful precedent for other beleaguered firms.

Except that’s not what happened next.

The chairman of Paul Weiss said it, too, was initially prepared to sue over a March 14 order that targeted the firm in part because a former partner, Mark Pomerantz, had several years earlier overseen an investigation into Trump’s finances on behalf of the Manhattan district attorney’s office.

But the firm also came to believe that even a courtroom victory would not erase the perception among clients that it was “persona non grata” with the administration, its chairman, Brad Karp, later told colleagues in an email obtained by The Associated Press.

The order, Karp said, presented an “existential crisis” for a firm that has counted among its powerhouse representations the NFL and ExxonMobil. Some of its clients signaled they might abandon ship. The hoped-for support from fellow firms never materialized and some even sought to exploit Paul Weiss’ woes, Karp said.

“It was very likely that our firm would not be able to survive a protracted dispute with the Administration,” he wrote.

When the opportunity came for a White House meeting and the chance to cut a deal, he took it, pledging pro bono legal services for causes such as the fight against antisemitism as well as representation without regard to clients’ political affiliation. In so doing, he wrote, “we have quickly solved a seemingly intractable problem and removed a cloud of uncertainty that was hanging over our law firm.”

The outcry was swift. Lawyers outside the firm ridiculed it. More than 140 Paul Weiss alumni signed a

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 44 of 59

letter assailing the capitulation.

"Instead of a ringing defense of the values of democracy, we witnessed a craven surrender to, and thus complicity in, what is perhaps the gravest threat to the independence of the legal profession since at least the days of Senator Joseph McCarthy," the letter said.

Within days, two other firms, Jenner & Block and WilmerHale, were confronted with executive orders over their affiliation with prosecutors on Robert Mueller's special counsel team that investigated Trump during his first term. Both sued Friday. WilmerHale, where Mueller is a retired partner, said the order was an "unprecedented assault" on the legal system. After hearing arguments, judges blocked enforcement of key portions of both orders.

Yet that very day, the White House trumpeted a fresh deal with Skadden Arps in which the firm agreed to provide \$100 million of pro bono legal services and to disavow the use of diversity, equity and inclusion considerations in its hiring practices.

Trump has expressed satisfaction with his pressure campaign, issuing a directive to sanction lawyers who are seen as bringing "frivolous" litigation against the government. Universities, he marveled, are "bending and saying 'Sir, thank you very much, we appreciate it.'"

As for law firms, he said, "They're just saying, 'Where do I sign?' Nobody can believe it.'"

One Ivy League university also acceded to Trump's demands

Uptown from Paul Weiss's Midtown Manhattan home base, another elite New York institution was facing its own crucible.

Trump had taken office against the backdrop of disruptive protests at Columbia University tied to Israel's war with Hamas. The turmoil prompted the resignation of its president and made the Ivy League school a target of critics who said an overly permissive campus environment had let antisemitic rhetoric flourish.

The Trump administration this month arrested a prominent Palestinian activist and legal permanent resident in his university-owned apartment building and opened an investigation into whether Columbia hid students sought by the U.S. over their involvement in the demonstrations.

In a separate action, the administration pulled \$400 million from Columbia, canceling grants and contracts because of what the government said was the school's failure to stamp out antisemitism and demanding a series of changes as a condition for restoring the money or for even considering doing so.

Two weeks later, the then-interim university president, Katrina Armstrong, announced that she would implement nearly all of the changes sought by the White House. Columbia would bar students from protesting in academic buildings, she said, adopt a new definition of antisemitism and put its Middle East studies department under new supervision.

The university's March 21 rollout of reforms did not challenge the Trump administration's coercive tactics, but nodded to what it said were "legitimate concerns" raised about antisemitism. U.S. Education Secretary Linda McMahon has said the university was "on the right track" but has not yet indicated whether funding might be restored.

The Columbia resolution was condemned by some faculty members and free speech advocates.

"Columbia's capitulation endangers academic freedom and campus expression nationwide," Donna Lieberman, executive director of the New York Civil Liberties Union, said in a statement at the time.

Armstrong on Friday night announced her exit from the position and her return to her post atop the school's medical center.

Columbia is not Trump's sole target in academia. Also this month, the administration suspended about \$175 million in federal funding for the University of Pennsylvania over a transgender swimmer who last competed for the school in 2022.

Media companies have also been a target

Trump had not even taken office on Jan. 20 when one legal fight that could have followed him into office abruptly faded.

In December, ABC News agreed to pay \$15 million toward Trump's presidential library to settle a defamation lawsuit over anchor George Stephanopoulos' inaccurate on-air assertion that the president-elect

had been found civilly liable for raping writer E. Jean Carroll.

The following month, Meta, the parent company of Facebook, agreed to pay \$25 million to settle a lawsuit filed by Trump against the company after it suspended his accounts following the Jan. 6 riot.

The agreement followed a visit by Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg to Trump's private Florida club to try to mend fences. Such a trip may have seemed unlikely in Trump's first term, or after the Capitol siege made him, briefly, a pariah within his own party. But it's something other technology, business and government officials have done.

The administration, meanwhile, has taken action against news organizations whose coverage it disagrees with. The White House last month removed Associated Press reporters and photographers from the small group of journalists who follow the president in the pool and other events after the news agency declined to follow Trump's executive order to rename the Gulf of Mexico; a suit by the AP is pending.

And the administration has sought to dismantle Voice of America, a U.S. government-funded international news service. On Friday, a federal judge halted plans to fire more than 1,200 journalists, engineers and other staff who were sidelined after Trump ordered a funding cut.

Smell of death permeates Myanmar cities after quake kills over 1,600 and leaves countless buried

By THEIN ZAW, DAVID RISING and GRANT PECK Associated Press

MANDALAY, Myanmar (AP) — The smell of decaying bodies permeated the streets of Myanmar's second-largest city on Sunday as people worked frantically by hand to clear rubble in the hope of finding someone still alive, two days after a massive earthquake struck that killed more than 1,600 people and left countless others buried.

The 7.7 magnitude quake hit midday Friday with an epicenter near Mandalay, bringing down scores of buildings and damaging other infrastructure like the city's airport.

Relief efforts have been hampered by buckled roads, downed bridges, spotty communications and the challenges of operating in a country in the midst of a civil war.

The search for survivors has been primarily conducted by the local residents without the aid of heavy equipment, moving rubble by hand and with shovels in 41-degree Celsius (106 Fahrenheit) heat, with only the occasional tracked excavator to be seen.

A 5.1 magnitude aftershock Sunday afternoon prompted screams from those in the streets, and then the work continued.

Many of Mandalay's 1.5 million people spent the night sleeping on the streets, either left homeless by the quake, which also shook neighboring Thailand and killed at least 18 people there, or worried that the continuing aftershocks might cause structures left unstable to collapse.

Many areas still have not been reached

So far 1,644 people have been reported killed in Myanmar and 3,408 injured, but many areas have not yet been reached, and many rescue efforts so far have been undertaken by people working by hand to try and clear rubble, said Cara Bragg, the Yangon-based manager of Catholic Relief Services in Myanmar.

"It's mainly been local volunteers, local people who are just trying to find their loved ones," Bragg said after being briefed by her colleague in Mandalay.

"I've also seen reports that now some countries are sending search and rescue teams up to Mandalay to support the efforts, but hospitals are really struggling to cope with the influx of injured people, there's a shortage of medical supplies, and people are struggling to find food and clean water," Bragg added.

The organization was sending a team by road on Sunday to assess peoples' most pressing needs so that it could target its own response.

With the Mandalay airport damaged and the control tower toppled in the capital Naypitaw's airport, all commercial flights into the cities have been shut down.

Official relief efforts in Naypitaw were prioritizing government offices and staff housing, leaving locals and aid groups to dig through the rubble by hand in residential areas, the hot sun beating down and the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 46 of 59

smell of death in the air.

A team sent from neighboring China rescued an older man who had been trapped for nearly 40 hours beneath the rubble of a Naypitaw hospital, and many others are believed to still be buried under, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

Myanmar sits on the Sagaing Fault, a major north-south fault that separates the India plate and the Sunda plate.

The earthquake occurred when a 200-kilometer (125-mile) section of the fault ruptured, causing widespread damage along a wide swath of territory down the middle of the country, including Sagaing, Mandalay, Magway and Bago regions and Shan State.

With widespread telecommunication outages, few details have come out so far from areas other than the main urban areas of Mandalay and Naypitaw.

Foreign aid starts to arrive in Myanmar

Still, two Indian C-17 military transport aircraft were able to land late Saturday at Naypitaw with a field hospital unit and some 120 personnel who were then to travel north to Mandalay to establish a 60-bed emergency treatment center, according to the country's Foreign Ministry. Other Indian supplies were flown into Yangon, Myanmar's biggest city, which has been the hub of other foreign relief efforts.

On Sunday, a convoy of 17 Chinese cargo trucks carrying critical shelter and medical supplies was expected to reach Mandalay, after making the arduous journey by road from Yangon.

The 650-kilometer (400-mile) journey has been taking 14 hours or longer, with clogged roads and traffic diverted from the main highway to skirt damage from the earthquake.

At the same time, the window of opportunity to find anyone alive is rapidly closing. Most rescues occur within the first 24 hours after a disaster, and then survival chances drop as each day passes.

An initial report on earthquake relief efforts issued Saturday by the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs noted the severe damage or destruction of many health facilities, and warned that a "severe shortage of medical supplies is hampering response efforts, including trauma kits, blood bags, anesthetics, assistive devices, essential medicines, and tents for health workers."

China said it has sent more than 135 rescue personnel and experts along with supplies like medical kits and generators and pledged around \$13.8 million in emergency aid. Russia's Emergencies Ministry said it had flown in 120 rescuers and supplies to Yangon, and the country's Health Ministry said Moscow had sent a medical team to Myanmar.

Teams from Singapore have been working already in Naypitaw. Malaysia dispatched a team of 50 personnel on Sunday with trucks, search and rescue equipment and medical supplies. Thailand said 55 of its soldiers arrived in Yangon on Sunday to help with search and rescue operations, while Britain announced a \$13 million aid package to help its locally-funded partners already in Myanmar respond to the crisis.

18 people reported dead in Thailand

In neighboring Thailand, the quake rocked much of the country, bringing down a high-rise building under construction in Bangkok, some 1,300 kilometers (800 miles) away from the epicenter.

So far, 11 people have been found dead at the construction site near the popular Chatuchak market. A total of 18 people have been reported killed by the quake in Thailand so far.

Rescue efforts in Myanmar complicated by civil war

In Myanmar, which is also known as Burma, rescue efforts so far are focused on Mandalay and Naypitaw, which are thought to have been the hardest hit, but many other areas were also impacted and little is known so far about the damage there.

"We're hearing reports of hundreds of people trapped in different areas," said Bragg. "Right now we're at 1,600 (known fatalities) and we don't have a lot of data coming out but you've got to assume it will be increasing in the thousands based on what the impacts are. This is just anecdotal information at this point."

Beyond the earthquake damage, rescue efforts are complicated by the bloody civil war roiling much of the country, including in quake-affected areas. In 2021, the military seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi, sparking what has since turned into significant armed resistance.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 47 of 59

Government forces have lost control of much of Myanmar, and many places are dangerous or impossible for aid groups to reach. More than 3 million people have been displaced by the fighting and nearly 20 million are in need, according to the United Nations.

The government military has been fighting long-established militias and newly formed pro-democracy People's Defense Forces, and has heavily restricted much-needed aid efforts to the large population already displaced by war even before the earthquake.

Military attacks continued with airstrikes on Friday and reports of mortar and drone attacks on Saturday. Tom Andrews, a monitor on rights in Myanmar commissioned by the U.N.-backed Human Rights Council, called for the military to immediately call a ceasefire.

"Aid workers should not have to fear arrest and there should be no obstructions to aid getting to where it is most needed," he said on X. "Every minute counts."

Minnesota officials seek answers in case of graduate student detained by ICE

MINNEAPOLIS (AP) — Officials in Minnesota are seeking answers in the case of a University of Minnesota graduate student who's being detained by U.S. immigration authorities for unknown reasons.

University leadership said Immigration and Customs Enforcement detained the student Thursday at an off-campus residence. Officials said the school was not given advance notice about the detention and did not share information with federal authorities. The student's name and nationality have not been released.

As the case remained largely a mystery, state and local leaders called on federal authorities to explain their actions.

"My office and I are doing all we can to get information about this concerning case," Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar said in a post on the social media site X. "We're in contact with the University and understand they had no prior warning or information that led to this detainment."

She said that international students are "a major part of the fabric of life in the school and our community."

The detained student is enrolled in business school at the university's Twin Cities campus. University officials said the school is providing the student with legal aid and other support services.

The university's graduate labor union organized a protest Saturday outside the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in downtown Minneapolis. Organizers said they stood in solidarity with international students facing uncertain futures as the new Trump administration pursues an immigration crackdown that has targeted people with ties to American colleges and universities.

"An increasing number of international students are being detained without due process across the country," leaders of the University of Minnesota Graduate Labor Union-United Electrical Local 1105 said in a statement. "These constitutional violations are part of a larger plan to continue stripping our rights away from us, starting with immigrants. It will not stop there."

The Trump administration has cited a seldom-invoked statute authorizing the secretary of state to revoke visas of noncitizens who could be considered a threat to foreign policy interests. More than half a dozen people are known to have been taken into custody or deported in recent weeks. Most of the detainees have shown support for Palestinian causes during campus protests over the war in Gaza last year.

"An attack on one of us is an attack on all of us," the union's president, Abaki Beck, said in a statement.

What prompted authorities to detain the University of Minnesota student is still unknown. ICE officials have not responded to an Associated Press email requesting comment.

Minnesota Gov. Tim Walz said on X that he is in touch with the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

"The University of Minnesota is an international destination for education and research," Walz wrote. "We have any number of students studying here with visas, and we need answers."

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey also called the case "deeply troubling."

"Educational environments must be places where all students can focus on learning and growing without fear," he wrote on X.

Officials promised to release more information about the case once they have updates.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 48 of 59

"International students are huge assets to the University of Minnesota," U.S. Sen. Tina Smith of Minnesota said in a Facebook post. "They move thousands of miles away from their families and support systems to learn from the best and the brightest. I can't imagine how terrified they are after learning ICE has detained one of their classmates."

Statham's 'A Working Man' upsets 'Snow White' to take No. 1 at the box office

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — In an unexpected upset, the Jason Statham thriller "A Working Man" took No. 1 at the box office, besting the rapidly declining "Snow White," according to studio estimates Sunday.

Even after a lackluster debut, the Walt Disney Co.'s live-action remake was predicted to remain the top film in U.S. and Canadian theaters over the weekend. Instead, "Snow White," plagued by bad buzz and backlash, nosedived in its second weekend and dropped 66%.

At the same time, Amazon MGM Studios' "A Working Man," directed by David Ayer, beat expectations with a \$15.2 million debut. Co-written by Sylvester Stallone, "A Working Man" reteams Statham and Ayer following last year's successful "The Beekeeper" (\$162 million worldwide). This time around, Statham plays a construction worker with an elite military past.

While reviews have been mixed and audiences only gave "A Working Man" a "B" CinemaScore, showing Statham has carved out something rare in the movie industry today: bankability. "A Working Man" opened similarly to "The Beekeeper," which launched with \$16.5 million.

The bigger headline, though, might have been the fast erosion of ticket buyers' appetite for "Snow White." The film, directed by Marc Webb and starring Rachel Zegler, had been hoped to lift movie theaters after a painful start to 2025. Produced for more \$250 million, the film has turned into a poisoned apple, with a two-week global haul of \$143.1 million.

Next weekend, Warner Bros.' "A Minecraft Movie," is expected to win the weekend and will, like "Snow White," target family audiences.

A trio of newcomers – A24's "Death of a Unicorn," Universal and Blumhouse's "The Woman in the Yard," and the Fathom's "Chosen: The Last Supper" – also opened over the weekend, though none made a big impact.

"The Chosen: The Last Supper," fared the best, with \$11.5 million in 2,235 theaters. The Christian TV series, now in its fifth season, has regularly driven ticket sales before streaming. More episodes will roll out in theaters through April.

"Death of a Unicorn," a horror comedy starring Jenna Ortega and Paul Rudd, portrays a father and daughter who hit a unicorn on the road while they're driving. The movie collected a modest \$5.8 million from 3,050 theaters.

The weekend's more straightforward horror contender, Blumhouse's "The Woman in the Yard," starring Danielle Deadwyler, debuted with \$9.4 million from 2,842 cinemas. In "Black Adam" director Jaume Collet-Serra's film, a mysterious woman keeps appearing in a family's front yard. Though it cost little to make, with a production budget of \$12 million, it has been slammed by critics.

One of the weekend's biggest successes was the 1997 Studio Ghibli classic "Princess Mononoke." The Hayo Miyazaki film grossed \$4 million across just 347 IMAX screens. Distributor GKids touted that result as a victory for humanity over technology. Earlier in the week, a new version of ChatGPT allowed users to render images in Studio Ghibli-like animation.

Sony Pictures Classic's "The Penguin Lesson," starring Steve Coogan and Jonathan Pryce, opened with \$1.2 million at 1,017 theaters. Coogan plays an Englishman teaching in Argentina in 1976 who rescues a penguin from an oil spill.

With flagging ticket sales overall, Hollywood marked the first quarter of 2025 with a sizeable box-office deficit. Sales are down 11% from the same point in 2024, and nearly 40% from 2019, according to Comscore.

"Hopefully 'Minecraft' can help the marketplace level up since after some underwhelming weekends at

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 49 of 59

the box office we need to get some momentum back at the multiplex," said Paul Dergarabedian, senior media analyst for Comscore.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

With final domestic figures due Monday, the following list factors in estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Comscore:

1. "A Working Man," \$15.2 million
2. "Snow White," \$14.2 million.
3. "The Chosen: Last Supper," \$11.5 million.
4. "The Woman in the Yard," \$9.5 million.
5. "Death of a Unicorn," \$5.8 million.
6. "Princess Mononoke," \$4 million.
7. "Captain America: Brave New World," \$2.8 million.
8. "Black Bag," \$2.2 million.
9. "Mickey 17," \$1.9 million.
10. "Novocaine," \$1.5 million.

Trump roars down multiple paths of retribution as he vowed. Some targets yield while others fight

By ERIC TUCKER and CALVIN WOODWARD Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The executive order against one of the country's most prestigious law firms followed a well-worn template as President Donald Trump roared down the road to retribution.

Reaching far beyond government, Trump has set out to impose his will across a broad swath of American life, from individuals who have been targeted to institutions known for their own flexes of power and intimidation.

Paul Weiss, a New York law firm born in 1875, got the word that it was in trouble.

Trump ordered that federal security clearances of Paul Weiss attorneys be reviewed for suspension, federal contracts terminated and employee access to federal buildings restricted. One of its former lawyers once investigated Trump as a Manhattan prosecutor.

The decree was averted in the most Trumpian of ways —with a deal.

After a White House meeting with the firm's chairman yielded various commitments, including \$40 million worth of legal work to support the administration's causes, the order was rescinded.

The episode showed not only Trump's aggressive use of the power of the presidency to police dissent and punish adversaries but also his success in extracting concessions from law firms, academia, Silicon Valley, corporate boardrooms and more.

Just one day after Paul Weiss' deal, Columbia University disclosed major policy changes at the risk of losing billions in federal money. Before that, ABC News and Meta reached multimillion-dollar settlements to resolve lawsuits from Trump.

"The more of them that cave, the more extortion that that invites," said Ty Cobb, a White House lawyer in Trump's first term and now a critic. "You'll see other universities and other law firms and other enemies of Trump assaulted and attacked into submission because of that."

Some within the conservative legal community, by contrast, think Trump is operating within his rights.

Other targets have taken the opposite tack, with two different law firms since the Paul Weiss deal suing over the executive orders. Judges on Friday temporarily blocked enforcement of key sections of those orders against Jenner & Block and WilmerHale.

If the submissions have been surprising, then Trump's interest in reprisal was less so, telegraphed as it was during the campaign. "I am your retribution," he told supporters in March 2023.

But retribution for what, exactly? Against whom? How?

The answers would come soon.

'An Existential Crisis'

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 50 of 59

Fresh off four federal and state indictments that threatened his political career, Trump came immediately for the prosecutors who investigated him and the law firms he saw as sheltering them.

Out went members of special counsel Jack Smith's team and some prosecutors who handled cases arising from the Jan. 6 riot.

Then an executive order stripped security clearances from lawyers from Covington & Burling who provided legal representation for Smith himself during the threat of government investigations.

A subsequent order punished Perkins Coie for representing Democratic presidential nominee Hillary Clinton during the 2016 campaign

Its business in the balance, Perkins Coie hired Williams Connolly, a firm with an aggressive litigation style, to contest the order. A federal judge said the administration's action sent "chills down my spine" and blocked portions of it. The decision could have been a precedent for other firms to rely on.

The Paul Weiss chairman said it, too, initially intended to sue over the order that targeted the firm in part because former partner Mark Pomerantz had several years earlier overseen an investigation into Trump's finances for the Manhattan district attorney. But even a courtroom victory wouldn't erase clients' perception that it was "persona non grata" with the administration, according to an internal email from the firm's chairman, Brad Karp.

Support from fellow firms never materialized and some even sought to exploit Paul Weiss' woes, Karp said.

When the opportunity came to cut a deal in a White House meeting, he took it, pledging free legal services for causes Trump supports, like the fight against antisemitism.

The outcry was swift. Lawyers outside the firm ridiculed what they saw as a weak-kneed response. More than 140 alumni of the firm assailed the capitulation in a letter.

Within days, Jenner & Block and WilmerHale, were hit with executive orders over their affiliation with prosecutors on Robert Mueller's special counsel team that investigated him during his first term. Both sued and got orders blocking sections of the edicts. Trump, meanwhile, has unleashed a new directive to sanction any lawyer who brings "frivolous" litigation against the government.

"I just think," Trump said, "that law firms need to behave themselves."

Inside the ivory tower

Another New York institution was facing its own crucible.

Trump had taken office against the backdrop of protests at Columbia University tied to Israel's war with Hamas. The protests prompted its president to resign and made the Ivy League school a target of critics who said an overly permissive campus environment had let antisemitic rhetoric flourish.

The Trump administration in March arrested a Palestinian activist and legal permanent resident in his university-owned apartment building and began investigating whether Columbia hid students sought by the U.S. over their involvement in the demonstrations.

The administration also canceled \$400 million in grants and contracts for the school and demanded changes as a condition for restoring the money.

Two weeks later, then-university President Katrina Armstrong said she would implement nearly everything sought by the White House. Columbia on Friday announced Armstrong's exit from the position.

He went after media, too

ABC News agreed to pay \$15 million toward Trump's presidential library to settle a defamation lawsuit over anchor George Stephanopoulos' inaccurate on-air assertion that Trump had been found civilly liable for raping writer E. Jean Carroll.

Then Meta agreed to pay \$25 million to settle a lawsuit filed by Trump after it suspended his Facebook accounts after the 2021 attack on the Capitol.

The Trump administration, meanwhile, has taken action against news organizations it disagrees with. The White House last month removed Associated Press reporters and photographers from the small group of journalists who follow the president in the pool and other events after the news agency declined to follow Trump's order to rename the Gulf of Mexico. AP sued.

On Friday, a federal judge in New York halted the administration's efforts to dismantle Voice of America, a U.S. government-funded international news service.

At least half of US states now outlaw devices that convert pistols into machine guns

By DAVID A. LIEB Associated Press

In New Mexico, police and prosecutors backed an effort to outlaw devices that convert pistols into machine guns. In Alabama, the governor made it a priority.

Lawmakers in both states — one led by Democrats, the other by Republicans — responded this year with new laws making so-called Glock switches illegal.

At least half of U.S. states now have similar laws prohibiting the possession of such devices, a list that has grown over the past decade as law enforcement officers have found more of the tiny yet powerful devices attached to guns.

States are mimicking federal law, which for decades has generally prohibited machine guns and any parts that can transform semiautomatic weapons into automatic ones.

What does federal law say?

U.S. law defines a machine gun as a weapon that automatically fires more than one shot with a single pull of a trigger. The definition also includes any parts designed to convert a weapon into a machine gun.

Federal law prohibits possessing machine guns made after 1986, with some exceptions for law enforcement, the military and certain licensed dealers. Nearly all conversion devices are illegal because they were made more recently.

People convicted of possessing machine guns and conversion devices can face up to 10 years in prison.

What is a Glock switch?

A Glock switch is one type of a machine gun conversion device. It's a metal or plastic piece, about the size of a coin, that attaches to the back of Glock pistol, a brand that is popular with both police and criminals. The switch interferes with a gun's internal trigger components so that it fires continuously when the trigger is pulled back and held.

A gun outfitted with a switch can fire dozens of bullets in mere seconds, similar to a factory-made machine gun.

Other brands of pistols that mimic Glocks also can be converted to machine guns. So can some semi-automatic rifles. Such conversion devices also are referred to as auto sears, selector switches or chips.

What does the data indicate?

The use of auto sears spiked in the past decade, partly because they can be made inexpensively with 3D printers.

From 2012 to 2016, just 814 machine gun conversion parts were taken into custody by the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives. That swelled to 5,454 from 2017-2021.

In January, former President Joe Biden's administration said 12,360 suspected machine gun conversion devices had been recovered in the U.S. and submitted to the ATF during a roughly 34-month period ending in October 2024.

Five states including Florida, Illinois, Texas, Montana and North Dakota accounted for nearly half that total.

What have states been doing?

Alabama is the latest state to outlaw Glock switches. A law signed this month by Republican Gov. Kay Ivey makes possessing parts designed to convert pistols into machine guns a felony punishable by up to 10 years in prison.

The bipartisan push in Alabama came after police said they believed conversion devices had been used in fatal shootings, including one in September that killed four and injured 17 people outside a Birmingham lounge.

Democratic New Mexico Gov. Michelle Lujan Grisham signed a law in February making possession of a weapon conversion device a felony punishable by up to three years in prison.

Similar legislation passed the New Jersey General Assembly last week and now heads to the Senate.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 52 of 59

Bills also are pending in other states.

Republican Virginia Gov. Glenn Youngkin signed a law last year making auto sears illegal. But Youngkin vetoed legislation this past week that would have broadened an existing ban on "trigger activators" to cover additional devices that increase firing rates of semiautomatic weapons.

What do gun control advocates want?

Groups such as Everytown for Gun Safety say state laws provide a sometimes easier alternative to federal prosecution for possessing Glock switches. But they want to go further.

Everytown for Gun Safety is backing legislation in California, Maryland and New York that would make it illegal to sell pistols that could be transformed into machine guns.

"That really puts the pressure where it belongs — on the manufactures that are making money off of guns that they know can be readily turned into machine guns," said Nick Suplina, senior vice president for law and policy at Everytown for Gun Safety.

Several cities and states including Baltimore, Chicago, Minnesota and New Jersey have sued Glock for making pistols that can be converted by others to automatic weapons.

What do gun-rights groups say?

The National Rifle Association notes U.S. attorneys already can prosecute people for misusing gun conversion devices without the need for state laws.

Gun Owners of America, another gun-rights group, contends people should have a Second Amendment right to own machine guns. State laws against machine gun conversation devices are "duplicative" and "pure virtue signaling," said Aidan Johnston, federal affairs director for Gun Owners of America.

He said guns converted to fire automatically can have practical uses like eliminating large groups of feral hogs that are destroying land.

"Just because you put that on your firearm doesn't mean that you are a violent criminal or that you necessarily are a dangerous person," Johnston said.

The US dominated figure skating's world championships. It may face the Russians at the Olympics

By DAVE SKRETTA AP Sports Writer

BOSTON (AP) — It's hard to imagine a better world championships for the American figure skating team, which captured gold in three of the four disciplines over the weekend for the first time in its history, and will take all of that momentum into an Olympic year.

But there is an old rival potentially returning to the mix that wasn't at worlds: the Russians.

The country that has dominated Olympic figure skating over the past three-plus decades has been banned from competing in any international events since its 2022 invasion of Ukraine. Its best skaters have been forced to defect to other countries or, for those unwilling to do so, compete in a series of domestic events far outside of the global spotlight.

But late last year, the International Skating Union announced that it had developed a strict procedure whereby a small number of Russian athletes could qualify for the Milano-Cortina Games in February. The plan created at the recommendation of the International Olympic Committee involves Russia nominating a single athlete or pair in each of the disciplines to compete in a qualifying event in Beijing later this year, provided they go through a rigorous background check.

The athletes would compete as neutral athletes, much like a small number did at the 2024 Paris Olympics, and only if they have no ties to the Russian or Belarusian military and have not publicly supported the invasion of Ukraine.

"The ISU has maintained its condemnation of the invasion of Ukraine," the organization said in a statement.

The plan was greeted by athletes at the world championships this week with a mixture of confusion and disappointment, support and rejection. But most athletes that discussed the situation with The Associated Press said they simply didn't care.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 53 of 59

They have competed against Russians in every other Olympics. They would be fine with doing it again. "It's something we've grown accustomed to being in my four Olympics, and hopefully heading to a fifth," said Evan Bates, who along with his partner, Madison Chock, won their third consecutive ice dance championship on Saturday night.

The last couple to accomplish that feat? Russians Oksana Grischuk and Evgeni Platov, who won four in a row from 1994-97.

"It's something completely out of our control. We can never control who is going to be let in, and what the political ramifications are," Bates continued. "It's outside our control, and the more we focus on it, it distracts from where our focus needs to be."

This isn't the first time that Chock and Bates have been through some uncertainty when it comes to the Russian team.

They were part of the American squad that initially earned a silver medal at the 2022 Beijing Games. But when Russian star Kamila Valieva was disqualified for a doping violation after a protracted investigation, the U.S. was elevated to gold, and Chock and Bates finally received their medals alongside their teammates at the Paris Games last summer.

Along with its gold medal Saturday night, the U.S. also stood atop the worlds podium with Alysa Liu, who broke a nearly two-decade drought for American women, and in the men's competition with Ilia Malinin, who won a second straight title by more than 30 points to stamp himself as the overwhelming favorite for the Winter Games.

Asked whether she thought the Russians should be at worlds, Liu replied simply: "I don't know. Do you?"

It's difficult to predict which Russians will attempt to qualify for Milano-Cortina — the ISU received a list of candidates to vet by its Feb. 28 deadline — but whoever clears the threshold likely will contend in two events in particular: women and pairs.

Anna Shcherbakova and Alexandra Trusova gave Russia gold and silver for the second consecutive Winter Games in Beijing, and a Russian has stood atop the podium in the women's event for the past three Olympics. And in pairs, Russians have taken gold in five of the past eight Olympics, and its skaters took silver and bronze at the Beijing Games.

The U.S. has not had a women's Olympic champion since Sarah Hughes in 2002. It has never won in pairs.

Last month, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov told reporters that Russia would try to ensure the participation of its athletes at the Winter Games, according to Russian news agency Tass. The statement came before the election of Kirsty Coventry as the new IOC president, and with her arrival came new hope for Russia that it could be allowed back into the Olympics.

Already, it appears Russian President Vladimir Putin is attempting to make inroads, offering the former swimmer his "sincere congratulations" on her win. Putin said in a statement issued by the Kremlin, "The results of the vote convincingly attest to your high authority in the sporting world and the recognition of your outstanding personal achievements."

"We will defend the interests of our athletes and our Olympic team," said Peskov, when asked recently about Russia's potential involvement in the Milano-Cortina Games. "Settling this issue will require additional time and effort."

That time and effort is for others to expend, though. For skaters, the focus is on preparing themselves for an Olympic year.

"Our Olympic experiences, there's been Russians at every Olympics so far, and looking to the next, should they be there, that will make the Olympic Games feel like there's no caveat," Bates said. "And if we can execute our plan and fulfill the goals we set for ourselves and stand atop the podium, we won't worry about the rest of the field. We'll just focus on the skating and the training and the preparation and enjoying what could be our last Olympic experience."

US immigration officials look to expand social media data collection

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — U.S. immigration officials are asking the public and federal agencies to comment on a proposal to collect social media handles from people applying for benefits such as green cards or citizenship, to comply with an executive order from President Donald Trump.

The March 5 notice raised alarms from immigration and free speech advocates because it appears to expand the government's reach in social media surveillance to people already vetted and in the U.S. legally, such as asylum seekers, green card and citizenship applicants -- and not just those applying to enter the country. That said, social media monitoring by immigration officials has been a practice for over a decade, since at least the second Obama administration and ramping up under Trump's first term.

Below are some questions and answers on what the new proposal means and how it might expand social media surveillance.

What is the proposal?

The Department of Homeland Security issued a 60-day notice asking for public commentary on its plan to comply with Trump's executive order titled "Protecting the United States from Foreign Terrorists and Other National Security and Public Safety Threats." The plan calls for "uniform vetting standards" and screening people for grounds of inadmissibility to the U.S., as well as identify verification and "national security screening." It seeks to collect social media handles and the names of platforms, although not passwords.

The policy seeks to require people to share their social media handles when applying for U.S. citizenship, green card, asylum and other immigration benefits. The proposal is open to feedback from the public until May 5.

What is changing?

"The basic requirements that are in place right now is that people who are applying for immigrant and non-immigrant visas have to provide their social media handles," said Rachel Levinson-Waldman, managing director of the Brennan Center's Liberty and National Security Program at New York University. "Where I could see this impacting is someone who came into the country before visa-related social media handle collection started, so they wouldn't have provided it before and now they're being required to. Or maybe they did before, but their social media use has changed."

"This fairly widely expanded policy to collect them for everyone applying for any kind of immigration benefit, including people who have already been vetted quite extensively," she added.

What this points to — along with other signals the administration is sending such as detaining people and revoking student visas for participating in campus protests that the government deems antisemitic and sympathetic to the militant Palestinian group Hamas — Levinson-Waldman added, is the increased use of social media to "make these very high-stakes determinations about people."

In a statement, a spokesperson for the United States Citizenship and Immigration Service said the agency seeks to "strengthen fraud detection, prevent identity theft, and support the enforcement of rigorous screening and vetting measures to the fullest extent possible."

"These efforts ensure that those seeking immigration benefits to live and work in the United States do not threaten public safety, undermine national security, or promote harmful anti-American ideologies," the statement continued. USCIS estimates that the proposed policy change will affect about 3.6 million people.

How are social media accounts used now?

The U.S. government began ramping up the use of social media for immigration vetting in 2014 under then-President Barack Obama, according to the Brennan Center for Justice. In late 2015, the Department of Homeland Security began both "manual and automatic screening of the social media accounts of a limited number of individuals applying to travel to the United States, through various non-public pilot programs," the nonpartisan law and policy institute explains on its website.

In May 2017, the U.S. Department of State issued an emergency notice to increase the screening of visa applicants. Brennan, along with other civil and human rights groups, opposed the move, arguing that it is

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 55 of 59

"excessively burdensome and vague, is apt to chill speech, is discriminatory against Muslims, and has no security benefit."

Two years later, the State Department began collecting social media handles from "nearly all foreigners" applying for visas to travel to the U.S. — about 15 million people a year.

How is AI used?

Artificial intelligence tools used to comb through potentially millions of social media accounts have evolved over the past decade, although experts caution that such tools have limits and can make mistakes.

Leon Rodriguez, who served as the director of USCIS from 2014 to 2017 and now practices as an immigration attorney, said while AI could be used as a first screening tool, he doesn't think "we're anywhere close to where AI will be able to exercise the judgment of a trained fraud detection and national security officer" or that of someone in an intelligence agency.

"It's also possible that I will miss stuff," he added. "Because AI is still very much driven by specific search criteria and it's possible that the search criteria won't hit actionable content."

What are the concerns?

"Social media is just a stew, so much different information — some of it is reliable, some of it isn't. Some of it can be clearly attributed to somebody, some of it can't. And it can be very hard to interpret," Levinson-Waldman said. "So I think as a baseline matter, just using social media to make high-stakes decisions is quite concerning."

Then there's the First Amendment.

"It's by and large established that people in the U.S. have First Amendment rights," she said. This includes people who are not citizens. "And obviously, there are complicated ways that that plays out. There is also fairly broad authority for the government to do something like revoking somebody's visa, if you're not a citizen, then there's steps that the government can take — but by and large, with very narrow exceptions, that cannot be on the grounds of speech that would be protected (by the First Amendment)."

What to know about Myanmar's civil war, which is complicating earthquake relief efforts

By GRANT PECK Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — The Southeast Asian nation of Myanmar has been plagued by wars and natural disasters since it became independent from Britain in 1948, when it was still called Burma.

Relief efforts from Friday's devastating 7.7 magnitude earthquake will be especially complicated with the country in embroiled in civil war, which began after the army seized power from the elected government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February 2021.

The main resistance movement against military rule has issued a statement saying it is unilaterally initiating a two-week ceasefire beginning Sunday in areas of the country affected by the quake.

There was no immediate reaction from the military government, which even before the earthquake — in addition to employing massive repression and state violence — heavily restricted much-needed aid to the more than 3 million people displaced by war.

The army's ability to facilitate or block food and other assistance has been described as a way of weaponizing aid. Critics of the military government have called repeatedly for outside assistance to be delivered directly to areas under control of the resistance.

Who are the protagonists in Myanmar's armed conflict?

The military, which has directly or indirectly ruled Myanmar most of the time since independence, seized power from Suu Kyi's government as it was about to begin a second five-year term. She and leaders of her National League for Democracy party were jailed, and security forces put down pro-democracy demonstrations with deadly force, leading to the growth of armed resistance, and the army in turn escalating its violence.

Despite a huge disadvantage in weaponry and manpower, pro-democracy fighters allied with ethnic minority groups seeking greater autonomy have successfully battled back, and analysts believe they control

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 56 of 59

a much greater share of territory.

The resistance is coordinated by the self-styled National Unity Government, whose claim to legitimacy is that it was formed by elected lawmakers. The NUG, which operates underground, has an armed wing called the People's Defense Force.

The PDF is largely a conglomeration of locally formed defense groups, poorly armed but usually with the advantage of fighting on home ground. Their ethnic allies are much more experienced and have even managed in some cases to manufacture their own weapons.

What exactly has the resistance proposed?

The National Unity Government said in an announcement Saturday that the PDF will implement a two-week pause in offensive military operations starting Sunday in earthquake-affected areas, while retaining the right to self-defense.

It said it would collaborate with the U.N. and international nongovernmental organizations "to ensure security, transportation, and the establishment of temporary rescue and medical camps," in the areas it controls. It also offered to provide health care professionals loyal to its resistance movement to work with international humanitarian organizations to deliver emergency rescue and medical services in areas under the military's control, if provided with safety guarantees.

What is the significance of the resistance's announcement?

The PDF fighters rarely mount large-scale offensives, sticking mainly to defense and ambush-style attacks, so its ceasefire would be largely symbolic. By taking the moral high ground, it gives its supporters a stronger argument to push for the unrestricted distribution of aid.

Although the military government has made the rare gesture of soliciting foreign emergency aid, its critics are skeptical that it will deploy it fairly and effectively.

The military's record is discouraging. For instance, it initially refused to allow in foreign rescue teams or many emergency supplies after Cyclone Nargis in 2008, which resulted in well over 100,000 deaths, and tens of thousands more left unaccounted for. Even after it agreed to accept foreign help, it was with severe restrictions.

When Cyclone Mocha ripped into the coast in May 2023, the military's relief efforts were again tardy, and as in 2008, private relief missions were discouraged, as was reporting. Property damage was heavy and while 145 deaths were officially acknowledged, independent accounts put the total at over 400.

There are examples in other countries when the effort to rebuild after natural disasters have played a part in helping to restore peace to areas torn by conflict, most notably in Indonesia's Aceh province after it was devastated by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami.

Buzzkill: Trump's trade wars threaten America's craft brewers already reeling from changing tastes

By DEE-ANN DURBIN and PAUL WISEMAN AP Business Writers

America's craft brewers already have enough problems. Hard seltzers and cocktails are muscling into beer sales. Millennials and Gen Z don't drink as much as their elders. Brewpubs still haven't fully recovered from the shock of COVID-19 five years ago.

Now there's a new threat: President Donald Trump's tariffs, including levies of 25% on imported steel and aluminum and on goods from Canada and Mexico.

"It's going to cost the industry a substantial amount of money," said Matt Cole, brewmaster at Ohio-based Fat Head's Brewery. Trump's trade war "will be crippling for our industry if this carries out into months and years."

The tariffs, some of which have been suspended until April 2, could impact brewers in ways big and small, said Bart Watson, president and CEO of the Brewers Association, the trade group for craft beer. Aluminum cans are in Trump's crosshairs. And nearly all the steel kegs used by U.S. brewers are made in Germany, so a tariff on finished steel products raises the cost of kegs. Tariffs on Canadian products like barley and malt would also increase costs. And some brewers depend on raspberries and other fruit from

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 57 of 59

Mexico, Watson said.

At Port City Brewing in Alexandria, Virginia, founder Bill Butcher worries that he'll have to raise the price of a six-pack of his best-selling Optimal Wit and other brews to \$18.99 from around \$12.99, and to charge more for a pint at his tasting room.

"Are people still going to come here and pay \$12 a pint instead of \$8?" he said. "Our business will slow down."

For Port City, the biggest threat comes from the looming tariff on Canadian imports. Every three weeks, the brewery receives a 40,000-pound truckload of pilsner malt from Canada, which goes into a 55,000-pound silo on the brewery's grounds. Butcher said he can't find malt of comparable quality anywhere else.

Trump's tariffs also hit Port City in a round-about way: The levy on aluminum, which went into effect March 12, is causing big brewers to switch from aluminum cans to bottles. Port City, which bottles 70% of its beer, found itself unable to get bottles.

"Our bottle supplier is cutting us off at the end of the month," Butcher said. "That caught us by surprise."

Fat Head's Brewery gets its barley from Canada. Cole said it could shift to sources in Idaho and Montana, but the shipping logistics are more complicated. And Trump's tariffs, by putting Canadian barley at a competitive disadvantage, would allow U.S. producers to raise domestic prices.

Fat Head's is trying to mitigate the impact of the tariffs. Anticipating higher aluminum prices, for instance, the brewery stockpiled beer cans — which it gets from a U.S. supplier — and now has 3 million cans in its warehouse, 30% of what it needs annually. It has also shifted production to painted cans, which are cheaper than those with shrink-wrapped film sleeves.

In Arizona, some brewers are already eliminating or reducing the beers they offer in aluminum cans to cut costs, said Cale Aylsworth, the director of sales and relations at O.H.S.O. Brewery and Distillery and president of the Arizona Craft Brewers Guild.

"This is a blow to Arizona craft. I hate to see less local options on the shelf," Aylsworth said.

Some brewers have also lost access to store shelves from one big customer: Canada, which is the top foreign market for U.S. craft beer, accounting for almost 38% of exports. But Canadians are furious that Trump targeted their products, and Canadian importers have been cancelling orders and pulling U.S. beer off store shelves.

The tariffs come at an already difficult time for brewers.

After years of steady growth — the number of U.S. breweries more than doubled to 9,736 between 2014 and 2024 — the industry is struggling to compete with seltzers and other beverages and to win over younger customers. In 2024, brewery closings outnumbered openings for the first time since the mid-2000s, Watson of the Brewers Association said. He estimates that U.S. craft beer production dipped 2% to 3% last year.

"Craft brewing had a period of phenomenal growth, but we are not in that era anymore," he said. "We're in a more mature market."

Port City's production peaked in 2019 at 16,000 barrels of beer — equivalent to 220,000 cases. Then COVID hit and hammered the company's draft beer business in bars and restaurants. The comeback has been slow. Butcher expects Port City to produce 13,000 barrels this year.

The brewery seeks to set itself apart by emphasizing its award-winning brews. In 2015, Port City was named small brewery of the year at the Great American Beer Festival. But it isn't easy with import taxes threatening to raise the cost of ingredients and packaging.

"It's hard enough to run a small business when your supply chain is intact," he said. And the erratic way that Trump has rolled out the taxes — announcing them, then suspending them, then threatening new ones — has made it even more difficult to plan.

"The unpredictability just injects an element of chaos," Butcher said.

Aylsworth, in Arizona, said big brewers have whole teams of people to calculate the impact of tariffs, but smaller brewers must stretch their resources to navigate them. That's on top of the other complexities of running a brewery, from zoning laws to licensing permits to labor shortages.

But for many brewers, the heaviest burden right now is lower sales as customers cut back on beer,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 58 of 59

Aylsworth said. That's why many brewers are trying hard not to raise prices.

"In today's world, with the economy and the high level of uncertainty, people are spending less," Cole said. "Beer is an affordable luxury, and we want to make sure we don't lose that."

Officials survey damage in Myanmar's earthquake-devastated central areas

BANGKOK (AP) — Friday's deadly earthquake rattled most of Myanmar and Thailand but certain areas sustained the heaviest damage, including flattened buildings and many lost lives.

The death toll of the 7.7 magnitude earthquake on Friday rose quickly in Myanmar and was at 1,644 victims by Sunday. There were a further 3,408 people injured and 139 missing.

In the greater Bangkok area, which took the brunt of the quake in Thailand, officials said Sunday the count was 18 dead, 33 injured and 78 people missing.

Officials were still assessing the damage and any overall estimate remains incomplete. But two days later a clearer picture has emerged about the extent of the destruction.

Myanmar sits on the major north-south Sagaing Fault, which separates the India and Sunda plates, and the widespread damage runs down a wide swath of the middle of the country. The area includes Mandalay, Myanmar's second-largest city with 1.5 million people that is located near the earthquake's epicenter.

Critical infrastructure has been destroyed including the historic Ava Bridge connecting Sagaing and Mandalay, Mandalay University and various heritage sites, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies said in a statement Sunday.

Little information has come out so far from areas other than the main urban areas of Mandalay city and Naypitaw and the Red Cross said the airports remain closed in both areas.

Significant damage also has been reported in the Sagaing, Naypyidaw, Magway, Bago and Shan State regions, while telecommunications outages continued to hamper emergency coordination in several regions, the Red Cross said.

The Red Cross said it has launched an emergency appeal for 100 million Swiss francs (\$113.3 million) to assist 100,000 people in 20,000 households over the next 24 months.

Today in History: March 31 LBJ announces he won't run for reelection

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, March 31, the 90th day of 2025. There are 275 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 31, 1968, at the conclusion of a nationally broadcast address on Vietnam, President Lyndon B. Johnson stunned listeners by declaring, "I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president."

Also on this date:

In 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain issued the Alhambra Decree, an edict expelling Jews from Spanish soil, except those willing to convert to Christianity.

In 1854, Japan and the United States signed the Treaty of Kanagawa, which opened two Japanese ports to American vessels and marked the beginning of Japan's transition away from isolationism.

In 1918, the United States first observed daylight saving time, moving clocks ahead one hour.

In 1931, Notre Dame college football coach Knute Rockne, 43, was killed in the crash of a TWA plane near Bazaar, Kansas.

In 1993, actor Brandon Lee, 28, was accidentally shot to death during the filming of a movie in Wilmington, North Carolina, when he was hit by a bullet fragment that had become lodged inside a prop gun.

In 1995, Tejano music star Selena, 23, died after being shot by Yolanda Saldívar, the president of Selena's fan club, who was found to have been embezzling money from the singer.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 31, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 279 ~ 59 of 59

In 2004, four U.S. civilian contractors were killed by Iraqi insurgents in Fallujah, Iraq; frenzied crowds then dragged the burned, mutilated bodies and hanged two of them from a bridge.

In 2005, Terri Schiavo (SHY'-voh), 41, died at a hospice in Pinellas Park, Florida, 13 days after her feeding tube was removed in a wrenching right-to-die court battle that began in 1998.

In 2022, scientists announced they had finished fully sequencing the human genome, the full genetic blueprint for human life.

Today's Birthdays: Actor William Daniels is 98. Actor Richard Chamberlain is 91. Actor Shirley Jones is 91. Musician-producer Herb Alpert is 90. Actor Christopher Walken is 82. Sen. Angus King, I-Maine, is 81. Former Vice President Al Gore is 77. Actor Rhea Perlman is 77. Rock musician Angus Young (AC/DC) is 70. Hockey Hall of Famer Pavel Bure is 54. Actor Ewan McGregor is 54. Actor Brian Tyree Henry is 43. Filmmaker Chloé Zhao is 43. Musician-producer Jack Antonoff is 41.