

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 1 of 52

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [4- Volga beats Groton in championship game at Milbank](#)
- [4- Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Aberdeen Smittys](#)
- [5- PrairieDoc: "Oral health is a gateway to general wellness"](#)
- [6- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [7- SD SearchLight: Trump: Existing prison locations might be only politically palatable sites for a new facility](#)
- [8- Names Released in Lawrence County Fatal Crash](#)
- [9- Names Released in Meade County Fatal Crash](#)
- [10- EarthTalk - Lava Flows](#)
- [11- Weather Pages](#)
- [15- Daily Devotional](#)
- [16- Subscription Form](#)
- [17- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [18- Upcoming Groton Events](#)
- [19- News from the Associated Press](#)

Monday, June 23

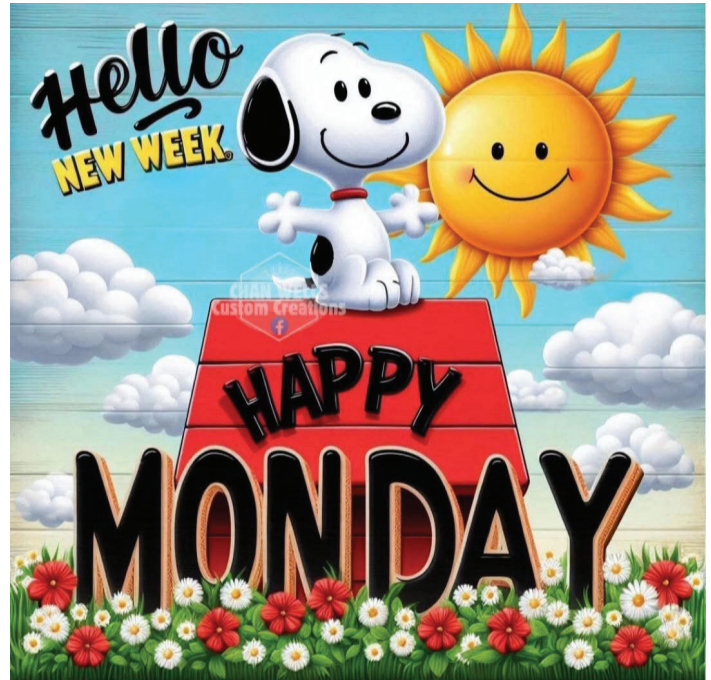
Senior Menu: Parmesan chicken breast, rice pilaf, Italian blend, blushing pears, whole wheat bread.
Jr. Legion hosts Aberdeen Smitty's 16U, 6 p.m.
U12 B&W hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Cancelled: U10 R&B hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U8 R&B at Columbia, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U12 at Milbank, 6 p.m. (DH)
Olive Grove: Women's 2-Person Scramble
Community Blood Drive, Noon to 6 p.m., Groton Community Center
Senior Citizens meet at Groton Community Center with potluck at noon.
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.

Tuesday, June 24

Senior Menu: Pork roast, mashed potatoes with gravy, glazed carrots, cinnamon apple sauce, whole wheat bread.
Jr. Legion hosts Miller, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U10 B&W hosts Claremont, 6:30 p.m.
U8 B&W hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m.
Softball: U14 hosts Warner, 6 p.m. (DH)
T-Ball: Gold hosts Claremont, 5:30 p.m.
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Groton Daily Independent

PO Box 34, Groton SD 57445
Paul's Cell/Text: 605-397-7460



Wednesday, June 25

Senior Menu: BBQ Pork Riblet on bun, potato salad, green beans, oranges with vanilla pudding.
Amateurs at Aberdeen, 6 p.m.
Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Jr. Teeners vs. W.I.N. at Northville, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U12 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U10 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
U8 W&R at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U8 B vs. U8G, 5:30 p.m.; U10B vs. U8G, 5:30 p.m. (DH); U12 hosts Redfield 2, 6:30 p.m. (DH)
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.
Groton C&MA: Kid's Club, Youth Group, Adult Bible Study, 7 p.m.

Thursday, June 26

Senior Menu: Kielbasa with Mac n cheese, winter blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
Jr. Legion hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Jr. Teeners at Aberdeen 13U, 5:30 p.m. (DH)
Softball: U8G at Claremont, 5:30 p.m.; U14 hosts Redfield 1, 5 p.m. (DH)
T-Ball: Black at Columbia, 5 p.m.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 2 of 52

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.

US Strikes Iran

The US joined Israel's military campaign against Iran Saturday, using B-2 bombers to target three nuclear sites: Natanz, Isfahan, and Fordo. In a speech to the nation, President Donald Trump called the strikes a success, saying the military destroyed the facilities. A final assessment of the impact to Iran's nuclear program is ongoing.

Operation Midnight Hammer began around 12 am ET Friday night, when seven B-2 bombers launched from Missouri east to Iran, with bombers also flying west as a decoy. After an 18-hour flight with minimal communication, the bombers struck Iran's heavily fortified Fordo and Natanz facilities in the first-ever operational deployment of 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs. US submarines separately launched Tomahawk missiles at an Iranian nuclear facility in Isfahan. The stealth bomber strikes took place between 6:40 pm ET and 7:05 pm ET—around 2 am local time. No shots were known to have been fired on US aircraft or personnel.

Trump suggested if Iran does not pursue peace, the US could strike further. Iran said it is reserving all options for a response and has not retaliated as of this writing. Israel said an Iranian missile barrage early Sunday wounded at least 80 people. Democratic congressional leaders have meanwhile criticized the US strikes as a dangerous escalation.

Robotaxi Launch

Tesla debuted its robotaxi service yesterday, releasing roughly 10 driverless Model Y vehicles in part of Austin, Texas. CEO Elon Musk says the rides will cost a flat share of \$4.20 and hopes to ramp up to 1,000 vehicles within months.

Tesla is not Austin's first robotaxi; Amazon's Waymo is the industry leader, boasting over 250,000 paid trips weekly across Austin, Los Angeles, Phoenix, and San Francisco. Alphabet's Zoox is available for employees and guests in Las Vegas and San Francisco. As with Waymo and Zoox, Tesla's pilot will have a driver accompanying the vehicles. The company will also monitor its robotaxi service remotely. The launch came as Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) signed a bill requiring autonomous vehicle operators to acquire a permit, beginning in September.

Tesla's autonomous ride-hailing service is projected to become a \$951B business by 2029, making up 90% of company earnings.

Thunder Clap

The Oklahoma City Thunder clinched the NBA championship last night, defeating the Indiana Pacers 103-91 in Game 7 of the Finals. The win marks a new era for the Thunder, as the franchise lifts the Larry O'Brien Trophy for the first time since 1979, when they were the Seattle SuperSonics (the team relocated in 2008). Pacers star Tyrese Haliburton exited the game in first quarter with an injured Achilles.

The title caps a dominant season for the Thunder, who finished with a league-leading 68 wins and entered the playoffs as the top seed in the West. Adding to his accolades after being named regular-season MVP, star guard Shai Gilgeous-Alexander (or "SGA") was also named Finals MVP, averaging nearly 38 points, five rebounds, and four assists during the series.

In related news, the Phoenix Suns reportedly traded 15-time All-Star Kevin Durant to the Houston Rockets yesterday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 3 of 52

Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Final member of BTS completes military service, reuniting the K-pop supergroup for first time in three years.

Rapper Fat Joe accused of sexual assault and coercion by former hype man in new lawsuit.

Jon Jones, considered to be one of the greatest mixed martial artists of all time, retires at age 37.

Three people dead and more than 70 injured after fans fall from upper deck of Algeria soccer stadium.

LSU tops Coastal Carolina to win Men's College World Series and its eighth NCAA baseball national title.

Seattle Mariners catcher Cal Raleigh becomes first switch-hitter to hit 30 home runs before the MLB All-Star Game.

Science & Technology

Anthropic researchers find leading AI models used in corporate applications may resort to malicious behavior when threatened, including blackmail and leaking sensitive documents.

Vera C. Rubin Observatory expected to release first images today from world's largest digital camera before launching 10-year survey; primary goals include study of dark matter and energy, the structure and evolution of the Milky Way.

Stem cell treatment effectively cures severe Type 1 diabetes in small clinical trial; 10 of 12 patients no longer needed insulin a year after a single infusion of zimislecel.

Business & Markets

US stock markets close mixed Friday (S&P 500 -0.2%, Dow +0.1%, Nasdaq -0.5%) amid tensions in the Middle East.

FedEx founder Fred Smith dies at age 80; Smith revolutionized the package delivery industry with air-ground system of hubs and spokes, leading the \$54.1B company from its 1971 founding to 2022.

The US and European Union reportedly approach deal to settle nontariff trade disputes, including on deforestation, treatment of US tech companies.

Politics & World Affairs

Heat wave covers central and eastern US with temperatures expected to exceed 90 degrees for 170 million Americans.

North Dakota tornado kills at least three people.

Pro-Palestinian activist and Columbia University graduate Mahmoud Khalil is released from ICE detention after federal judge finds the legal US resident did not pose a flight risk; Department of Homeland Security says it will appeal.

Hot air balloon fire in Brazil kills eight people; pilot and 13 passengers survive with injuries.

India says it will never restore water treaty with Pakistan following conflict in May; treaty provided water for 80% of Pakistan's farms,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 4 of 52

Groton Legion Post 39 Defeated By 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114

By GameChanger Media

Groton Legion Post 39 fell to 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 7-3 on Sunday in the championship game of the Milbank Tournament.

2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 got on the board in the bottom of the third inning after Kam Hauck grounded into a fielder's choice, Braden Danzeisen singled, and Ethan Axtell grounded out, each scoring one run.

Carter Simon hit a solo home run to left field in the top of the fourth for the Groton Legion Post 39.

Gavin Englund doubled down the left field line, which helped Groton Legion Post 39 tie the game at three in the top of the fifth.

2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 jumped into the lead in the bottom of the fifth when Danzeisen doubled, scoring two runs, Bret Milton singled, scoring one run, and Levi Loban was struck by a pitch, driving in a run.

Jarrett Erdmann stepped on the mound first for Groton Legion Post 39. The lefty gave up seven hits and seven runs over four and one-third innings, striking out four and walking three. Andrew Gunderson started the game for 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114. The starter gave up two hits and zero runs over three innings, striking out six and walking none.

Englund drove the middle of the lineup, leading Groton Legion Post 39 with two runs batted in. The infielder went 1-for-4 on the day. Nick Morris, Lincoln Krause, Braxton Imrie, Karsten Fliehs, Brevin Fliehs, Englund, and Simon each collected one hit for Groton Legion Post 39. Groton Legion Post 39 turned one double play in the game.

2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 piled up 10 hits in the game. Danzeisen provided pop in the middle of the lineup, and led 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 with three runs batted in. The catcher went 2-for-4 on the day. Danzeisen, Hauck, Axtell, and Loban each collected two hits for 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114. Hauck stole three bases. 2025 Volga Sr Legion Post 114 turned two double plays in the game.

Groton Legion Post 39 play at home on Wednesday against Webster in their next game.

Copyright © 2025 GameChanger, Inc. All rights reserved. Any reuse or republication of this story must include the preceding attribution and is subject to the Dick's Sporting Goods, Inc. Terms of Use, License Agreement, and Privacy Policy.

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion Looks To Continue Strong Play Against Aberdeen Smittys

By GameChanger Media

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion have been playing well lately, going 6-4 in their last 10 games. They'll put that strong play to the test when they play Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen on Monday, 6 p.m., at Locke-Karst Field, Groton.

Last Time Out:

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion came back to defeat Milbank 9-7. Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen lost to Renner 18-9.

Player Highlight:

Alex Abeln hits and pitches for Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. Abeln primarily plays shortstop on the field. Abeln has driven in a run in the past two games. The right-handed hitter has hit 4-8 and driven in three runs during the streak. Abeln is on a 2-game hitting streak. The shortstop has hit 0.500 during the streak. Abeln has an on-base percentage of 0.449 this season thanks in part to a 0.366 average and seven walks. Abeln gets ahead in the count fast on the mound. Abeln has thrown first pitch strikes to 48 of the 79 batters they've faced this season.

About Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion:

Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion has played well lately, going 6-4 in their last 10 games. They have an 8-6 record overall. T.C Schuster's 1.036 OPS leads Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion. The right-handed hitter has a 0.516 OBP and a 0.520 slugging percentage this season. Abeln leads Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with 17 and two-thirds innings pitched. The starting pitcher has a 1.19 ERA this season. Abeln leads Groton Post 39 Jr. Legion with 50 total fielding chances this season. Abeln's primary position is shortstop.

About Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen:

Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen has a record of 4-12 this season. Trevor Nipp's 1.025 OPS leads Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen. The infielder has a 0.613 OBP and a 0.412 slugging percentage this season. Cash Bahr leads Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen with 17 and two-thirds innings pitched. The starting pitcher has a 2.77 ERA this season. Noah Circle Eagle leads Smittys 16U 2025 Aberdeen with 79 total fielding chances this season. Circle Eagle's primary position is first base.

"Oral health is a gateway to general wellness"

For much of modern healthcare, dentistry has existed apart from the broader medical system. Patients commonly have separate providers for medical and dental care, and this division is reflected in insurance models, education, and even cultural perception. Yet biologically, this separation is artificial. The mouth is a central part of the body, and its health is intimately tied to overall well-being.

Studies of centenarians—people who live into their 100s—have shown a correlation between good oral health and longevity. While flossing alone may not extend your life, oral hygiene often reflects broader patterns of self-care. People who maintain their teeth through regular checkups and good habits tend to engage in other positive health behaviors, supporting the idea that oral health is a gateway to general wellness.

Beyond its connection to systemic health, oral health also has a major psychosocial impact. A healthy smile can influence confidence, job opportunities, and social interactions. Teeth support essential functions like speech, eating, and self-expression—all of which contribute to quality of life at any age. This means not only is there a reason to maintain your teeth with brushing and flossing, but there are also benefits to improving them for both esthetics and function.

One way to enhance a smile is by improving tooth alignment, which can benefit both function and appearance. Orthodontics—the dental specialty focused on straightening teeth and correcting bite issues—is often associated with adolescence, but treatment is increasingly common among adults. Advances in digital imaging and clear aligner therapy have made orthodontics more accessible and discreet. For many patients, even minor adjustments, such as moving one tooth or closing a small space, can be completed efficiently and comfortably with modern treatment options.

These treatment options can now range from simple corrections to comprehensive care using either clear aligners or traditional braces. Importantly, they are often more convenient than people expect, with flexible solutions to fit different lifestyles and goals.

The first step toward improving your oral health—or enhancing your smile—is establishing or re-establishing a dental home. Regular dental evaluations help detect and address problems early, before they become more serious or expensive to treat. Once a foundation of oral health is in place, patients can explore options to improve the shape, color, alignment, or function of their teeth.

Whether you're considering tooth whitening, replacing missing teeth, or straightening your smile, having a trusted relationship with a dental provider makes all the difference. Open conversations, regular care, and modern dental tools make it possible to achieve not only a healthier mouth but a healthier life overall.

Paul Meyer, DDS, MS, is an orthodontist proudly serving the Brookings, South Dakota community. After earning his dental degree from the University of Minnesota and completing his orthodontic residency at the Mayo Clinic, Dr. Meyer returned to his hometown to carry on the family practice at Meyer Orthodontics. He is honored to continue the practice founded by his father, Dr. David Meyer, providing expert, personalized orthodontic care to patients of all ages. 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 or streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB), providing health information based on science, built on trust.



By Paul Meyer DDS MS

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 6 of 52



As the 2025 NFL season draws closer, the Minnesota Vikings find themselves in a rare position: built to win now, yet still developing key young talent across the roster. With training camp on the horizon and a deep, competitive team in place, I'll be breaking down each position group over the next seven weeks to get a clearer picture of who's locked in, who's on the bubble, and who could surprise us this summer. We'll start at quarterback and work our way through the entire roster, ending with the secondary just before the first preseason game kicks off.

Quarterback

J.J. McCarthy – The second year QB is firmly locked in as the starter for the 2025 season. McCarthy was a top-10 pick last year and was battling with Sam Darnold for positioning on the depth chart. Unfortunately an injury derailed his rookie season, but the front office is confident enough in his recovery that they chose not to sign another player to challenge McCarthy – most notably passing on future Hall of Famer Aaron Rodgers.

Sam Howell – A fifth-round pick by the Washington Commanders in 2022, Howell started one game as a rookie then all 17 games in his sophomore season in which he completed 388 of his 612 passes (63.4%) for 3,946 yards, 21 touchdowns and 21 interceptions. Following the 2023 season, Howell was traded to Seattle to be the team's backup. The Vikings traded for him during the draft this offseason to fill the same role. He's a young player with plenty of starts under his belt, but he's not in a position to challenge McCarthy for the starting spot.

Brett Rypien – An undrafted rookie in 2019, Rypien bounced around the league, spending time in Denver, Los Angeles, Seattle, New York (Jets), and Chicago before making it to Minnesota. His best case scenario would be making the team as the third/emergency QB.

Max Brosmer – Brosmer signed with the Vikings after going undrafted in this year's draft. The former Golden Gopher will compete with Brett Rypien for the final spot on Minnesota's QB depth chart.

Running Back

Aaron Jones Sr. – Despite his age, the Vikings re-signed Jones to lead the backfield in 2025. Jones excels in multiple categories with his ability to run the ball (averaging 4.5 yards per carry last season) and catch the ball out of the backfield (51 catches for 408 yards). The biggest question marks for Jones are his age (he'll turn 31 this season), and his durability (last year was only the second time in his career he's played every game of the season).

Jordan Mason – After spending his first three seasons in San Francisco, Mason was acquired by the Vikings this offseason, then promptly given a new contract. With Christian McCaffrey out with an injury last season, Mason filled in admirably, including a 20-carry, 100-yard effort against the Vikings in week 2. The Vikings' plan is to have a two-headed monster at RB this season, with Jones and Mason splitting carries.

C.J. Ham – Entering his ninth season in the league, Ham will once again be the team's starting fullback. The two-time Pro Bowler is a solid blocker who is rarely given a chance to touch the ball (he only had two carries and five catches in 2024).

Ty Chandler – A fifth-round pick by the Vikings in 2022, Chandler enters the season third on the RB depth chart. He started four games for the Vikings in 2023, averaging 4.5 yards per carry that season. Unfortunately his yards per carry dropped to 3.3 in 2024, which likely prompted the Vikings to trade for Jordan Mason.

Zavier Scott – Undrafted in 2023, Scott spent his rookie year on the Colts' practice squad. He's a bigger back who can also play receiver if needed. Scott will likely be a practice squad candidate unless he can impress the coaching staff with his versatility and special teams value.

Tre Stewart – An undrafted rookie this year, Stewart began his career at Limestone University before transferring to Jacksonville State in 2024. Despite the jump up in competition, Stewart ran for 1,604 yards and 23 touchdowns last season. He's an electric runner who needs to improve his hands out of the backfield and tighten up his ball security if he wants to carve out a role for himself on a practice squad.



SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

COMMENTARY

Existing prison locations might be only politically palatable sites for a new facility

by Dana Hess

South Dakotans are being held prisoner by their indecision about where they want to build their next prison.

After all the debates and accusations, it's hard to know what to think about the project. It's difficult not to be cynical watching lawmakers get all hopped up about spending \$600 million. We're supposed to think that's a bargain because the original plan called for spending \$850 million. So even at more than half a billion dollars, there are concerns about the new place being built on the cheap.

Much of this consternation originates in the way the prison project was initially handled during the Kristi Noem administration. Neighbors of the Lincoln County project weren't made aware that state land in their county was under consideration until plans were announced for the new prison. When they found out about it, their concerns didn't matter to Noem, who was known for a my-way-or-the-highway approach to getting what she wanted. That initial secrecy in the governor's office led to so much protest from neighbors, and so much rancor in the Legislature, that the original site is now deemed too politically toxic to host the prison.

As a taxpayer, and as a lifelong believer that government should be conducted in a transparent manner, it has been heartening to watch Gov. Larry Rhoden's Project Prison Resetwork group conduct public meetings as they have struggled to figure out the best, most politically palatable solution to South Dakota's prison problem. It certainly hasn't been pretty, but it has been a lesson in transparent government.

The work group has conducted a series of hearings about the project site. When they finally make a decision, they should hold some more hearings, this time to figure out how South Dakota managed to invest more than \$50 million in the original prison site without having the official OK from the Legislature. Because officials jumped the gun, taxpayers are left with \$50 million in plans and infrastructure improvements that may never be used for a prison and possibly never be used at all.

The work group has yet to decide what the best location is for the new prison. Many sites have been considered, but the three still standing are locations in Mitchell and Worthing or sites where the Department of Corrections already has prisons or land in Sioux Falls and Springfield.

While the Worthing site may be, well, worthy, it's also in Lincoln County. The opposition of Lincoln County residents has already killed one viable prison site. It may be in the best interests of the work group to consider that the toxicity at the original site extends to the entire county.

Like the original Lincoln County site, most other sites in the state, no matter how viable, run the risk of upsetting the project's neighbors as well as those folks who just like to be upset about something.

There is already a not-in-my-back-yard movement in Mitchell, reminiscent of what happened in Lincoln County.

"They didn't tell us about it until after the fact," Mitchell resident Barbara Stadler told South Dakota Searchlight at a recent community forum, in reference to Mitchell city leaders' initial pitch to the Project Prison Reset task force.

The work group runs the risk of inspiring that kind of response with any new prison site they consider. That leaves the group with the choice to build new prison facilities on sites already run by the Department of Corrections. It's hard for neighbors to make a NIMBY complaint about a new prison project when the

prison is literally already in their backyard.

As consultants have explained, building on or near current prison facilities is not the best choice. It may, however, be the most palatable choice for South Dakotans and the choice most likely to earn the endorsement of the Legislature.

Dana Hess spent more than 25 years in South Dakota journalism, editing newspapers in Redfield, Milbank and Pierre. He's retired and lives in Brookings, working occasionally as a freelance writer.

Names Released in Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle fatal crash

Where: US Highway 14A, mile marker 40, Deadwood, SD

When: 10:35 a.m., June 19, 2025

Driver 1: Joseph Bernard Schumacher, 73-year-old male from Lead, SD, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2011 Honda Ridgeline

Seat belt Used: Yes

Driver 2: Robert Ray Stagner, 59-year-old male from Deadwood, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2022 Ford F-550

Seat belt Used: Yes

Lawrence County, S.D.- A Lead, SD man died in a two-vehicle crash Thursday morning on Highway 14A in Deadwood, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Joseph Bernard Schumacher, the driver of a 2011 Honda Ridgeline was traveling west on US Highway 14A near mile marker 40 when the vehicle crossed the center line and collided with an eastbound Ford F-550 driven by Robert Ray Stagner. Both vehicles came to rest in the eastbound lanes.

Schumacher was pronounced deceased at the scene. Stagner was not injured.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

Names Released in Meade County Fatal Crash

What: Two vehicle injury crash

Where: Junction Avenue and exit 32, I-90 westbound off-ramp, Sturgis, SD

When: 1:51 p.m. Monday, June 16, 2025

Driver 1: Heather Lynne Clifton, 60-year-old female from Newcastle, WY, fatal injuries

Vehicle 1: 2015 Harley Davidson motorcycle

Helmet Used: Yes

Driver 2: Leatrice C. Edwards, 96-year-old female from Sturgis, SD, no injuries

Vehicle 2: 2014 Ford Taurus

Seat belt Used: Yes

Meade County, S.D.- A motorcyclist died June 18th as a result of a two-vehicle crash Monday afternoon in Sturgis, SD.

Preliminary crash information indicates Heather Lynne Clifton, the driver of a 2015 Harley Davidson motorcycle was traveling west on Interstate 90 on the Exit 32 off-ramp near its intersection with Junction Avenue. A Ford Taurus driven by Leatrice C. Edwards was traveling north on Junction Avenue near the off-ramp. As the motorcycle entered the intersection, it collided with the Taurus, and the rider became separated from the motorcycle.

Clifton was taken to a nearby hospital with life-threatening injuries and died Wednesday from those injuries. Edwards was not injured.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol is investigating the crash. All information released so far is only preliminary.

The Highway Patrol is an agency of the South Dakota Department of Public Safety.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 10 of 52

EARTHTALK

Dear EarthTalk: Can lava flows be harnessed into structures we could live and work in?

-- Peter R., Eugene, OR

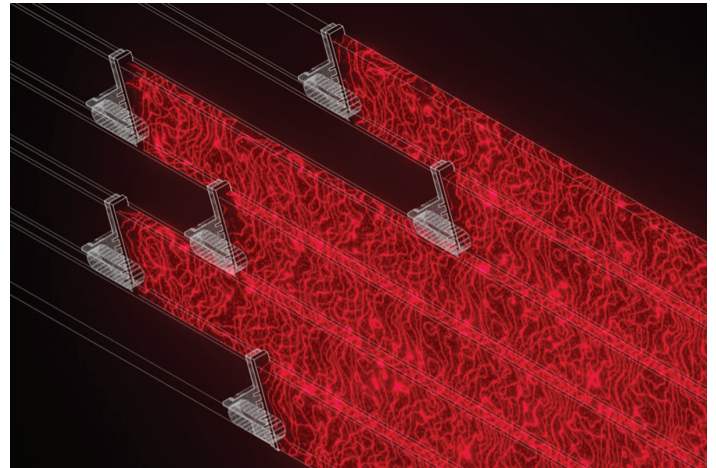
To reach proposed climate goals, we now need to look beyond the simple acts and focus instead on the bigger culprit industries, especially the building and construction sectors, which account for about a third of greenhouse gas emissions.

In 2018, Icelandic architect Arnhildur Pálmadóttir's company, Studio Arnhildur Pálmadóttir, coined the term "lavaforming" and declared it their new project. Lava flow itself is the stream of magma that rushes to the Earth's surface during a volcanic eruption. Although molten rock has historically been viewed as a byproduct that has catastrophic potential, Pálmadóttir was among the few who reimagined its potential as a key to meeting sustainability goals. Pálmadóttir defined the term as transforming a "local threat" into a "valuable resource", namely turning lava flow into a sustainable building material.

While lavaforming can be accomplished in a number of ways, the best-known technique entails digging trenches to redirect the flow of magma before a volcanic eruption occurs. The rechanneled lava flow would not only protect the surrounding infrastructure but could also become the foundational structure for a new city when it hardens into basalt rock, a reliable building material. Another well-supported way of lavaforming is extracting the magma from a volcano before an eruption. In addition, others have proposed the use of 3D printing with molten lava to create foundational building materials.

While lava flow could technically be harnessed into livable buildings and structures, there are significant challenges that go against the feasibility of the concept. In an economy where profit maximization is the bottom-line goal, new ideas like lavaforming might be perceived as a threat by companies or individuals who are happy the way things already are. Also, property rights relating to lava flow and volcanoes need to be addressed as they have never been utilized economically before.

However, ordinary citizens can contribute to spreading the idea, given that lava flow does have the potential to be harnessed into structures humans can live in. In fact, Pálmadóttir states that lavaforming would allow "the foundations of an entire city [to] rise in a matter of weeks without harmful mining or nonrenewable energy generation." By transforming lava flow, which has traditionally been regarded as a waste material, into an environmentally friendly building material, the world can gradually move towards more sustainable building and construction.

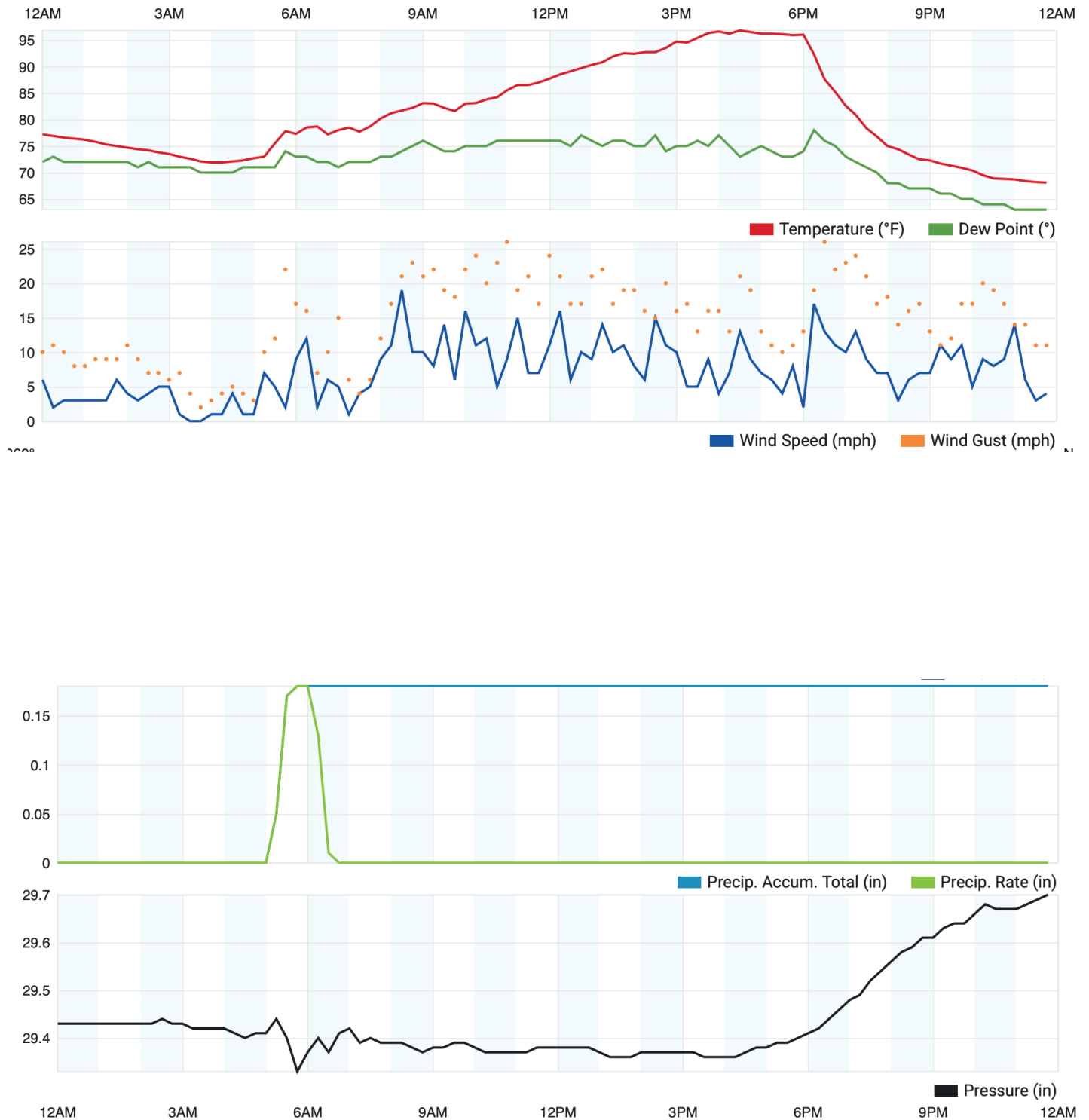


Researchers working to harness lava flows into livable green structures may be onto something in thinking about buildings of the future. Credit: S.ap Arkitektar.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 11 of 52

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 12 of 52

Monday



High: 75 °F

Becoming
Sunny

Monday Night



Low: 51 °F

Mostly Clear

Tuesday



High: 78 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tuesday Night

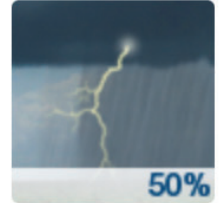


20 % → 50 %

Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance
T-storms then
Chance
T-storms

Wednesday



50%

High: 74 °F

Chance
T-storms



Through The Work Week

June 23, 2025
2:52 AM

Cool Through Mid-Week Before Turning Warmer

Today



**Clear By
Mid-day**

**Highs:
71 to 77**

Tues



**Storms Late
Central SD
30-60%**

**Highs:
72 to 79**

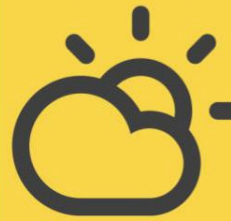
Wed



40-60%

**Highs:
71 to 78**

Thurs



**Highs:
75 to 85**

Fri



20-30%

**Highs:
84 to 92**



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

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD

Seasonally cool temperatures, by about 5 to 10 degrees, are expected to start the week. We could see some storms move in late Tuesday and persist into Wednesday, with a marginal (1 of 5) risk for severe weather Wednesday.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 13 of 52

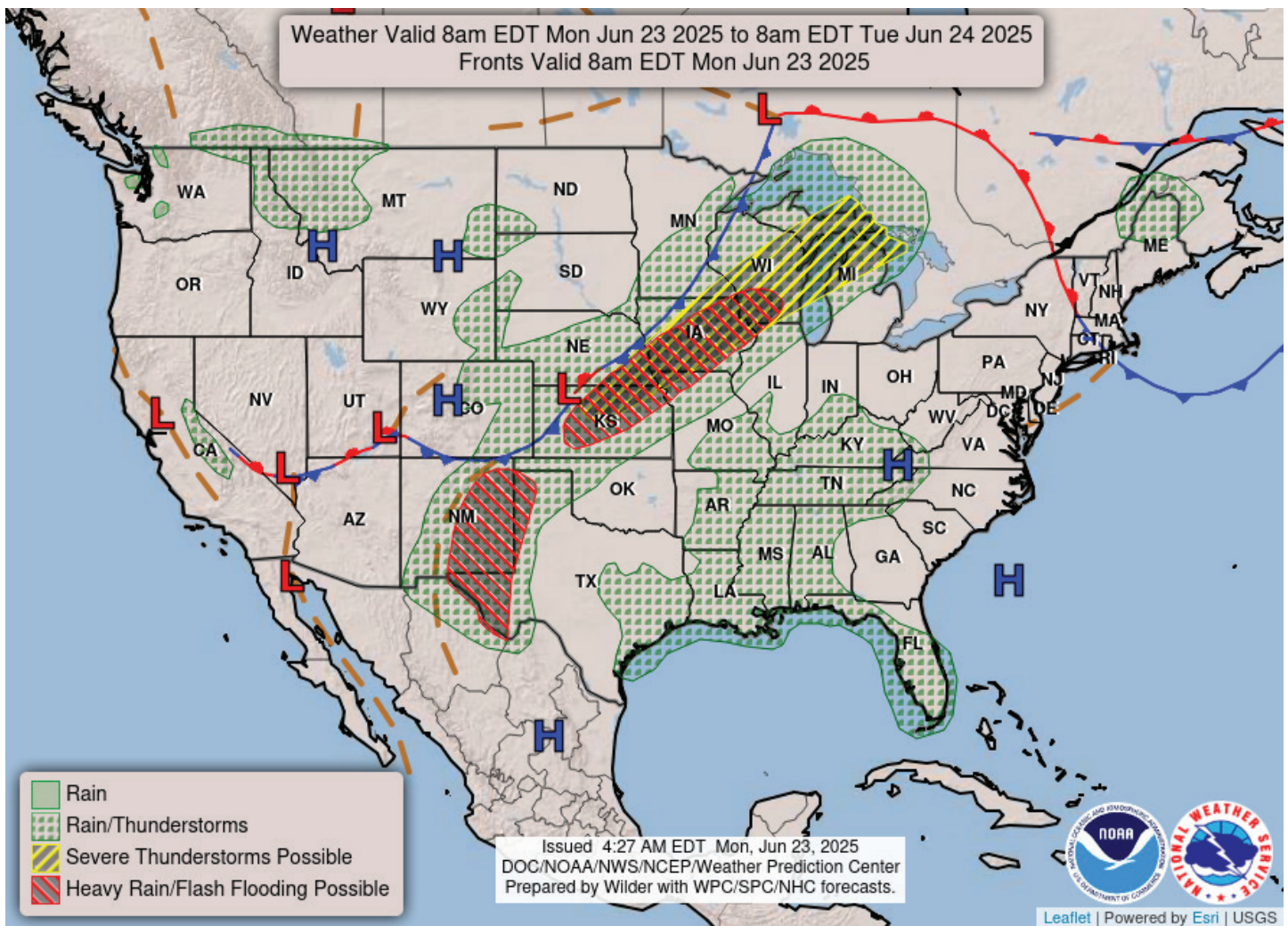
Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 97 °F at 4:21 PM
Low Temp: 68 °F at 11:19 PM
Wind: 27 mph at 6:00 AM
Precip: : 0.00

Day length: 15 hours, 44 minutes

Today's Info

Record High: 104 in 1911
Record Low: 33 in 1942
Average High: 82
Average Low: 57
Average Precip in June.: 2.83
Precip to date in June: 2.72
Average Precip to date: 10.08
Precip Year to Date: 8.77
Sunset Tonight: 9:26:46 pm
Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:43:05 am



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 14 of 52

Today in Weather History

June 23rd, 1914: A destructive, estimated F3 tornado moved east across Altamont Township in Brown County. All buildings on at least four farms were destroyed. A man was killed trying to keep his family from being blown out of a shallow cellar.

Another storm moved east from the southeastern part of Watertown to north of Goodwin. Over 200 homes were heavily damaged in Watertown by an estimated F2 tornado and downburst winds. Barns were destroyed on three farms east of Watertown. The estimated cost was \$200,000.

June 23rd, 2002: During the evening, a powerful supercell thunderstorm produced six tornados from eastern McPherson County and across northern Brown County. The first tornado to touchdown was a brief F0 and occurred 6.4 miles northeast of Leola and resulted in no damage. The second tornado was an F1 and touched down 8.5 miles northeast of Leola and crossed over into Brown County, where it dissipated 9 miles northwest of Barnard. This tornado brought down many trees and a barn and caused damage to the siding and the roof of a farmhouse in McPherson County. A third weak satellite F0 tornado occurred following the dissipation of the second tornado and resulted in no damage. A fourth, stronger F3 tornado developed 6 miles west of Barnard and moved east before dissipating 3 miles southeast of Barnard. This tornado brought down some high-power lines and a support tower and tossed a pickup truck 100 yards into a group of trees. The pickup truck was totaled. The tornado caused extensive damage to two farmhouses, several farm buildings, and farm equipment. One farmhouse lost the garage and had many trees completely snapped off down low and debarked. The fifth tornado developed 5 miles southeast of Barnard and became a violent F4 tornado. This tornado caused damage to one farmhouse, several outbuildings, trees, and equipment as it moved northeast and strengthened. The tornado completely demolished two unoccupied homes and several outbuildings, destroying or damaging some farm equipment before dissipating 7.6 miles northeast of Barnard. The sixth tornado was a weak satellite F0, which occurred with this violent tornado and caused no damage. The F4 tornado was the first recorded in Brown County and one of the few recorded in South Dakota. The total estimated property loss exceeded a million dollars.

1902 - The temperature at Volcano Springs, CA, soared to 129 degrees to set a June record for the U.S. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders)

1944 - Four tornadoes killed 153 persons and caused five million dollars damage in Pennsylvania, West Virginia and Maryland. The tornadoes formed during the evening and moved southeast along parallel paths flattening everything in their way. The town of Shinnston WV was leveled, and was left with the majority of the casualties. Until that time it was believed that damaging tornadoes did not travel across mountainous terrain. (David Ludlum)

1957 - A few miles west of Fort Stockton TX, softball size hail injured 21 persons unable to find shelter, mostly farm laborers. Some livestock were killed. (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A massive hailstorm hit eastern Colorado causing an estimated 60 to 70 million dollars damage. At La Junta, CO, hail as large as softballs caused 37 million dollars damage. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1988 - Thirty-four cities reported record high temperatures for the date. The reading of 90 degrees at Bluefield, WV, equalled their record for the month of June. The record high of 104 degrees at Billings, MT, was their thirteenth of the month. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - Six cities in the High Plains Region reported record low temperatures for the date, including Sheridan, WY, with a reading of 38 degrees. Showers and thunderstorms in the eastern U.S. deluged New Castle County, DE, with 2.5 inches of rain in one hour. (The National Weather Summary)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 15 of 52



"Clothes make the man!" was a popular saying years ago.

Solomon, however, would strongly disagree.

To the contrary, he would say that "A worthy woman enhances her husband's reputation and well-being and status in the community." He does not imply, even slightly, that a wife "exists" only to "serve" a husband, but to do him "good."

This "worthy woman" is more thoroughly described in Proverbs 31, and it is no accident that in the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Ruth follows Proverbs — a living example of what he is teaching.

This wife of "noble character" stands as a "model wife" for the young man who one day will become a husband. A wife of "noble character" is the "crown" of her husband because she brings him esteem, honor, and worth in his community.

It stands in direct contrast to a wife who "shames her husband." The wife who "shames" her husband lowers his status and brings shame on him with her "lack of good judgment." Her influence on his reputation is like "decay in his bones" — the "rotting" away of his life because he is never able to "rise above her reputation" or influence in the community where they live.

No matter how successful he may be, she "brings him down" because she lacks the character that God will honor and bless! She does what displeases God!

When we look deeply into the importance of this verse, we discover the seriousness of choosing a partner for life. A partner is not to be chosen because of beauty, glamour, or wealth. Godliness and character must come first. Then, the blessings God gives will follow.

Prayer: Thank You, Father, for this warning and the truth it contains. Thank You, also, that change is possible.

In Jesus' Name, Amen.

Today's Scripture: "A wife of noble character is her husband's crown, but a disgraceful wife is like decay in his bones." Proverbs 12:4

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, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 16 of 52

The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% 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



WINNING NUMBERS

MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.20.25

26 49 58 61 63 9

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$326,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 27 Mins
50 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.21.25

4 6 14 37 43 2

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$2,300,000

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 42 Mins 50
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

LUCKY FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.22.25

12 19 21 23 38 6

TOP PRIZE:

\$7,000/week

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 57 Mins 49
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.21.25

9 13 15 29 34

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$36,000

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 57
Mins 49 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.21.25

1 26 29 44 52 26

TOP PRIZE:

\$10,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 50
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS: 06.21.25

3 16 32 52 62 24

Power Play: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

\$128,000,000

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 26 Mins 50
Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 18 of 52

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
09/6-7/25 Fly in/Drive in at Groton Municipal Airport
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
11/30/2025 Snow Queen Contest, 4 p.m.
12/06/2025 Olive Grove Holiday Party and Silent Live Auction Fundraiser

News from the **AP** Associated Press

A suspected Israeli strike hits the gate of Iran's Evin prison in Tehran, Iranian state TV says

By DAVID RISING and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — A suspected Israeli airstrike hit the gate of Iran's notorious Evin prison in Tehran, Iranian state television reported Monday. Iranian media speculated the strike may be from a drone.

The report shared what appeared to be black-and-white-surveillance footage of the strike. The prison is known for holding dual nationals and Westerners often used by Iran as bargaining chips in negotiations with the West.

Israel did not immediately acknowledge carrying out the strike.

Evin also has specialized units for political prisoners and those with Western ties, run by the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard, which answers only to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. The facility is the target of both U.S. and European Union sanctions.

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

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's underground enrichment site at Fordo was hit again Monday while Iran fired a salvo of missiles and drones at Israel and warned the United States that its military now has a "free hand" to attack American targets in the wake of the Trump administration's massive strikes on Iranian nuclear sites.

The Fordo facility was one of those hit in Sunday's attack, and it was struck again on Monday, Iranian state television reported. There was no immediate word on damage nor who launched the attack, though Israel said earlier it was conducting airstrikes on Iran.

In Vienna, the head of the United Nations nuclear watchdog said he expected there to be heavy damage at the Fordo facility already following the Sunday's U.S. airstrike there with sophisticated bunker-buster bombs.

"Given the explosive payload utilized ... very significant damage ... is expected to have occurred," said Rafael Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

With the strikes on Sunday on Iranian nuclear sites, the United States inserted itself into Israel's war, prompting fears of a wider regional conflict. Iran said the U.S. had crossed "a very big red line" with its risky gambit to strike the three sites with missiles and 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs.

Israel said its defense systems were operating to intercept the latest Iranian threat, which apparently targeted the north and central areas of the country, and told people to head to shelters. Iran described the attack a new wave of its Operation "True Promise 3," saying it was targeting the Israeli cities of Haifa and Tel Aviv, according to Iranian state television.

Explosions were also heard in Jerusalem. There were no immediate reports of damage.

In Iran, witnesses reported Israeli airstrikes hit areas around Iran's capital, Tehran, midday. It wasn't immediately clear what had been targeted.

In Vienna, Rafael Mariano Grossi, the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, said that given the "explosive payload utilized and the extreme vibration sensitive nature of centrifuges, very significant damage is expected to have occurred."

He added that "at this time, no one, including the IAEA, is in a position to have fully assessed the underground damage at Fordo."

Also Monday, Iranian Gen. Abdolrahim Mousavi, the chief of joint staff of armed forces, warned Washington its strikes had given Iranian forces a "free hand" to "act against U.S. interests and its army."

Tens of thousands of American troops are based in the Middle East, many in locations within range of short-range Iranian missiles.

The U.S. described its Sunday attack on the Fordo and Natanz enrichment facilities, as well as the Isfa-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 20 of 52

han nuclear sit, as a one-off to take out Iran's nuclear program, but President Donald Trump has warned of additional strikes if Tehran retaliates.

Mousavi described the American attack as violating Iran's sovereignty and being tantamount to invading the country, the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

In the wake of the American attacks on Iran, calls came from across the globe for de-escalation and the return to diplomacy to try and resolve the conflict.

On Monday, the European Union's top diplomat said the bloc remained "very much focused on the diplomatic solution."

"The concerns of retaliation and this war escalating are huge," Kaja Kallas said at the start of a foreign ministers' meeting in Brussels where Iran has jumped to the top of the agenda.

"Especially closing of the Strait of Hormuz by Iran is something that would be extremely dangerous and not good for anybody," Kallas said, referring to a maritime route crucial for oil transport.

After Sunday's attacks, Iranian officials repeated their longtime threats of possibly closing the key shipping lane.

Iran, which insists its nuclear program is for civilian purposes only, previously agreed to limit its uranium enrichment and allow international inspectors access to its nuclear sites under a 2015 deal with the U.S., France, China, Russia, Britain and Germany in exchange for sanctions relief.

But after Trump pulled the U.S. unilaterally out of the deal during his first term, Iran began enriching uranium up to 60% — a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90% — and restricting access to its nuclear facilities.

As he arrived in Brussels on Monday for a meeting with his EU counterparts, German Foreign Minister renewed calls for Iran to agree again to direct talks with the United States but says Europe still has a role to play.

"We already made it very clear to the Iranian side that a real precondition for a settlement to the conflict is that Iran be ready to negotiate directly with the U.S.," he said, while adding that the European group known as the E3 "will contribute what we can."

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was meeting on Monday in Moscow with Russian President Vladimir Putin, one of Iran's key allies.

Oil flip-flops and shares are mixed after the US strikes Iranian nuclear sites

By ELAINE KURTENBACH and BERNARD CONDON AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — Global markets appeared to take the U.S. strike against nuclear targets in Iran in stride as investors watched Monday to see how Iran will react.

The price of oil initially jumped more than 2% but later fell back, losing about 0.4%. U.S. stock futures edged higher and share benchmarks in Europe and Asia were mixed.

The big unknown is what Iran will do, analysts said, while the U.S. military's strike on three Iranian sites raised urgent questions about what remains of Tehran's nuclear program.

"I believe what we are thinking is or the thinking is that it is going to be a short conflict. The one big hit by the Americans will be effective and then we'll get back to sort of business as usual, in which case there is no need for an immediate, panicky type of reaction," said Neil Newman, managing director of Atris Advisory Japan.

By early morning in London, the price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, had fallen 0.4% to \$76.74 a barrel. U.S. crude also fell back, giving up 0.3% to \$73.59 a barrel.

The attacks Saturday raised the stakes in the war between Israel and Iran. The future for the S&P 500 gained 0.2% while that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 0.1%. Treasury yields were little changed.

In Europe, Germany's DAX was nearly unchanged at 23,347.90 and the CAC 40 in Paris also was flat at 7,588.54. Britain's FTSE 100 was up less than 4 points at 8,778.96.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 21 of 52

The conflict began with an Israeli attack against Iran on June 13 that sent oil prices yo-yoing and rattled other markets.

Iran is a major oil producer and sits on the narrow Strait of Hormuz, through which much of the world's crude passes. Closing off the waterway would be technically difficult but it could severely disrupt transit through it, sending insurance rates spiking and making shippers nervous to move without U.S. Navy escorts.

"The situation remains highly fluid, and much hinges on whether Tehran opts for a restrained reaction or a more aggressive course of action," Kristian Kerr, head of macro strategy at LPL Financial in Charlotte, North Carolina, said in a commentary.

Iran may be reluctant to close down the waterway because it uses the strait to transport its own crude, mostly to China, and oil is a major revenue source for the regime.

Speaking to Fox News on Sunday, U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio said disrupting traffic through the strait would be "economic suicide" and would elicit a U.S. response.

"I would encourage the Chinese government in Beijing to call them about that because they heavily depend on the Strait of Hormuz for their oil," Rubio said.

Tom Kloza, chief market analyst at Turner Mason & Co said he expects Iranian leaders to refrain from drastic measures and oil futures to ease back after the initial fears blow over.

Disrupting shipping would be "a scorched earth possibility, a Sherman-burning-Atlanta move," Kloza said.

Writing in a report, Ed Yardeni, a long-time analyst, agreed that Tehran leaders would likely hold back.

"They aren't crazy," he wrote in a note to investors Sunday. "The price of oil should fall and stock markets around the world should climb higher."

Other experts weren't so sure.

Andy Lipow, a Houston analyst who has covered oil markets for 45 years, said countries are not always rational actors and he wouldn't be surprised if Tehran lashed out for political or emotional reasons.

"If the Strait of Hormuz was completely shut down, oil prices would rise to \$120 to \$130 a barrel," said Lipow. That would translate to about \$4.50 a gallon at the pump and hurt consumers in other ways, he said.

"It would mean higher prices for all those goods transported by truck, and it would be more difficult for the Fed to lower interest rates."

Much of East Asia depends on oil imported through the Strait of Hormuz. Taiwan's Taiex fell 1.4% while the Kospi in South Korea initially lost 1% but then regained some lost ground to fall 0.2% to 3,014.17.

In Tokyo, the Nikkei 225 edged 0.1% lower to 38,354.09, with gains for defense contractors, oil companies and miners helping to make up for broad losses.

"The U.S. strike on Iran certainly is very good for defense equipment," Newman of Atris Advisory said, noting that both Japan and South Korea have sizable military manufacturing hubs.

Australia's S&P/ASX fell 0.4% to 8,475.90.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng regained lost ground, climbing 0.7% to 23,689.13, while markets in mainland China advanced with gains for energy companies. The Shanghai Composite index picked up 0.7% to 3,381.58.

In currency dealings, the U.S. dollar rose to 147.49 Japanese yen from 146.66 yen. The euro climbed to \$1.1490 from \$1.1473.

Pakistan condemns Trump for bombing Iran a day after recommending him for a Nobel Peace Prize

By RIAZAT BUTT Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan condemned U.S. President Donald Trump for bombing Iran, less than 24 hours after saying he deserved a Nobel Peace Prize for defusing a recent crisis with India.

Relations between the two South Asian countries plummeted after a massacre of tourists in Indian-controlled Kashmir in April. The nuclear-armed rivals stepped closer to war in the weeks that followed, attacking each other until intense diplomatic efforts, led by the U.S., resulted in a truce for which Trump took credit.

It was this "decisive diplomatic intervention and pivotal leadership" that Pakistan praised in an effusive

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 22 of 52

message Saturday night on the X platform when it announced its formal recommendation for him to receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Less than 24 hours later, however, it condemned the U.S. for attacking Iran, saying the strikes "constituted a serious violation of international law" and the statute of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in a phone call Sunday with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, expressed his concern that the bombings had targeted facilities that were under the safeguards of the IAEA. Pakistan has close ties with Iran and supports its attacks on Israel, saying it has the right to self-defense.

There was no immediate comment on Monday from Islamabad about the Trump Nobel recommendation, which also followed a high-profile White House lunch meeting between the president and Pakistan's powerful army chief, Asim Munir.

Thursday's meeting, which lasted more than two hours, was also attended by the Secretary of State Marco Rubio and Steve Witkoff, the U.S. Special Representative for Middle Eastern Affairs.

According to a Pakistani military statement, a detailed exchange of views took place on the "prevailing tensions between Iran and Israel, with both leaders emphasizing the importance of the resolution of the conflict."

While Pakistan was quick to thank Trump for his intervention in its crisis with India, New Delhi played it down and said there was no need for external mediation on the Kashmir issue.

The Himalayan region of Kashmir is divided between Pakistan and India but claimed by both in its entirety. India accuses Pakistan of backing militant groups in the region, which Pakistan denies.

Police say a man opened fire outside a church before staff fatally shot him, averting mass shooting

By PAUL SANCYA and HOLLY RAMER Associated Press

WAYNE, Mich. (AP) — A man who opened fire outside a Michigan church filled with worshippers on Sunday was struck by a vehicle and then fatally shot by security staff who averted a potential mass shooting, police said.

Churchgoers attending a morning service at CrossPointe Community Church in Wayne spotted the gunman driving recklessly and then saw him exit his car wearing a tactical vest and carrying a rifle and a handgun, police Chief Ryan Strong said at an evening news conference.

The man began firing as he approached the church, striking one person in the leg.

"A parishioner struck the gunman with his vehicle as the gunman shot the vehicle repeatedly," Strong told reporters. "At least two staff members shot the gunman, causing the fatal wounds."

Police described the suspect as a 31-year-old white male with no known connection to the church. His motive remains unclear, but it appears he was suffering from a mental health crisis, Strong said.

The shooting occurred around 11 a.m. in Wayne, a city of about 17,000 people located about 25 miles (40 kilometers) west of Detroit. The person who was shot in the leg was treated for non-life-threatening injuries, the chief said. Nobody else was hurt.

Strong said a church member ran the suspect over with his pickup truck, giving security staff time to shoot him.

"We are grateful for the heroic actions of the church's staff members, who undoubtedly saved many lives and prevented a large-scale mass shooting," the chief said.

About 150 people were inside the church at the time. The church's website says it hosts a worship service on Sundays at 10:45 a.m.

Worshipper Wendy Bodin said she heard a loud "boom" and when she looked outside, she saw a man sprawled out on the grass in front of the church. "I thought he got hit or crashed his car or was hurt," Bodin told WXYZ-TV. "And another lady saw and pointed to me and said, 'Oh my, call 911!'"

Wayne Police Deputy Chief Finley Carter III said hours later that it was too early to know a motive. FBI Deputy Director Dan Bongino tweeted that bureau "leadership and support teams" were at the scene and

helping with the investigation.

Messages left by The Associated Press on Sunday on voicemail and a Facebook page for the church were not immediately returned.

Alarm grows after the US inserts itself into Israel's war against Iran with strikes on nuclear sites

By JON GAMBRELL, FARNOUSH AMIRI and CARA ANNA Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The world grappled Sunday with the United States inserting itself into Israel's war by attacking Iranian nuclear sites, an operation that raised urgent questions about what remained of Tehran's nuclear program and how its weakened military might respond.

Experts warned that worldwide efforts to contain the spread of nuclear weapons by peaceful means would be at stake in the days ahead, while fears of a wider regional conflict loomed large. The price of oil rose as financial markets reacted.

Iran lashed out at the U.S. for crossing "a very big red line" with its risky gambit to strike the three sites with missiles and 30,000-pound bunker-buster bombs.

Iran's U.N. ambassador, Amir Saeid Iravani, told an emergency meeting of the U.N. Security Council that the U.S. "decided to destroy diplomacy," and that the Iranian military will decide the "timing, nature and scale" of a "proportionate response." Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi flew to Moscow to coordinate with close ally Russia.

Tens of thousands of American troops are based in the Middle East. Ali Akbar Velayati, an adviser to Iran's supreme leader, said any country used by the U.S. to strike Iran "will be a legitimate target for our armed forces," the state-run IRNA news agency reported.

At first, the Trump administration indicated it wanted to restart diplomatic talks with Iran. "Let's meet directly," Secretary of State Marco Rubio said in an interview with CBS. Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the U.S. "does not seek war."

But President Donald Trump, who has warned of additional strikes if Tehran retaliates against U.S. forces, later mused about the possibility of "regime change" in Iran.

The U.S. strikes, confirmed by the Atomic Energy Organization of Iran, hit the Fordo and Natanz enrichment facilities, as well as the Isfahan nuclear site. Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog said there were no immediate signs of radioactive contamination around them.

Trump asserted on his Truth Social platform that Iran's nuclear sites sustained "monumental damage" in the attack, though an American assessment on the strikes is still underway.

"The biggest damage took place far below ground level. Bullseye!!!" he wrote.

Trump previously claimed the U.S. "completely and fully obliterated" the sites, but the Pentagon reported "sustained, extremely severe damage and destruction." Israeli army spokesman Effie Defrin said "the damage is deep," but an assessment with the U.S. continued.

"We are very close to achieving our goals" in removing Iran's nuclear and missile threats, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said late Sunday.

U.S. defense officials have said they are working to determine about just how much damage the strikes did. Iran as well has not said how much damage was done in the attack, though Tehran has not offered any details so far on the strikes it has faced from Israel in its war with that country.

The head of the U.N.'s International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Mariano Grossi, told the Security Council that no one was in a position to assess the underground damage at Fordo, which is dug deep into a mountain, but visible craters tracked with the U.S. announcements. He said IAEA inspectors should be allowed to look at the sites. The IAEA's governing board planned an emergency meeting Monday.

Grossi stressed that a path for diplomacy remained, but if that fails, "violence and destruction could reach unthinkable levels," and global efforts at nuclear nonproliferation "could crumble."

Satellite images analyzed Monday by The Associated Press appear to show at least one crater at the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 24 of 52

Natanz site. A hole of around 5 meters (16 feet) could be seen in images taken by Planet Labs PBC and Maxar Technologies on Sunday after the American strikes. That hole sits directly over the underground portion of the site, which includes centrifuge halls.

Iran has offered no assessment of how much damage has been done at the site. Previous Israeli strikes destroyed an above-ground centrifuge hall, as well as all of the power equipment at the site, likely cutting its electrical supply.

With the attack that Washington said was carried out without detection, the United States inserted itself into a war it spent decades trying to avoid. Success could mean ending Iran's nuclear ambitions and eliminating the last significant state threat to the security of Israel, its close ally. Failure — or overreach — could plunge the U.S. into another long and unpredictable conflict.

For Iran's supreme leader, it could mark the end of a campaign to transform the Islamic Republic into a greater regional power that holds enriched nuclear material a step away from weapons-grade levels. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei last spoke publicly on Wednesday, warning the U.S. that strikes targeting the Islamic Republic will "result in irreparable damage for them."

Iran, battered by Israel's largest-ever assault on it that began on June 13, has limited options for retaliation, as key allies have mostly stayed out of the conflict. It could attack U.S. forces stationed in the Middle East with the missiles and rockets that Israel hasn't destroyed. It could attempt to close a key bottleneck for global oil supplies, the Strait of Hormuz, between it and Oman.

Or it could hurry to develop a nuclear weapon with what remains of its program. The Atomic Energy Organization of Iran said its program will not be stopped.

New questions about Iran's nuclear stockpile

Iran has long maintained that its nuclear program was peaceful, and U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed that Tehran is not actively pursuing a bomb. However, Trump and Israeli leaders have argued that Iran could quickly assemble a nuclear weapon.

Israel has significantly degraded Iran's air defenses and offensive missile capabilities and damaged its nuclear enrichment facilities. But only the U.S. military has the bunker-buster bombs that officials believe offered the best chance of destroying sites deep underground. A total of 14 of the bombs were used on Natanz and Fordo, according to the Pentagon.

Experts scrambled to answer the urgent question: What has happened to Iran's stockpile of uranium and centrifuges?

Satellite images taken by Planet Labs PBC after the U.S. strikes, analyzed by The Associated Press, show damage to the facility. Other images from Maxar Technologies suggest Iran packed the entrance tunnels to Fordo with dirt and had trucks at the facility ahead of the strikes.

Several Iranian officials, including Atomic Energy Organization of Iran spokesman Behrouz Kamalvandi, have claimed Iran removed nuclear material from targeted sites.

Before the Israeli military campaign began, Iran said it had declared a third, unknown site as a new enrichment facility.

"Questions remain as to where Iran may be storing its already enriched stocks ... as these will have almost certainly been moved to hardened and undisclosed locations, out of the way of potential Israeli or U.S. strikes," said Darya Dolzikova, a senior research fellow at the Royal United Services Institute focused on nonproliferation issues.

Global leaders responded with shock and calls for restraint. Egypt warned of "grave repercussions" for the region. Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy's Middle East-based 5th Fleet, called on Iran and the U.S. to "quickly resume talks."

The State Department advised U.S. citizens worldwide to "exercise increased caution."

Trump's decision and the risks

The decision to attack was a risky one for Trump, who won the White House partly on the promise of keeping America out of costly foreign conflicts.

But Trump also vowed that he would not allow Iran to obtain a nuclear weapon. He initially hoped that

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 25 of 52

the threat of force would bring the country's leaders to give up its nuclear program.

For Netanyahu, the strikes were the culmination of a decades-long campaign to get the U.S. to strike Israel's chief regional rival and its disputed nuclear program. Netanyahu praised Trump, saying his decision "will change history."

Israel is widely believed to be the only Middle Eastern country with nuclear weapons, which it has never acknowledged.

Iran and Israel trade more attacks

Israel's military chief, Lt. Gen. Eyal Amir, called the U.S. attack a key "turning point" but added: "We still have targets to strike and objectives to complete."

Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said it launched a barrage of 40 missiles at Israel, including its Khorramshahr-4, which can carry multiple warheads. Israeli authorities said more than 80 people suffered mostly minor injuries.

Late Sunday, the Israeli military said it again struck military infrastructure sites in Tehran and western Iran.

The Israeli military confirmed other attacks on Iran late Sunday which included strikes on Hamedan and Kermanshah in western Iran, as well as strikes in Tehran, Iran's capital. Israel also hit what its military described as a missile production site in Shahroud.

Earlier, explosions boomed in Bushehr, home to Iran's only nuclear power plant, three semiofficial media outlets reported. Israel's military said it struck missile launchers in Bushehr, Isfahan and Ahvaz, as well as a command center in the Yazd area where it said Khorramshahr missiles were stored. Iran has not acknowledged losses of military materiel in the war so far.

Iranian state media reported air defense systems were firing in Tehran early Monday, while explosions could be heard in the nearby city of Karaj.

A social media account associated with Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, published a propaganda post Monday portraying missile strikes on a darkened city with a giant skull bearing the Star of David on it. "The punishment continues," the poster read.

Israeli strikes on Iran have killed at least 950 people and wounded 3,450 others, according to the Washington-based group Human Rights Activists. The group said of those dead, it identified 380 civilians and 253 security force personnel. In Israel, at least 24 people have been killed and over 1,000 wounded.

At Turkey's border with Iran, one departing Iranian defended his country's nuclear program.

"We were minding our own business," Behnam Puran said.

Tarnished by Oct. 7, Netanyahu's legacy may be reshaped by war with Iran

By TIA GOLDENBERG Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — In the days after Hamas attacked Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu seemed a shellshocked shadow of himself. He looked diminished and downtrodden by the surprise assault that created a national emergency and caused his public support to plummet.

Now, as Israel faces another unprecedented crisis in a war with Iran, Netanyahu appears rejuvenated. With the U.S. lending its support against a threat he has devoted his life to confronting, Netanyahu is demonstrating a resurgent confidence that could signal a new turning point in his lengthy political career.

Even as Iranian missiles pound Israeli cities, Netanyahu, 75, has the chance to salvage his sagging political fortunes and reshape a legacy punctured by Hamas' attacks, a corruption trial and a history of divisive rule. If he succeeds, it will cement his reputation within Israel as a political wizard who can rise from the ashes.

"Netanyahu has proven that he is a phoenix," said veteran Israeli journalist and Netanyahu biographer Mazal Mualem.

Netanyahu's troubled legacy is granted a lifeline

The war is far from won. Israel is still vulnerable to Iranian attacks, and whatever political boost Netanyahu gains from the latest developments could dissipate by elections scheduled for next year. He is the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 26 of 52

same polarizing leader he was yesterday.

Internationally, he faces an arrest warrant for charges of war crimes in Gaza. He is widely reviled across the Arab world. And after nearly two years of regionwide conflict, many critics see him as a warmonger responsible for tens of thousands of deaths in Gaza and elsewhere in the Middle East.

But domestically, where Netanyahu's eyes are always focused, his legacy has been granted a lifeline.

Many Israelis are attuned to Netanyahu's campaign against Iran's nuclear program, which they view as a major threat to their country and are therefore relieved by the direct involvement of the U.S. military.

"Netanyahu is seen as a very divisive and destructive leader. He is seen as someone who talks a lot and doesn't do anything," said Aviv Bushinsky, a former Netanyahu aide. "Today, Netanyahu redeemed himself, big time."

In an early morning video statement after the U.S. strike on Iran's nuclear facilities, Netanyahu could barely contain a smile as he thanked President Donald Trump. He said the intervention would "change history."

It's a stunning turnaround for an Israeli leader who critics and analysts largely wrote off in the days after Oct. 7, when he presided over the deadliest attack in Israel's history. Many hold Netanyahu personally responsible for overseeing policies that enabled Hamas to retain power in Gaza for many years and build up a formidable arsenal.

Netanyahu has been buoyed occasionally since then by military successes against Hamas and the Iran-backed Hezbollah in Lebanon. But with the Gaza war dragging on with no end in sight, and dozens of Israeli hostages still in captivity, his approval ratings have remained low.

The week-old assault on Iran, highlighted by Sunday's U.S. attack, grants Netanyahu a chance for salvation.

Netanyahu's yearslong focus on Iran

The war caps a yearslong focus — some would say obsession — by Netanyahu on Iran and its nuclear program. Since his first term as prime minister in the 1990s, and throughout his current, nearly uninterrupted 16-year rule, he has made challenging Iran's nuclear program his life's work.

Netanyahu has long portrayed Iran as an existential threat — pointing not only to its nuclear program, but also its development of long-range missiles aimed at Israel and support for hostile militant groups on Israel's borders.

Iran became a repeated theme in his speeches to the Israeli and international public. He famously hoisted a cartoon bomb from the dais of U.N. General Assembly as he accused Iran of developing a nuclear weapon. Iran insists the program is for civilian purposes. At the same time, Netanyahu has made no mention of Israel's own widely suspected nuclear weapons arsenal.

Netanyahu took significant diplomatic risks to pursue his crusade, including with a 2015 speech to Congress that was organized by Republican lawmakers, angering the Obama administration. During the speech, he railed against a U.S.-led deal on Iran's nuclear program just as negotiators were wrapping up its details. Trump unilaterally withdrew the U.S. from the agreement during his first term.

Some critics say that it was Netanyahu's laser focus on Iran, and the military and intelligence resources devoted to it, that blinded the Israeli leader and the defense establishment to the threat Hamas in Gaza.

Hamas' attack is a stain on Netanyahu's legacy

Hamas' attack, in which 1,200 people were killed and 251 taken hostage, blindsided Israel. Netanyahu, who likes to portray himself as a security hawk and the only true guardian of Israel, is seen by many as having promoted a failed strategy in the years preceding the Oct. 7 attack by sending huge amounts of aid into Gaza under the misconception that Hamas was deterred.

In fact, the Palestinian militant group would stage a brutal assault that would crush Israel's vaunted defenses and change the course of history.

In the aftermath of Hamas' attack, Netanyahu's public support plummeted.

Netanyahu shrugged off accountability for Hamas' attacks, pointing a finger at his security chiefs and rejecting demands for a public inquiry into the failures. He says he will answer tough questions about his role after the war, now in its 21st month.

Any political boost from the war could fade by elections

Netanyahu's work is not done. The war in Gaza grinds on, and Netanyahu still dreams of seeing a nor-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 27 of 52

malization deal between Israel and Arab powerhouse Saudi Arabia as part of his legacy.

The question remains whether Netanyahu will rebound politically from the Iran war. Polls taken last week showed that Netanyahu would still struggle to form a coalition if elections were held today. Even if he gets a bump from Sunday's U.S. attack, it's not clear how long that might last.

Bushinsky compared Netanyahu's potential political predicament to a world leader he likes to compare himself to, Winston Churchill, who, after leading the allies in triumphantly defeating the Nazis in World War II, did not get reelected in a 1945 vote in part because public priorities shifted dramatically.

"Bibi may be 'King of Israel,'" Bushinsky said, using a nickname for Netanyahu popular among his supporters, "but even a king has his limits."

NATO leaders gather Tuesday for what could be a historic summit, or one marred by divisions

By LORNE COOK Associated Press

THE HAGUE, Netherlands (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump and his NATO counterparts are due to gather Tuesday for a summit that could unite the world's biggest security organization around a new defense spending pledge or widen divisions among the 32 allies.

Just a week ago, things had seemed rosy. NATO Secretary-General Mark Rutte was optimistic the European members and Canada would commit to invest at least as much of their economic growth on defense as the United States does for the first time.

Then Spain rejected the new NATO target for each country to spend 5% of its gross domestic product on defense needs, calling it "unreasonable." Trump also insists on that figure. The alliance operates on a consensus that requires the backing of all 32 members.

The following day, Trump said the U.S. should not have to respect the goal.

"I don't think we should, but I think they should," he said. Trump lashed out at Prime Minister Pedro Sánchez's government, saying: "NATO is going to have to deal with Spain. Spain's been a very low payer." He also criticized Canada as "a low payer."

Spain was the lowest spender in the alliance last year, directing less than 2% of its GDP on defense expenditure, while Canada was spending 1.45%, according to NATO figures.

Then Trump ordered the bombing of nuclear installations in Iran. In 2003, the U.S.-led war on Iraq deeply divided NATO, as France and Germany led opposition to the attack, while Britain and Spain joined the coalition.

European allies and Canada also want Ukraine to be at the top of the summit agenda, but they are wary that Trump might not want President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to steal the limelight.

A short summit, decades of mutual security

The two-day summit in The Hague involves an informal dinner Tuesday and one working session Wednesday morning. A very short summit statement has been drafted to ensure the meeting is not derailed by fights over details and wording.

Indeed, much about this NATO summit is brief, even though ripples could be felt for years.

Founded in 1949, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was formed by 12 nations to counter the threat to security in Europe posed by the Soviet Union during the Cold War, notably via a strong U.S. presence on the continent.

Dealing with Moscow is in its DNA. Keeping the peace outside the Euro-Atlantic area is not.

NATO's ranks have grown to 32 countries since the Washington Treaty was signed 75 years ago. Sweden joined last year, worried by an increasingly aggressive Russia.

NATO's collective security guarantee — Article 5 of the treaty — underpins its credibility.

It's a political commitment by all countries to come to the aid of any member whose sovereignty or territory might be under attack. Trump has suggested he is committed to that pledge, but he has also sowed doubt about his intentions. He has said the U.S. intends to remain a member of the alliance.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 28 of 52

A civilian runs NATO, but the U.S. and its military hold power

The United States is NATO's most powerful member. It spends much more on defense than any other ally and far outweighs its partners in terms of military muscle. Washington has traditionally driven the agenda but has stepped back under Trump.

The U.S. nuclear arsenal provides strategic deterrence against would-be adversaries.

NATO's day-to-day work is led by Rutte, a former Dutch prime minister.

As its top civilian official, he chairs almost weekly meetings of ambassadors in the North Atlantic Council at its Brussels headquarters. He chairs other "NACs" at ministerial and leader levels. Rutte runs NATO headquarters, trying to foster consensus and to speak on behalf of all members.

NATO's military headquarters is based nearby in Mons, Belgium. It is always run by a top U.S. officer.

Ukraine's role at the summit is unclear

With Trump demanding greater defense spending, it's unclear what role Ukraine will play at the summit. Zelenskyy has been invited, but it's unclear whether he will have a seat at NATO's table, although he may take part in Tuesday's dinner. Russia's war in Ukraine usually dominates such meetings.

More broadly, NATO itself is not arming Ukraine. As an organization, it possesses no weapons of any kind. Collectively, it provides only non-lethal support — fuel, combat rations, medical supplies, body armor, and equipment to counter drones or mines.

But individually, members do send arms. European allies provided 60% of the military support that Ukraine received in 2024. NATO coordinates those weapons deliveries via a hub on the Polish border and helps organize training for Ukrainian troops.

NATO's troop plans

A key part of the commitment for allies to defend one another is to deter Russia, or any other adversary, from attacking in the first place. Finland and Sweden joined NATO recently because of this concern.

Under NATO's new military plans, 300,000 military personnel would be deployed within 30 days to counter any attack, whether it be on land, at sea, by air or in cyberspace. But experts doubt whether the allies could muster the troop numbers.

It's not just about troop and equipment numbers. An adversary would be less likely to challenge NATO if it thought the allies would use the forces it controls. Trump's threats against U.S. allies — including imposing tariffs on them — has weakened that deterrence.

The U.S. is carrying the biggest military burden

Due to high U.S. defense spending over many years, the American armed forces have more personnel and superior weapons but also significant transportation and logistics assets.

Other allies are starting to spend more, though. After years of cuts, NATO members committed to ramp up their national defense budgets in 2014 when Russia illegally annexed Ukraine's Crimean Peninsula.

After Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine in 2022, the NATO allies agreed to make 2% of GDP the minimum spending level. Last year, 22 countries were expected to hit that target, up from only three a decade ago.

In The Hague, the allies were expected to up the ante to 3.5%, plus a further 1.5% for things like improving roads, bridges, ports and airfields or preparing societies to deal with future conflicts. Whether they will now remains an open question.

Suicide bomber kills at least 22 in Greek Orthodox church in Syria during Divine Liturgy

By ABDULRAHMAN SHAHEEN and KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

DWEIL'A, Syria (AP) — A suicide bomber in Syria opened fire then detonated an explosive vest inside a Greek Orthodox church filled with people praying on Sunday, killing at least 22 and wounding 63 others, state media reported.

The attack took place in Dweil'a on the outskirts of Damascus inside the Mar Elias Church, according to state media SANA, citing the Health Ministry for the toll of dead and wounded. Britain-based war monitor

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 29 of 52

the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said there were at least 19 people killed and dozens wounded, but did not give exact numbers. Some local media reported that children were among the casualties.

The attack on the church was the first of its kind in Syria in years, and comes as Damascus under its de facto Islamist rule is trying to win the support of minorities. As President Ahmad al-Sharaa struggles to exert authority across the country, there have been concerns about the presence of sleeper cells of extremist groups in the war-torn country.

No group immediately claimed responsibility Sunday. Syrian Interior Ministry spokesman Nouredine Al-Baba said in a news conference that their preliminary investigation points to the extremist Islamic State group. The ministry said one gunman entered the church, fired at the people there before detonating himself with an explosives vest, echoing some witness testimonies.

"The security of places of worship is a red line," he said, adding that IS and remaining members of the ousted Assad government are trying to destabilize Syria.

Syrian Information Minister Hamza Mostafa condemned the attack, calling it a terrorist attack.

"This cowardly act goes against the civic values that brings us together," he said on X. "We will not back down from our commitment to equal citizenship ... and we also affirm the state's pledge to exert all its efforts to combat criminal organizations and to protect society from all attacks threatening its safety."

Witnesses said the gunman with his face covered entered and fired at the people. When a crowd charged at him to remove him from the church, he detonated his explosives at the entrance.

Syria's Social Affairs and Labor Minister Hind Kabawat, the country's Christian and female minister, met with the clergy at the church in the evening to express her condolences.

"People were praying safely under the eyes of God," said Father Fadi Ghattas, who said he saw at least 20 people killed with his own eyes. "There were 350 people praying at the church."

However, Meletius Shahati, a church priest, said there was a second gunman who shot at the church door before the other person detonated himself.

Issam Nasr who was praying at the church said he saw people "blown to bits."

"We have never held a knife in our lives. All we ever carried were our prayers," he said.

Security forces and first-responders rushed to the church. Panicked survivors wailed, as one lady fell to her knees and burst into tears. A photo circulated by Syrian state media SANA showed the church's pews covered in debris and blood.

Game 7: Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scores 29 points and Thunder beat Pacers 103-91 for NBA title

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

OKLAHOMA CITY (AP) — Shai Gilgeous-Alexander walked off the court for the final time this season, collapsed into the arms of coach Mark Daigneault and finally smiled.

It was over.

The climb is complete. The rebuild is done. The Oklahoma City Thunder are champions.

The best team all season was the best team at the end, bringing the NBA title to Oklahoma City for the first time. Gilgeous-Alexander finished off his MVP season with 29 points and 12 assists, and the Thunder beat the Indiana Pacers — who lost Tyrese Haliburton to a serious leg injury in the opening minutes — 103-91 in Game 7 of the NBA Finals on Sunday night.

"It doesn't feel real," said Gilgeous-Alexander, the Finals MVP. "So many hours. So many moments. So many emotions. So many nights of disbelief. So many nights of belief. It's crazy to know that we're all here, but this group worked for it. This group put in the hours and we deserve this."

Jalen Williams scored 20 points and Chet Holmgren had 18 for the Thunder, who finished off a season for the ages. Oklahoma City won 84 games between the regular season and the playoffs, tying the 1996-97 Chicago Bulls for third most in any season.

Only Golden State (88 in 2016-17) and the Bulls (87 in 2015-16) won more.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 30 of 52

It's the second championship for the franchise. The Seattle SuperSonics won the NBA title in 1979; the team was moved to Oklahoma City in 2008. There's nothing in the rafters in Oklahoma City to commemorate that title.

In October, a championship banner is finally coming. A Thunder banner.

"They behave like champions. They compete like champions," Daigneault said. "They root for each other's success, which is rare in professional sports. I've said it many times and now I'm going to say it one more time. They are an uncommon team and now they're champions."

The Pacers led 48-47 at the half even after losing Haliburton to what his father said was an Achilles tendon injury about seven minutes into the game. But they were outscored 34-20 in the third quarter as the Thunder built a 13-point lead and began to run away.

"Deflated, but proud of everything we've accomplished," Pacers guard TJ McConnell said.

Bennedict Mathurin had 24 points and 13 rebounds for Indiana, which still is waiting for its first NBA title. The Pacers — who were 10-15 after 25 games and were bidding to be the first team in NBA history to turn that bad of a start into a championship — had leads of 1-0 and 2-1 in the series, but they simply didn't have enough in the end.

Home teams improved to 16-4 in NBA Finals Game 7s. And the Thunder became the seventh champion in the last seven seasons, a run of parity like none other in NBA history.

Pacers forward Pascal Siakam was part of the Toronto team that won in 2019, Thunder guard Alex Caruso was part of the Los Angeles Lakers team that won in the pandemic "bubble" in 2020, Milwaukee won in 2021, Golden State in 2022, Pacers forward Thomas Bryant and Denver prevailed in 2023, and Boston won last year's title.

And now, the Thunder get their turn. The youngest team to win a title in nearly a half-century has reached the NBA mountaintop.

The Thunder are the ninth franchise to win a title in NBA Commissioner Adam Silver's 12 seasons. His predecessor, David Stern, saw eight franchises win titles in his 30 seasons as commissioner.

"It really hurts on the one hand," Pacers coach Rick Carlisle said. "On the other hand, this team has given all of Pacer Nation something to be very proud of."

Judge will order Kilmar Abrego Garcia's release before trial, but ICE plans to detain him

By TRAVIS LOLLER and BEN FINLEY Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — A federal judge in Tennessee plans to order the release of Kilmar Abrego Garcia, whose mistaken deportation to El Salvador has become a flashpoint in President Donald Trump's immigration crackdown, while he awaits a federal trial on human smuggling charges.

But Abrego Garcia is not expected to go free because U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement will likely take him into custody and possibly try to deport him.

In a ruling on Sunday, U.S. Magistrate Judge Barbara Holmes denied the U.S. government's motion to keep Abrego Garcia in detention before his trial. She scheduled a hearing for Wednesday to discuss the conditions of his release.

The U.S. government has already filed a motion to appeal the judge's decision and is asking the judge to stay her impending release order.

Abrego Garcia pleaded not guilty on June 13 to smuggling charges that his attorneys have characterized as an attempt to justify his mistaken deportation in March to a notorious prison in El Salvador after the fact. That hearing was the first chance the Maryland construction worker had in a U.S. courtroom to answer the Trump administration's allegations.

The smuggling charges stem from a 2022 traffic stop for speeding in Tennessee during which Abrego Garcia was driving a vehicle with nine passengers. Although officers suspected possible smuggling, he was allowed to go on his way with only a warning.

A federal indictment accuses Abrego Garcia of smuggling throughout the U.S. hundreds of people living

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 31 of 52

in the country illegally, including children and members of the violent MS-13 gang. The investigation was launched weeks after the Supreme Court ordered the administration to facilitate his return from El Salvador amid mounting public pressure.

Holmes acknowledged in her ruling Sunday that determining whether Abrego Garcia should be released is "little more than an academic exercise" because ICE will likely detain him. But the judge wrote that the government failed to prove that Abrego was a flight risk, that he posed a danger to the community or that he would interfere with proceedings if released.

"Overall, the Court cannot find from the evidence presented that Abrego's release clearly and convincingly poses an irremediable danger to other persons or to the community," the judge wrote.

The acting U.S. attorney for the Middle District of Tennessee, Rob McGuire, argued on June 13 that the likely attempt by ICE to try to deport him was one reason to keep him in jail.

The judge suggested then that the Department of Justice and the Department of Homeland Security could work out between themselves whether the government's priority is to try him on the criminal charges or deport him. No date has been set for the trial.

A 2019 immigration judge's order prevents Abrego Garcia from being deported to his native El Salvador because he faces a credible threat from gangs there, according to Will Allensworth, an assistant federal public defender representing Abrego Garcia.

The government could deport him to a third country, but immigration officials would first be required to show that third country was willing to keep him and not simply deport him back to El Salvador, Allensworth said.

At the detention hearing, McGuire said cooperating witnesses have accused Abrego Garcia of trafficking drugs and firearms and of abusing the women he transported, among other claims. Although he is not charged with such crimes, McGuire said they showed Abrego Garcia to be a dangerous person who should remain in jail pretrial.

Most people in ICE custody who are facing criminal charges are not kept in the U.S. for trial but deported, according to Ohio State University law professor César Cuauhtémoc García Hernández. The government would not need a conviction to deport Abrego Garcia because he came to the U.S. illegally.

However an immigration judge rules, the decision can be appealed to the Board of Immigration Appeals, García Hernández said. And the board's ruling can then be contested in a federal appeals court.

Eastern half of US sweltering again, with dangerous heat wave expected to last until midweek

By TODD RICHMOND Associated Press

MADISON, Wis. (AP) — Tens of millions of people across the Midwest and East endured dangerously hot temperatures again on Sunday as a sprawling June heat wave that gripped much of the U.S. was expected to last well into this week.

Most of the northeastern quadrant of the country from Minnesota to Maine was under some type of heat advisory. So were parts of Arkansas, Tennessee, Louisiana and Mississippi, the National Weather Service said.

Weather service offices throughout the region warned of sweltering and sometimes life-threatening conditions through Wednesday.

"Please plan ahead to take frequent breaks if you must be outside, stay hydrated and provide plenty of water and shade for any outdoor animals," the service office in Wakefield, Virginia, said on X.

Meteorologists say a phenomenon known as a heat dome, a large area of high pressure in the upper atmosphere that traps heat and humidity, is responsible for the extreme temperatures.

Thunderstorms slam New York State

Twin 6-year-old girls were among three people killed when thunderstorms brought trees down onto homes in central New York before dawn Sunday, according to the Oneida County Sheriff's Office. Several

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 32 of 52

inches of rain fell over just a few hours, inundating the small town of Kirkland.

A neighbor, Jared Bowman, said he ran next door to help the twins' mother escape through a window after a giant maple crashed through the roof around 4 a.m.

"She was yelling, 'Get my kids out!'" Bowman told the Post-Standard.

A 50-year-old woman died when a tree hit a house nearby, sheriff's officials said. The streets were littered with electrical lines and thousands in the region were without power.

Gov. Kathy Hochul declared a state of emergency in 32 counties due to the strong storms and forecast extreme heat.

'I just want to sit in my air conditioning'

Sunday marked the second straight day of extreme heat across the Midwest and East Coast. Heat indexes on Sunday hit 103 F (39.4 C) in Chicago and 101 F (38.3 C) on Saturday in Madison, Wisconsin, turning that city's annual naked bike ride into a sticky and sweaty affair.

Lynn Watkins, 53, director of Sacred Hearts Day Care in Sun Prairie, a Madison suburb, said that she tried to sit outside to grill but it was so hot she had to go inside. She plans to cancel all outdoor activities at the day care on Monday with highs around 93 F (33.8 C) forecast.

"I can't stand being outside when it's like this," she said. "I just want to sit in my air conditioning."

The heat index in Pittsburgh reached 105 F, and hovered around 104 F (40 C) in Columbus, Ohio.

Forecasts in Philadelphia called for a heat index of 108 F (42.2 C) on Monday.

Philadelphia declares a heat emergency

The city's public health department declared a heat emergency through Wednesday evening. Officials directed residents to air-conditioned libraries, community centers and other locations, and set up a "heat line" staffed by medical professionals to discuss conditions and illnesses made worse by the heat.

With temperatures in the mid-80s, Delaware's Rehoboth Beach was crowded Sunday.

"It's only going to get worse," said beachgoer Vak Kobiashvili. "People are trying to get out to the beach before it's too hot to really even manage to be outside."

Kobiashvili said even his dog didn't want to be outside.

"East Coast weather, at least from my perspective, is just very sweaty in the summer," he said. "It's that walking through a swamp kind of feeling."

Forecasters warned the heat index in Cromwell, Connecticut, would reach 105 F on Sunday, making for a steamy day during the final round of the PGA Travelers Championship. Fans sought shelter under trees and on air-conditioned benches. Many lined up for water at a hydration station near the ninth green.

Karin Skalina, of New York, had been in the sun-soaked bleachers by the eighth green and eventually sought relief on a ventilated cooling bench. "Didn't work," she said.

"(We're) trying to follow the shade," Skalina said.

Courtney Kamansky, of Newington, Connecticut, came prepared with extra water bottles. Asked if she was able to find shade, she pointed to her umbrella and said, "I bring it with me."

Heat to persist into the coming week with highest temperatures shifting eastward

Cincinnati Reds shortstop Elly De La Cruz got sick Saturday while playing in extreme heat against the Cardinals in St. Louis. Seattle Mariners reliever Trent Thornton, facing the Cubs in Chicago, also fell ill.

The heat is expected to persist this week with the highest temperatures shifting eastward. New York City is expected to see highs around 95 F (35 C) on Monday and Tuesday. Boston is on track for highs approaching 100 F (37.7 C) on Tuesday, and temperatures in Washington, D.C., were expected to hit 100 F on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Mark Gehring, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Sullivan, Wisconsin, said this level of heat is not uncommon during the summer months in the U.S., although it usually takes hold in mid-July or early August. The most unusual facet of this heat wave is the sheer amount of territory sweltering under it, he said.

"It's basically everywhere east of the Rockies," he said, referring to the Rocky Mountains. "That is unusual, to have this massive area of high dewpoints and heat."

FedEx founder Fred Smith, a Marine Corps veteran who revolutionized package delivery, dies at 80

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (AP) — Fred Smith, the FedEx Corp. founder who revolutionized the express delivery industry, has died, the company said. He was 80.

FedEx started operating in 1973, delivering small parcels and documents more quickly than the postal service. Over the next half-century, Smith, a Marine Corps veteran, oversaw the growth of a company that became something of an economic bellwether because so many other companies rely on it.

Memphis, Tennessee-based FedEx became a global transportation and logistics company that averages 17 million shipments per business day. Smith stepped down as CEO in 2022 but remained executive chairman.

Smith, a 1966 graduate of Yale University, used a business theory he came up with in college to create a delivery system based on coordinated air cargo flights centered on a main hub, a "hub and spokes" system, as it became known.

The company also played a major role in the shift by American business and industry to a greater use of time-sensitive deliveries and less dependence on large inventories and warehouses.

Smith once told The Associated Press that he came up with the name Federal Express because he wanted the company to sound big and important when in fact it was a start-up operation with a future far from assured.

At the time, Smith was trying to land a major shipping contract with the Federal Reserve Bank that didn't work out.

In the beginning, Federal Express had 14 small aircraft operating out of the Memphis International Airport flying packages to 25 U.S. cities.

Smith's father, also named Frederick, built a small fortune in Memphis with a regional bus line and other business ventures. Following college, Smith joined the U.S. Marines and was commissioned a second lieutenant. He left the military as a captain in 1969 after two tours in Vietnam where he was decorated for bravery and wounds received in combat.

He told The Associated Press in a 2023 interview that everything he did running FedEx came from his experience in the Marines, not what he learned at Yale.

Getting Federal Express started was no easy task. Overnight shipments were new to American business and the company had to have a fleet of planes and a system of interconnecting air routes in place from the get-go.

Former President George W. Bush released a statement in which he praised Smith as "one of the finest Americans of our generation" and FedEx as an "innovative company that helped supercharge our economy."

Smith was a minority owner of the Washington Commanders NFL team until 2021, when owner Daniel Snyder and his family bought out the shares held by Smith, Dwight Schar and Bob Rothman. His son Arthur was a head coach with the Atlanta Falcons for three seasons and is currently the offensive coordinator for the Pittsburgh Steelers.

Though one of Memphis' best-known and most prominent citizens, Smith generally avoided the public spotlight, devoting his energies to work and family.

Despite his low profile, Smith made a cameo appearance in the 2000 movie "Castaway" starring Tom Hanks. The movie was about a FedEx employee stranded on an island.

"Memphis has lost its most important citizen, Fred Smith," said U.S. Rep. Steve Cohen of Tennessee, citing Smith's support for everything from the University of Memphis to the city's zoo. "FedEx is the engine of our economy, and Fred Smith was its visionary founder. But more than that, he was a dedicated citizen who cared deeply about our city."

Smith rarely publicized the donations he and his family made, but he agreed to speak with AP in 2023 about a gift to the Marine Corps Scholarship Foundation to endow a new scholarship fund for the children of Navy service members pursuing studies in STEM.

"The thing that's interested me are the institutions and the causes not the naming or the recognition,"

Smith said at the time.

Asked what it means to contribute to the public good, he replied:

"America is the most generous country in the world. It's amazing the charitable contributions that Americans make every year. Everything from the smallest things to these massive health care initiatives and the Gates Foundation and everything in between," he said. "I think if you've done well in this country, it's pretty churlish for you not to at least be willing to give a pretty good portion of that back to the public interest. And all this is in the great tradition of American philanthropy."

Trump is open to regime change in Iran, after his administration said that wasn't the goal

By JOSH BOAK and MIKE PESOLI Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump on Sunday called into question the future of Iran's ruling theocracy after a surprise attack on three of the country's nuclear sites, seemingly contradicting his administration's earlier calls to resume negotiations and avoid an escalation in fighting.

"It's not politically correct to use the term, 'Regime Change,' but if the current Iranian Regime is unable to MAKE IRAN GREAT AGAIN, why wouldn't there be a Regime change???" Trump posted on social media. "MIGA!!!"

The posting on Truth Social marked something of a reversal from Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's Sunday morning news conference that detailed the aerial bombing.

"This mission was not and has not been about regime change," Hegseth said.

What the administration has made clear is that it wants Iran to stop any development of nuclear weapons, with Secretary of State Marco Rubio warning on Fox News' "Sunday Morning Futures" that any retaliation against the U.S. or a rush toward building a nuclear weapon would "put the regime at risk."

But beyond that, the world is awash in uncertainty at a fragile moment that could decide whether parts of the globe tip into war or find a way to salvage a relative peace. Trump's warning to Iran's leadership comes as the U.S. has demanded that Iran not respond to the bombardment of the heart of a nuclear program that it spent decades developing.

The Trump administration has made a series of intimidating statements even as it has simultaneously called to restart negotiations, making it hard to get a complete read on whether the U.S. president is simply taunting an adversary or using inflammatory words that could further widen the war between Israel and Iran that began earlier this month.

Up until the U.S. president's post on Sunday afternoon, the coordinated messaging by Trump's vice president, Pentagon chief, top military adviser and secretary of state suggested a confidence that any fallout would be manageable and that Iran's lack of military capabilities would ultimately force it back to the bargaining table.

Hegseth had said that America "does not seek war" with Iran, while Vice President JD Vance said the strikes have given Tehran the possibility of returning to negotiate with Washington.

But the unfolding situation is not entirely under Washington's control, as Tehran has a series of levers to respond to the aerial bombings that could intensify the conflict in the Middle East with possible global repercussions.

Iran can block oil being shipped through the Strait of Hormuz, attack U.S. bases in the region, engage in cyber attacks or double down on a nuclear program that might seem like more of a necessity after the U.S. strike.

All of that raises the question of whether the strikes will open up a far more brutal phase of fighting or revive negotiations out of an abundance of caution. Inside the U.S., the attack quickly spilled over into domestic politics with Trump choosing to spend part of his Sunday going after his critics in Congress.

Trump also used a social media post to lambaste Rep. Thomas Massie, R-Ky., who had objected to the president taking military action without specific congressional approval.

"We had a spectacular military success yesterday, taking the 'bomb' right out of their hands (and they

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 35 of 52

would use it if they could!)” Trump wrote.

What Trump’s national security team said

At their joint Pentagon briefing, Hegseth and Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said that “Operation Midnight Hammer” involved decoys and deception, and met with no Iranian resistance.

Caine indicated that the goal of the operation — destroying nuclear sites in Fordo, Natanz and Isfahan — had been achieved.

“Final battle damage will take some time, but initial battle damage assessments indicate that all three sites sustained extremely severe damage and destruction,” Caine said.

Vance said he felt “very confident that we’ve substantially delayed their development of a nuclear weapon.”

Pressed further, he told NBC’s “Meet the Press” that “I think that we have really pushed their program back by a very long time. I think that it’s going to be many many years before the Iranians are able to develop a nuclear weapon.”

The vice president said the U.S. had “negotiated aggressively” with Iran to try to find a peaceful settlement and that Trump made his decision after assessing the Iranians were not acting “in good faith.”

“I actually think it provides an opportunity to reset this relationship, reset these negotiations and get us in a place where Iran can decide not to be a threat to its neighbors, not to be a threat to the United States, and if they’re willing to do that, the United States is all ears,” Vance said.

Rubio said on CBS’s “Face the Nation” that “there are no planned military operations right now against Iran, unless, unless they mess around and they attack” U.S. interests.

Trump has previously threatened other countries, but often backed down or failed to follow through, given his promises to his coalition of voters not to entangle the United States in an extended war. It was not immediately clear whether Iran saw the avoidance of a wider conflict as in its best interests.

How Iran and others are reacting to the US strikes

Much of the world is absorbing the consequences of the strikes and the risk that they could lead to more fighting across the Middle East after the U.S. inserted itself into the war between Israel and Iran. Israeli airstrikes that began on June 13 local time targeted Iran’s nuclear facilities and generals, prompting retaliation from Iran and creating a series of events that contributed to the U.S. attack.

While U.S. officials urged caution and stressed that only nuclear sites were targeted by Washington, Iran criticized the actions as a violation of its sovereignty and international law.

Iran’s foreign minister, Abbas Araghchi, said Washington was “fully responsible” for whatever actions Tehran may take in response.

“They crossed a very big red line by attacking nuclear facilities,” he said at a news conference in Turkey. “I don’t know how much room is left for diplomacy.”

China and Russia, where Araghchi was heading for talks with President Vladimir Putin, condemned the U.S. military action. The attacks were “a gross violation of international law,” said Russia’s Foreign Ministry, which also advocated “returning the situation to a political and diplomatic course.” A Turkish Foreign Ministry statement warned about the risk of the conflict spreading to “a global level.”

British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the United Kingdom was moving military equipment into the area to protect its interests, people and allies. His office said he talked on Sunday with Trump about the need for Tehran to resume negotiations, but Trump would have posted his remarks about regime change after their conversation.

The leaders of Italy, Canada, Germany and France agreed on the need for “a rapid resumption of negotiations.” France’s Emmanuel Macron held talks with the Saudi crown prince and sultan of Oman.

Iran trying to stop oil exports through the Strait of Hormuz could create the same kind of inflationary shocks that the world felt after Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022. Oil prices have increased as the war between Israel and Iran intensified, climbing by 21% over the past month.

The price of oil rose and U.S. stock futures fell on Sunday, amid uncertainty over Iran — which could undermine Trump’s promises to tame inflation and bring consumer prices down.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 36 of 52

Hegseth offers an explanation for the timeline

The Pentagon briefing did not provide any new details about Iran's nuclear capabilities. Hegseth said the timeline for the strikes was the result of a schedule set by Trump for talks with Iran about its nuclear ambitions.

"Iran found out" that when Trump "says 60 days that he seeks peace and negotiation, he means 60 days of peace and negotiation," Hegseth said. "Otherwise, that nuclear program, that new nuclear capability will not exist. He meant it."

That statement was complicated as the White House had suggested Thursday that Trump could take as much as two weeks to determine whether to strike Iran or continue to pursue negotiations. But the U.S. benefited from Iran's weakened air defenses and was able to conduct the attacks without resistance from Iran.

"Iran's fighters did not fly, and it appears that Iran's surface to air missile systems did not see us throughout the mission," Caine said.

Hegseth said that a choice to move a number of B-2 bombers from their base in Missouri earlier Saturday was meant to be a decoy to throw off Iranians. Caine added that the U.S. used other methods of deception as well, deploying fighters to protect the B-2 bombers that dropped a total of 14 bunker-buster bombs on Iran's sites at Fordo and Natanz.

Would you hail a 'robotaxi'? Musk bets cabs will give Tesla a lift after boycotts and sales plunge

By BERNARD CONDON AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Elon Musk promised in 2019 that driverless Tesla "robotaxis" would be on the road "next year," but it didn't happen. A year later, he promised to deliver them the next year, but that didn't happen either.

Despite the empty pledges the promises kept coming. Last year in January, Musk said, "Next year for sure, we'll have over a million robotaxis."

Would you settle for 10 or 12?

Musk appears to be on the verge of making his robotaxi vision a reality with a test run of a small squad of self-driving cabs in Austin, Texas, that began Sunday. Reaching a million may take a year or more, however, although the billionaire should be able to expand the service this year if the Austin demo is a success.

The stakes couldn't be higher, nor the challenges.

While Musk was making those "next year" promises, rival Waymo was busy deploying driverless taxis in Los Angeles, San Diego, Austin and other cities by using a different technology that allowed it to get to market faster. It just completed its 10 millionth paid ride.

Boycotts related to Musk's politics have tanked Tesla's sales. Rival electric vehicle makers with newly competitive models have stolen market share. And investors are on edge after a \$150 billion stock wipeout when Musk picked a social media fight with a U.S. president overseeing federal car regulators who could make the robotaxi rollout much more difficult. The stock has recovered somewhat after Musk said he regretted some of his remarks.

Tesla shareholders have stood by Musk over the years because he's defied the odds by building a successful standalone electric vehicle company — self-driving car promises aside — and making them a lot of money in the process. A decade ago, Tesla shares traded for around \$18. The shares closed Friday at \$322.

Musk seemed jubilant Sunday morning, posting on X, "The @Tesla_AI robotaxi launch begins in Austin this afternoon with customers paying a \$4.20 flat fee!"

The test is beginning modestly enough. Tesla is remotely monitoring the vehicles and putting a person in the passenger seat in case of trouble. The number of Teslas deployed will also be small — just 10 or 12 vehicles — and will only pick up passengers in a limited, geofenced area.

Musk has vowed that the service will quickly spread to other cities, eventually reaching hundreds of thousands if not a million vehicles next year.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 37 of 52

Some Musk watchers on Wall Street are skeptical.

"How quickly can he expand the fleet?" asks Garrett Nelson, an analyst at CFRA. "We're talking maybe a dozen vehicles initially. It's very small."

Morningstar's Seth Goldstein says Musk is being classic Musk: Promising too much, too quickly.

"When anyone in Austin can download the app and use a robotaxi, that will be a success, but I don't think that will happen until 2028," he says. "Testing is going to take a while."

Musk's tendency to push up the stock high with a bit of hyperbole is well known among investors.

In 2018, he told Tesla stockholders he had "funding secured" to buy all their shares at a massive premium and take the company private. But he not only lacked a written commitment from financiers, according to federal stock regulators who fined him, he hadn't discussed the loan amount or other details with them.

More recently, Musk told CNBC in May that Tesla was experiencing a "major rebound" in demand. A week later an auto trade group in Europe announced sales had plunged by half.

Musk has come under fire for allegedly exaggerating the ability of the system used for its cars to drive themselves, starting with the name. Full Self-Driving is a misnomer. The system still requires drivers to keep their eyes on the road because they may need to intervene and take control at any moment.

Federal highway safety regulators opened an investigation into FSD last year after several accidents, and the Department of Justice has conducted its own probe, though the status of that is not known. Tesla has also faced lawsuits over the feature, some resulting in settlements, other dismissed. In one case, a judge ruled against the plaintiffs but only because they hadn't proved Musk "knowingly" made false statements.

Musk says the robotaxis will be running on an improved version of Full Self-Driving and the cabs will be safe.

He also says the service will be able to expand rapidly around the country. His secret weapon: Millions of Tesla owners now on the roads. He says an over-the-air software update will soon allow them to turn their cars into driverless cabs and start a side business while stuck at the office for eight hours or on vacation for a week.

"Instead of having your car sit in the parking lot, your car could be earning money," Musk said earlier this year, calling it an Airbnb model for cars. "You will be able to add or subtract your car to the fleet."

Musk says Tesla also can move fast to deploy taxis now because of his decision to rely only on cameras for the cars to navigate, unlike Waymo, which has gone a more expensive route by supplementing its cameras with lasers and radar.

"Tesla will have, I don't know," Musk mused in a conference call with investors, "99% market share or something ridiculous." Given Waymo's head start and potential competition from Amazon and others, dominating the driverless market to that extent could be a reach.

But Dan Ives, a Wedbush Securities analyst and big Musk fan, says this time Musk may actually pull it off because of Tesla's ability to scale up quickly. And even skeptics like Morningstar's Goldstein acknowledge that Musk occasionally does get things right, and spectacularly so.

He upended the car industry by getting people to buy expensive electric vehicles, brought his Starlink satellite internet service to rural areas and, more recently, performed a gee-whiz trick of landing an unmanned SpaceX rocket on a platform back on earth.

"Maybe his timelines aren't realistic," Goldstein says, "but he can develop futuristic technology products."

11 days in June: Trump's path to 'yes' on bombing Iran

By CHRIS MEGERIAN and KATIE VOGEL Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — For more than a week, President Donald Trump kept the world wondering whether he would join Israel's attacks on Iran in an attempt to decapitate the country's nuclear program. The guessing ended this weekend, when American stealth bombers, fighter jets and a submarine struck with bombs and missiles.

Trump's decision marks one of the riskiest foreign policy decisions by a U.S. president in recent memory, potentially plunging the nation back into armed conflict in the Middle East with no clear endgame.

Like most of Trump's presidency, the path to military action was unconventional and played out on social

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 38 of 52

media, as he alternatively pledged diplomacy, demanded the evacuation of Tehran, threatened the ayatollah and ultimately announced the U.S. strike.

Here's a look at how the last 11 days unfolded, a cascade of events that could reshape a combustible corner of the globe. All dates below are in Eastern time.

Wednesday, June 11

The first sign that conflict could be on the horizon came when families of U.S. troops began leaving the Middle East. "They are being moved out because it could be a dangerous place, and we'll see what happens," Trump said as he arrived at the Kennedy Center for opening night of "Les Misérables," one of his favorite musicals.

It wasn't clear whether Israel was preparing to strike, fulfilling years of threats to attack Iran's nuclear program, or if the movements were a feint to increase pressure for negotiations. The next round of talks between Washington and Tehran was just days away, and Trump was adamant about reaching a diplomatic solution.

Behind the scenes, the Israeli military operation was already taking shape.

Thursday, June 12

Trump said an attack by Israel "could very well happen." But Iran still seemed to be taken by surprise. Around 8 p.m. in Washington, explosions in Tehran killed top military leaders and scientists. Multiple sites connected to Iran's nuclear program were also hit.

Israel said 200 warplanes took part in the first wave of attacks. More damage was done with drones that Israeli spies had smuggled into the country, destroying air defenses and missile launchers.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu described it as a "targeted military operation to roll back the Iranian threat to Israel's very survival." Although Iran has long maintained that its nuclear program was for peaceful purposes, Israeli leaders claimed it was an imminent threat.

Trump posted on social media that "we remain committed to a Diplomatic Resolution," but his tone would soon change.

Friday, June 13

Iran retaliated against Israel with missiles and drones, many of which were shot down by air defenses. As Trump started his day in Washington, he seemed impressed by Israeli military prowess and his tone became more aggressive toward Iran.

"The United States makes the best and most lethal military equipment anywhere in the World, BY FAR, and that Israel has a lot of it, with much more to come - And they know how to use it," he wrote on social media.

But Trump suggested that diplomacy was his first choice, and urged Iran to make a deal. "Now they have, perhaps, a second chance" to get it done, he said.

Saturday, June 14

Trump talked to Russian President Vladimir Putin in the morning, and they discussed the conflict between Israel and Iran. The next round of talks between the U.S. and Iran was canceled.

As Israel and Iran continued to trade strikes, Trump attended a military parade in Washington. It was the 250th anniversary of the U.S. Army, as well as his 79th birthday.

The muscular display of American military might — tanks, troops, paratroopers and a 21-gun salute — played out in the nation's capital as the potential for a new conflict loomed.

Sunday, June 15

Trump spent the day talking up his reputation as a peacemaker, encouraging Iran and Israel to "make a deal" similar to how he had brokered an end to fighting between India and Pakistan.

"Many calls and meetings now taking place," Trump wrote on social media. "I do a lot, and never get credit for anything, but that's OK, the PEOPLE understand. MAKE THE MIDDLE EAST GREAT AGAIN!"

<https://truthsocial.com/@realDonaldTrump/posts/114687664442020232>

Iran's health ministry said 224 people had been killed by Israeli strikes at this point in the conflict. Reports also emerged that Trump had rejected an Israeli plan to kill Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 39 of 52

Khamenei. U.S. officials viewed the idea as dangerously destabilizing.

Trump flew to Canada for the annual Group of Seven summit, which gathers the world's most powerful democracies. He would not be there long.

Monday, June 16

Israel claimed it had achieved "aerial superiority" over Tehran, allowing its warplanes to operate freely in the skies above Iran's capital. One of the strikes hit Iran's state-run television, abruptly stopping a live broadcast. Netanyahu said Israeli strikes set back Iran's nuclear program a "very, very long time."

However, the extent of the damage was unclear, and U.S. and Israeli officials believed only American planes with specially designed "bunker buster" bombs had the capability to destroy nuclear sites buried deep underground.

After a single day at the G7 summit, the White House abruptly announced that Trump would leave early on a red-eye flight to Washington to meet with his national security team.

Tuesday, June 17

Trump demanded Iran's "UNCONDITIONAL SURRENDER" in a post on social media and he told reporters aboard Air Force One that he wanted "a real end" to the conflict, not just a ceasefire.

He expressed frustration with Iranian leaders for failing to reach an agreement. "They should have done the deal. I told them, 'Do the deal,'" he said. "So I don't know. I'm not too much in the mood to negotiate."

Trump also brushed off assessments from U.S. spy agencies that Iran hadn't decided to build a nuclear weapon. He insisted they were "very close."

The sun had not yet risen when Trump arrived at the White House. He took part in a meeting in the Situation Room, but did not appear publicly.

With little clarity on next steps, State Department spokeswoman Tammy Bruce told reporters that "I'm here to take questions, not necessarily answer them."

Wednesday, June 18

By this point, there was no question that Trump was considering joining Israel's attacks on Iran. "I may do it, I may not do it," he said that morning. "Nobody knows what I'm going to do."

The president spoke to reporters while overseeing the installation of a massive new flagpole on the South Lawn of the White House, toggling back and forth between chatting up construction workers in hard hats and sizing up the Iranian nuclear threat.

Later, in the Oval Office, Trump again suggested that the U.S. might get directly involved to thwart Iran's atomic ambitions. "I'm not looking to fight," he said. "But if it's a choice between fighting and having a nuclear weapon, you have to do what you have to do."

On Capitol Hill, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth told lawmakers the Pentagon was presenting Trump with military options.

Thursday, June 19

It was a federal holiday — Juneteenth — and much of Washington took the hot, steamy day off, but White House press secretary Karoline Leavitt scheduled a briefing nonetheless.

She entered the briefing room to deliver a message from the president: He would decide within two weeks whether to become directly involved in Israel's war on Iran.

Trump has long been known to toss out "two week" deadlines for actions that never materialize, so the statement left people guessing on his next move.

Friday, June 20

Trump convened another meeting of his national security advisers and then flew to his golf club in New Jersey, where he attended a political fundraiser in the evening. He talked to reporters briefly en route, long enough to say his director of national intelligence, Tulsi Gabbard, was "wrong" when she previously said that the U.S. believed Iran wasn't building a nuclear weapon.

Saturday, June 21

Around midnight, the U.S. military operation began in secret: B-2 stealth bombers taking off from a base in Missouri. They headed east, over the Atlantic Ocean, refueling from airborne tankers along the way. It

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 40 of 52

would take them 18 hours to reach Iran. A decoy flight went west, toward the Pacific.

Trump returned to the White House from New Jersey around 6 p.m. Less than an hour later, American ordinance began exploding in Tehran.

More than two dozen Tomahawk missiles were fired from a U.S. submarine. Fighter jets scanned for Iranian interceptors. The stealth bombers dropped 14 bunker buster bombs, marking the first time that the 30,000-pound weapon had been used in combat.

Trump announced the strikes on social media, saying it was a "very successful attack and "NOW IS THE TIME FOR PEACE!" In a brief national address from the White House, the president threatened to attack Iran again if there was any retaliation.

"There will either be peace or there will be tragedy for Iran," he said.

How the US bombarded Iranian nuclear sites without detection

By FARNOUSH AMIRI and MEG KINNARD Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — It was an unprecedented attack years in the making, with some last-minute misdirection meant to give the operation a powerful element of surprise.

U.S. pilots dropped 30,000-pound bombs early Sunday on two key underground uranium enrichment plants in Iran, delivering what American military leaders believe is a knockout blow to a nuclear program that Israel views as an existential threat and has been pummeling for more than a week. American sailors bolstered the surprise mission by firing dozens of cruise missiles from a submarine toward at least one other site.

Dubbed Operation Midnight Hammer, U.S. officials say the plan was characterized by a "precision strike" that "devastated the Iranian nuclear program," even as they acknowledged an assessment was ongoing. For its part, Iran denied that any significant damage had been done, and the Islamic Republic pledged to retaliate.

Taking off from the U.S. heartland, B-2 stealth bombers delivered a total of 420,000 pounds of explosives, aided by an armada of refueling tankers and fighter jets — some of which launched their own weapons. U.S. officials said Iran neither detected the inbound fusillade, nor mustered a shot at the stealthy American jets.

The operation relied on a series of deceptive tactics and decoys to maintain the secrecy, U.S. officials said hours after the attack, which was preceded by nine days of Israeli attacks that debilitated Iran's military leadership and air defenses.

A decoy plan

Even before the planes took off, elements of misdirection were already in play. After setting parts of the plan in motion, Trump publicly announced Thursday that he'd make a decision within two weeks on whether to strike Iran — ostensibly to allow additional time for negotiations, but in actuality masking the impending attack.

One group of B-2 stealth bombers traveled west from Missouri on Saturday as decoys, drawing the attention of amateur plane spotters, government officials and some media as they headed toward a U.S. air base in the Pacific. At the same time, seven other B-2s carrying two "bunker buster" bombs apiece flew eastward, keeping communications to a minimum so as not to draw any attention.

Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, said at Sunday's briefing that it was all "part of a plan to maintain tactical surprise" and that only "an extremely small number of planners and key leaders" knew about it in Washington and Florida, where U.S. Central Command is based.

After 18 hours of furtive flying that required aerial refueling, the armed B-2 Spirit bombers, each with two crew members, arrived on time and without detection in the Eastern Mediterranean, from where they launched their attack runs. Before crossing into Iran, the B-2s were escorted by stealthy U.S. fighter jets and reconnaissance aircraft.

A graphic released by the Pentagon showed the flight route as passing over Lebanon, Syria and Iraq. It was unclear whether those countries were notified of the U.S. overflight in advance. Most U.S. lawmakers were also kept in the dark, with some Republicans saying they were provided a brief heads-up by the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 41 of 52

White House before the strike.

"Our B-2s went in and out and back without the world knowing at all," Secretary of Defense Pete Hegseth told reporters Sunday.

A multifaceted attack

About an hour before the B-2s entered Iran, Caine said that a U.S. submarine in the region launched more than two dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles against key targets, including a site in Isfahan where uranium is prepared for enrichment.

As the U.S. bombers approached their targets, they watched out for Iranian fighter jets and surface-to-air missiles, but encountered none.

At 6:40 p.m. in Washington and 2:10 a.m. in Tehran, the first B-2 bomber dropped its pair of GBU-57 massive ordnance penetrators on the deeply buried Fordo uranium enrichment plant. It was the first time these so-called "bunker busters" had ever been used in combat. Each 30,000-pound bomb is designed to burrow into the ground before detonating a massive warhead.

The Fordo site received the bulk of the bombardment, though a couple of the enormous bombs were also dropped on a uranium enrichment site at Natanz.

The U.S. bombs fell for about half an hour, with cruise missiles fired from submarines being the last American weapons to hit their targets, which included a third nuclear site at Isfahan, Caine said.

Both Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog said there were no immediate signs of radioactive contamination around the sites.

A look at the numbers

The mission included:

- 75 precision-guided weapons: these included 14 GBU-57 "bunker buster" bombs deployed by the seven B-2 Spirit stealth bombers, and more than two-dozen Tomahawk cruise missiles launched from a U.S. submarine.

- 125 aircraft, including the B-2 bombers, fighter jets and refueling planes.

A female pilot

Hegseth said Sunday that "our boys in those bombers are on their way home right now."

But a U.S. official said one woman was among those piloting the B-2 bombers. The official spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak about the mission publicly.

A bit of history

Caine said the use of the bunker-buster bombs made the mission historic, as did other elements.

"This was the largest B-2 operational strike in U.S. history, and the second longest B-2 mission ever flown, exceeded only by those in the days following 9/11," he told reporters Sunday.

What to know about the conflict between Israel and Iran, and the US intervention

By ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

ATHENS, Greece (AP) — President Donald Trump and other top American officials are urging Iran to forgo retaliation and engage in direct talks following the U.S. attack on three key Iranian nuclear sites.

The Islamic Republic responded to the overnight bombing by launching a barrage of missiles at Israel, but has so far taken no action against other U.S. allies or American interests in the Middle East. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi rejected the call for diplomacy, saying the U.S. had crossed "a very big red line" and maintaining his country had the right to defend itself.

The U.S. strikes came after a week of open conflict between Israel and Iran, sparked by Israel's sudden barrage of attacks against Iran's nuclear and military structure.

Israeli strikes began on June 13. Targeting Iranian military and nuclear sites, they killed several top military officials and nuclear scientists. Iran retaliated by firing hundreds of missiles and drones at Israel, some of which penetrated the country's vaunted multi-tiered air defense system. The war so far has killed hundreds

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 42 of 52

of people and wounded more than 1,000 in Iran and killed two dozen and wounded hundreds in Israel. Iran insists its nuclear program is only for peaceful purposes. But Israel views it as an existential threat and has said its military campaign is necessary to prevent Iran from building an atomic weapon.

Although U.S. intelligence agencies have assessed that Tehran is not actively pursuing a bomb, Trump and Israeli leaders have argued it could quickly assemble a nuclear weapon, making it an imminent threat.

The region has been on edge for the past two years as Israel seeks to annihilate the Hamas militant group, an Iranian ally, in the Gaza Strip, where war still rages after Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on southern Israel.

Here's what to know about the conflict between Israel and Iran, and the United States' intervention:

US bombs Iran

Trump announced the overnight "massive precision strikes" on Iran's Fordo, Isfahan and Natanz nuclear sites in a televised address to the nation from the White House. Describing them as "a spectacular military success," he said they had "completely and fully obliterated" the nuclear sites. Iran, he said, would now have to make peace.

The chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Air Force Gen. Dan Caine, said during a news briefing in Washington Sunday that while "final battle damage will take some time," initial assessments indicated all three nuclear sites had been heavily damaged.

Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth said the strikes were not aimed at toppling the Iranian government.

"This mission was not and has not been about regime change," Hegseth said during the news briefing.

Iran's Atomic Energy Organization confirmed the attacks, but insisted its nuclear program will not be stopped. Iran and the U.N. nuclear watchdog agency said there were no immediate signs of radioactive contamination at the three locations following the strikes.

The nuclear fuel enrichment site at Fordo is buried deep beneath a mountain, and the attack against it used bunker-buster bombs designed to penetrate the ground before exploding, a U.S. official said, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss military operations. Only the United States has the 30,000-pound (13,600-kilogram) munition and the stealth bombers used to deliver them.

Trump warned there would be additional strikes if Tehran retaliated against U.S. forces, while Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu praised Trump's decision to attack.

Iran's response

Iran launched a barrage of missiles against Israel overnight and into Sunday, with Israeli authorities reporting that more than 80 people were wounded, the vast majority of them lightly.

How Tehran might retaliate remains unclear, but an Iranian response could mean a wave of attacks on U.S. forces in the Middle East, an attempt to close a key bottleneck for global oil supplies or a dash to develop a nuclear weapon.

Secretary of State Marco Rubio said it would be a mistake for the Iranians to target U.S. bases in the region or the countries that host them.

"If the regime wants peace, we're ready for peace. If they want to do something else, they're incredibly vulnerable. They can't even protect their own airspace," Rubio said on CBS' "Face the Nation."

The State Department meanwhile has doubled the number of emergency evacuation flights it is providing for American citizens wishing to leave Israel, ordered the departure of nonessential staff from the U.S. Embassy in Lebanon and is stepping up travel warnings around the Middle East amid concerns about possible retaliatory attacks.

'A dangerous escalation'

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said he was "gravely alarmed" by the United States' use of force, and called the strikes a "dangerous escalation." World leaders issued calls for diplomacy and the U.N. Security Council scheduled a Sunday meeting at Iran's request.

The European Union's foreign policy chief, Kaja Kallas, said Iran must not be allowed to develop a nuclear weapon, but urged restraint. Kallas will chair a meeting of the 27-nation bloc's foreign ministers in Brussels on Monday, with the Israel-Iran war high on the agenda.

Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen, who had threatened to resume attacks on U.S. vessels in the

Red Sea if the Trump administration joined Israel's military campaign, called on other Muslim nations to form "one front against the Zionist-American arrogance."

Kevin Durant is going from the Suns to the Rockets in a blockbuster trade, AP source says

By TIM REYNOLDS AP Basketball Writer

The Houston Rockets are acquiring 15-time All-Star and four-time Olympic gold medalist Kevin Durant from the Phoenix Suns in a blockbuster deal struck Sunday, a person with knowledge of the agreement told The Associated Press.

The Rockets are giving up Dillon Brooks, Jalen Green and six future picks — including the No. 10 selection in Wednesday's opening round of this year's draft — according to the person who spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity because the deal was still pending NBA approval.

It ends weeks of speculation about where Durant would end up. Many teams were involved at various times, including Miami and Minnesota, but in the end Phoenix accepted the Rockets' offer.

ESPN first reported the trade.

Fans learned of the news while Durant was on stage in New York at Fanatics Fest NYC, and when they began reacting, Durant started smiling broadly.

"We're gonna see, man," Durant said from the stage. "We're gonna see."

Boardroom, the ever-growing media company that Durant and his business partner, Rich Kleiman, co-founded in 2019, teams up with Fanatics on a number of projects. The panel that Durant was set to appear on there Sunday was called "Global Game Changers."

He certainly figures to change the game for the Rockets.

Houston finished No. 2 in the Western Conference in the regular season, albeit 16 games behind No. 1 Oklahoma City. It now adds a two-time champion to its young core as it looks to make another jump next season.

Durant averaged 26.6 points this season, his 17th in the NBA — not counting one year missed because of injury. For his career, the 6-foot-11 forward is averaging 27.2 points and seven rebounds per game.

The move brings Durant back to the state of Texas, where he played his one year of college basketball for the Longhorns and was the college player of the year before going as the No. 2 pick in the 2007 draft by Seattle.

Houston will become his fifth franchise, joining the SuperSonics (who then became the Oklahoma City Thunder), Golden State, Brooklyn and Phoenix. Durant won his two titles with the Warriors in 2017 and 2018, and last summer in Paris he became the highest-scoring player in U.S. Olympic basketball history and the first men's player to be part of four gold-medal teams.

Durant is a four-time scoring champion, a two-time Finals MVP and one of eight players in NBA history with more than 30,000 career points, joining the club on Feb. 11.

Durant is under contract next season for roughly \$50 million before becoming a free agent in 2026.

His departure from the Suns was expected and ends a disappointing 2 1/2 years in the desert. Durant never enjoyed consistent team success despite being part of a trio that included star guards Devin Booker and Bradley Beal.

Durant was acquired by the Suns from the Brooklyn Nets in a four-team trade-deadline deal in 2023, just days after new owner Mat Ishbia bought the team for roughly \$4 billion. Phoenix gave up a lot to acquire the then-34-year-old, sending young standouts Mikal Bridges and Cam Johnson, along with four future first-round picks, to Brooklyn.

'How to Train Your Dragon' tops the US box office as 'Elio' marks a new low for Pixar

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Neither Pixar nor zombies were enough to topple "How to Train Your Dragon" from the No. 1 slot at North American box offices over the weekend. The Universal Pictures live-action remake remained the top film, bringing in \$37 million in ticket sales in its second weekend, despite the sizeable new releases of "Elio" and "28 Years Later," according to studio estimates Sunday. "How To Train Your Dragon" has rapidly amassed \$358.2 million worldwide.

Six years after its last entry, the Dean DeBlois-directed "How To Train Your Dragon" has proven a potent revival of the DreamWorks Animation franchise. A sequel is already in the works for the \$150 million production, which remakes the 2010 animated tale about a Viking boy and his dragon.

Pixar's "Elio" had a particularly tough weekend. The Walt Disney Co. animation studio has often launched some of its biggest titles in June, including "Cars," "WALL-E" and "Toy Story 4." But "Elio," a science fiction adventure about a boy who dreams of meeting aliens, notched a modest \$21 million, the lowest opening ever for Pixar.

"This is a weak opening for a new Pixar movie," said David A. Gross, who runs the movie consulting firm FranchiseRe. "These would be solid numbers for another original animation film, but this is Pixar, and by Pixar's remarkable standard, the opening is well below average."

"Elio," originally set for release in early 2024, had a bumpy road to the screen. Adrian Molina — co-director of "Coco" — was replaced mid-production by Domee Shi ("Turning Red") and Madeline Sharafian. Back at Disney's D23 conference in 2022, America Ferrera appeared to announce her role as Elio's mother, but the character doesn't even exist in the revamped film.

Disney and Pixar spent at least \$150 million making "Elio," which didn't fare any better internationally than it did in North America, bringing in just \$14 million from 43 territories. Pixar stumbled coming out of the pandemic before stabilizing performance with 2023's "Elemental" (\$496.4 million worldwide) and 2024's "Inside Out 2" (\$1.7 billion), which was the company's biggest box office hit.

"Elemental" was Pixar's previously lowest earning film, launching with \$29.6 million. It rallied in later weeks to collect nearly half a billion dollars at the box office. The company's first movie, "Toy Story," opened with \$29.1 million in 1995, or \$60 when adjusted for inflation. It remains to be seen whether "Elio's" decent reviews and "A" from CinemaScore audiences can lead it to repeat "Elemental's" trajectory.

With most schools on summer break, the competition for family audiences was stiff. Disney's own "Lilo & Stitch," another live-action remake, continued to pull in young moviegoers. It grossed \$9.7 million in its fifth weekend, bringing its global tally to \$910.3 million. .

"28 Years Later" signaled the return of another, far gorier franchise. Director Danny Boyle reunited with screenwriter Alex Garland to resume their pandemic apocalypse thriller 25 years after "28 Days Later" and 18 years after its sequel, "28 Weeks Later."

The Sony Pictures release opened with \$30 million. That was good enough to give Boyle, the filmmaker of "Slumdog Millionaire" and "Trainspotting," the biggest opening weekend of his career. The film, which cost \$60 million to make, jumps ahead nearly three decades from the outbreak of the so-called rage virus for a coming-of-age story about a 12-year-old (Alfie Williams) venturing out of his family's protected village. Aaron Taylor-Johnson, Jodie Comer and Ralph Fiennes co-star.

Reviews have been good (90% fresh on Rotten Tomatoes) for "28 Years Later," though audience reaction (a "B" CinemaScore) is mixed. Boyle has more plans for the zombie franchise, which will next see the release of "28 Years Later: The Bone Temple" next year from director Nia DaCosta.

"28 Years Later" added another \$30 million in 59 overseas markets.

After its strong start last weekend with \$12 million, A24's "Materialists" held well with \$5.8 million in its second weekend. The romantic drama by writer-director Celine Song and starring Dakota Johnson, Pedro Pascal and Chris Evans has collected \$24 million so far.

Next weekend should also be a competitive one in movie theaters, with both "F1," from Apple and Warner

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 45 of 52

Bros., and Universal's "Megan 2.0" launching in cinemas.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

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

1. "How to Train Your Dragon," \$37 million.
2. "28 Years Later," \$30 million.
3. "Elio," \$21 million.
4. "Lilo & Stitch," \$9.7 million.
5. "Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning," \$6.6 million.
6. "Materialists," \$5.8 million.
7. "Ballerina," \$4.5 million.
8. "Karate Kid: Legends," \$2.4 million.
9. "Final Destination: Bloodlines," \$1.9 million.
10. "Kuberaa," \$1.7 million.

Here's how Iran could retaliate after US strikes on its nuclear program

By JOSEPH KRAUSS and JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

Iran has spent decades building multi-tiered military capabilities at home and across the region that were at least partly aimed at deterring the United States from attacking it. By entering Israel's war, the U.S. may have removed the last rationale for holding them in reserve.

That could mean a wave of attacks on U.S. forces in the Middle East, an attempt to close a key bottle-neck for global oil supplies or a dash to develop a nuclear weapon with what remains of Iran's disputed program after American strikes on three key sites.

A decision to retaliate against the U.S. and its regional allies would give Iran a far larger target bank and one that is much closer than Israel, allowing it to potentially use its missiles and drones to greater effect. The U.S. and Israel have far superior capabilities, but those haven't always proven decisive in America's recent history of military interventions in the region.

Ever since Israel started the war with a surprise bombardment of Iran's military and nuclear sites on June 13, Iranian officials from the supreme leader on down have warned the U.S. to stay out, saying it would have dire consequences for the entire region.

It should soon be clear whether those were empty threats or a grim forecast.

Here's a look at what Iran's next move might be.

Targeting the Strait of Hormuz

The Strait of Hormuz is the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, through which some 20% of all oil traded globally passes, and at its narrowest point it is just 33 kilometers (21 miles) wide. Any disruption there could send oil prices soaring worldwide and hit American pocketbooks.

Iran boasts a fleet of fast-attack boats and thousands of naval mines that could potentially make the strait impassable, at least for a time. It could also fire missiles from its long Persian Gulf shore, as its allies, Yemen's Houthi rebels, have done in the Red Sea.

The U.S., with its 5th Fleet stationed in nearby Bahrain, has long pledged to uphold freedom of navigation in the strait and would respond with far superior forces. But even a relatively brief firefight could paralyze shipping traffic and spook investors, causing oil prices to spike and generating international pressure for a ceasefire.

Attacking US bases and allies in the region

The U.S. has tens of thousands of troops stationed in the region, including at permanent bases in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, Arab Gulf countries just across the Persian Gulf from Iran — and much closer than Israel.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 46 of 52

Those bases boast the same kinds of sophisticated air defenses as Israel, but would have much less warning time before waves of missiles or swarms of armed drones. And even Israel, which is several hundred kilometers (miles) further away, has been unable to stop all of the incoming fire.

Iran could also choose to attack key oil and gas facilities in those countries with the goal of exacting a higher price for U.S. involvement in the war. A drone attack on two major oil sites in Saudi Arabia in 2019 — claimed by the Houthis but widely blamed on Iran — briefly cut the kingdom's oil production in half.

Activating regional allies

Iran's so-called Axis of Resistance — a network of militant groups across the Middle East, is a shadow of what it was before the war ignited by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel out of the Gaza Strip — but it still has some formidable capabilities.

Israel's 20-month war in Gaza has severely diminished the Palestinian Hamas and Islamic Jihad groups, and Israel mauled Lebanon's Hezbollah last fall, killing most of its top leadership and devastating much of southern Lebanon, making its involvement unlikely.

But Iran could still call on the Houthis, who had threatened to resume their attacks in the Red Sea if the U.S. entered the war, and allied militias in Iraq. Both have drone and missile capabilities that would allow them to target the United States and its allies.

Iran could also seek to respond through militant attacks further afield, as it is widely accused of doing in the 1990s with an attack on a Jewish community center in Argentina that was blamed on Tehran and Hezbollah.

A sprint toward nuclear arms

It could be days or weeks before the full impact of the U.S. strikes on Iran's nuclear sites is known.

But experts have long warned that even joint U.S. and Israeli strikes would only delay Iran's ability to develop a weapon, not eliminate it. That's because Iran has dispersed its program across the country to several sites, including hardened, underground facilities.

Iran would likely struggle to repair or reconstitute its nuclear program while Israeli and U.S. warplanes are circling overhead. But it could still decide to fully end its cooperation with the International Atomic Energy Agency and abandon the the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty.

North Korea announced its withdrawal from the treaty in 2003 and tested a nuclear weapon three years later, but it had the freedom to develop its program without punishing airstrikes.

Iran insists its program is peaceful, though it is the only non-nuclear-armed state to enrich uranium up to 60%, a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. U.S. intelligence agencies and the IAEA assess Iran hasn't had an organized military nuclear program since 2003.

Israel is widely believed to be the only nuclear-armed state in the Middle East but does not acknowledge having such weapons.

Iranian missile fired after US strikes causes heavy damage but few injuries in Tel Aviv

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Hours after the U.S. struck three Iranian nuclear sites, Iran launched more than 40 missiles toward Israel on Sunday, wounding 23 people and destroying apartment buildings and homes in three cities.

At an impact site in Tel Aviv, the blast had sheared off the face of a multistory residential building and damaged several others — including a nursing home — in a radius of hundreds of meters (yards). But few people were wounded, as many residents had been evacuated and others made it to bomb shelters.

Deputy Mayor Haim Goren, who assisted at the scene, said it was nevertheless "miraculous" that more people were not hurt. Relatives and health aides helped residents — many with wheelchairs or walkers — to leave the nursing home, where windows were blown out up to the top on the 11th floor.

"It's like a typhoon came through my apartment," said Ofer Berger, who lives near the impact site on

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 47 of 52

the seventh floor of a high-rise. "All of the apartments in this area are destroyed," he said.

Emergency services said one person was moderately wounded by shrapnel in Sunday's missile barrage while dozens of others were lightly injured.

Berger said he hoped the war with Iran would end soon. "Most of the tit-for-tat strikes like this end with a lot of tears," he said.

Residents sat with their pets and suitcases outside the damaged buildings. One person sat next to a shopping cart filled with Buddha statues and a child's bicycle.

Families gathered what they could and stepped gingerly around piles of glass and twisted metal. Dozens of volunteers from an organization called "One Heart" showed up to help residents salvage their belongings.

Strikes have displaced more than 9,000 people from their homes since the start of the war, according to the Israeli military. Missiles have damaged 240 residential buildings, including more than 2,000 individual apartments.

Mira Goshen, 79, said her entire apartment was destroyed.

"My mamad was shaking like a leaf, and I thought it was the end of the world," Goshen said, referring to the reinforced safe rooms that are required in all new construction. She said the shelter had saved her life. In some areas where entire homes were flattened, the reinforced rooms stood intact.

Goshen's pet bird, Chica, survived an 11-story drop when her cage was knocked off the balcony by the explosion. A rescuer retrieved her, and she was trembling and burrowing into Goshen's neck hours later as Goshen spoke with neighbors and authorities outside her building.

Hours later, municipality workers worked to sweep up the the shattered glass and remove debris, while others handed out sandwiches and water at an aid station.

Several businesses on a nearby street had their windows blown out, and the stores were littered with broken glass amid baked goods, children's clothes and books. Workers at a supermarket stacked crates of fruit in front of a shattered front window and opened for shoppers, who packed the aisles.

Residents appeared calm in the aftermath of Sunday's strike, but Goren said the nightly barrages, the frantic running to shelters and the close confines inside them are taking a toll.

"There's a lot of stress and pressure building, lots of nerves," the deputy mayor said. Mutual aid groups are working around the clock to match families in need with shelters and support, and the municipality is working to convert parking garages, bus stations and train stations to temporary shelters.

Goshen said she was more focused on where she would go next than on the U.S. strikes on Iran and their aftermath.

"I'm far away from politics, and what I think, it doesn't matter actually, because they don't listen to ordinary people," she said.

Takeaways from AP report on Wagner allegedly committing war crimes by promoting atrocities

By MONIKA PRONCZUK and SAM MEDNICK Associated Press

DAKAR, Senegal (AP) — Editor's Note: This story contains graphic images and descriptions of atrocities.

The International Criminal Court has been asked to review a confidential legal brief arguing that the Russia-linked Wagner Group has committed war crimes by spreading images of apparent atrocities in West Africa on social media, including ones alluding to cannibalism. The brief was seen exclusively by The Associated Press.

Violence in the Sahel, an arid belt of land south of the Sahara Desert, has reached record levels as military governments battle extremist groups linked to al-Qaida and the Islamic State group. Last year, it became the deadliest place on earth for extremism, with half of the world's nearly 8,000 victims killed across the territory, according to yearly data compiled by the Institute for Economics and Peace.

While the United States and other Western powers withdraw from the region, Russia has taken advantage, expanding military cooperation with several African nations via Wagner, the private security company closely linked to Russia's intelligence and military.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 48 of 52

Observers say the new approach has led to the kind of atrocities and dehumanization not seen in the region for decades. Social media offers a window into the alleged horrors that often occur in remote areas with little or no oversight from governments or outside observers.

Experts say the images, while difficult to verify, could serve as evidence of war crimes. The confidential brief to the ICC goes further, arguing that the act of circulating the images on social media could constitute a war crime, too. It is the first such argument made to the international court.

Here are some takeaways from AP's report on the issue.

Videos that humiliate and dehumanize

The brief, along with AP reporting, shows that a network of social media channels, likely administered by current or former Wagner members, has reposted content that the channels say is from Wagner fighters. They promote videos and photos appearing to show abuses by armed, uniformed men, often accompanied by mocking or dehumanizing language.

In the videos, men in military uniform are shown butchering corpses of what appear to be civilians with machetes, hacking out organs and posing with severed limbs. One fighter says he is about to eat someone's liver. Another says he is trying to remove their heart.

While administrators of the channels are anonymous, open source analysts believe they are current or former Wagner fighters based on the content as well as graphics used, including in some cases Wagner's logo.

AP analysis of the videos confirms the body parts shown are genuine, as well as the military uniforms.

The videos and photos, in a mix of French and local languages, aim to humiliate and threaten those considered the enemies of Wagner and its local military allies, along with civilian populations whose youth face pressure to join extremist groups. But experts say it often has the opposite effect, prompting reprisal attacks and recruitment into the ranks of jihadis.

The governments of Mali and Burkina Faso earlier condemned the graphic videos and said they would look into them, but it is not clear whether anyone in them has been identified.

Russia's presence continues

The U.S. State Department has described Wagner, a network of mercenaries and businesses, as "a transnational criminal organization." Wagner did not respond to AP questions about the videos.

Since Wagner leader Yevgeny Prigozhin was killed in a plane crash in 2023, Moscow has been developing a new organization, the Africa Corps, as a rival force under direct command of Russian authorities.

Earlier this month, Wagner announced its withdrawal from Mali, declaring "mission accomplished" in a Telegram post. In a separate Telegram post, Africa Corps said it is staying.

In Mali, about 2,000 Russian mercenaries are fighting alongside the country's armed forces, according to U.S. officials. It is unclear how many have been with Wagner or are with the Africa Corps.

Outrages on personal dignity

Under the Rome Statute that created the ICC, the violation of personal dignity, mainly through humiliating and degrading treatment, constitutes a war crime. Legal experts from UC Berkeley, who submitted the brief to the ICC last year, argue that such treatment could include Wagner's alleged weaponization of social media.

The brief was submitted to the ICC before the U.S. sanctioned the court earlier this year. It asks the ICC to investigate individuals with Wagner and the governments of Mali and Russia for alleged abuses in northern and central Mali between December 2021 and July 2024, including extrajudicial killings, torture, mutilation and cannibalism.

It also asks the court to investigate crimes "committed through the internet, which are inextricably linked to the physical crimes and add a new dimension of harm to an extended group of victims."

The ICC told the AP it could not comment on the brief but said it was aware of "various reports of alleged massive human rights violations in other parts of Mali," adding that it "follows closely the situation."

Its Office of the Prosecutor said investigations have focused on alleged war crimes committed since January 2012, when insurgents seized communities in Mali's northern regions of Gao, Kidal and Timbuktu.

Lack of accountability

Human Rights Watch has documented atrocities committed in Mali by Wagner and other armed groups. It says accountability for alleged abuses has been minimal, with the military government reluctant to investigate its armed forces and Russian mercenaries.

It has become difficult to obtain detailed information on alleged abuses because of the Malian government's "relentless assault against the political opposition, civil society groups, the media and peaceful dissent," said Ilaria Allegrozzi, the group's Sahel researcher. That has worsened after a U.N. peacekeeping mission withdrew from Mali in December 2023 at the government's request.

That void, she said, "has eased the way for further atrocities."

What to know about the Supreme Court ruling 10 years ago that legalized same-sex marriage in the US

By JULIE CARR SMYTH Associated Press

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A landmark U.S. Supreme Court ruling 10 years ago this month, on June 26, 2015, legalized same-sex marriage across the U.S.

The Obergefell v. Hodges decision followed years of national wrangling over the issue, during which some states moved to protect domestic partnerships or civil unions for same-sex partners and others declared marriage could exist only between one man and one woman.

In plaintiff James Obergefell's home state of Ohio, voters had overwhelmingly approved such an amendment in 2004 — effectively mirroring the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which denied federal recognition of same-sex couples. That laid the political groundwork for the legal challenge that bears his name.

Here's what you need to know about the lawsuit, the people involved and the 2015 ruling's immediate and longer term effects:

Who are James Obergefell and Rick Hodges?

Obergefell and John Arthur, who brought the initial legal action, were long-time partners living in Cincinnati. They had been together for nearly two decades when Arthur was diagnosed with ALS, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, in 2011. Obergefell became Arthur's caregiver as the incurable condition ravaged his health over time.

When in 2013 the Supreme Court struck down the federal Defense of Marriage Act, which had denied federal recognition of same-sex marriages, the pair acted quickly to get married. Their union was not allowed in Ohio, so they boarded a plane to Maryland and, because of Arthur's fragile health, married on the tarmac.

It was when they learned their union would not be listed on Arthur's death certificate that the legal battle began. They went to court seeking recognition of their marriage on the document and their request was granted by a court. Ohio appealed and the case began its way up the ladder to the nation's high court.

A Democrat, Obergefell made an unsuccessful run for the Ohio House in 2022.

Rick Hodges, a Republican, was director of the Ohio Department of Health from August 2014 to 2017. The department handles death certificates in the state. Before being appointed by then-Gov. John Kasich, Hodges served five years in the Ohio House. Acquainted through the court case, he and Obergefell have become friends.

What were the legal arguments?

The lawsuit eventually titled Obergefell v. Hodges argued that marriage is guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution's Fourteenth Amendment, specifically the due process and equal protection clauses.

The litigation consolidated several lawsuits brought by same-sex couples in Ohio, Kentucky, Michigan and Tennessee who had been denied marriage licenses or recognition for their out-of-state marriages and whose cases had resulted in conflicting opinions in federal circuit courts.

In a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled the right to marry is fundamental, calling it "inherent in the liberty of the person," and therefore protected by the Constitution. The ruling effectively nullified state-level bans on same-sex marriages, as well as laws declining to recognize same-sex marriages performed

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 50 of 52

in other jurisdictions.

The custody, property, tax, insurance and business implications of the decision have also had sweeping impacts on other areas of law.

How did the country react to the decision?

Same-sex marriages surged in the immediate wake of the Obergefell decision, as dating couples and those already living as domestic partners flocked to courthouses and those houses of worship that welcomed them to legalize their unions. Over the ensuing decade, the number of married same-sex couples has more than doubled to an estimated 823,000, according to June data compiled by the Williams Institute at the University of California Los Angeles School of Law.

Not all Americans supported the change. Standing as a national symbol of opponents was Kim Davis, a then-clerk in Rowan County, Kentucky, who refused to issue marriage licenses on religious grounds. She was briefly jailed, touching off weeks of protests as gay marriage foes around the country praised her defiance.

Davis, a Republican, lost her bid for reelection in 2018. She was ordered to pay thousands in attorney fees incurred by a couple unable to get a license from her office. She has appealed in July 2024 in a challenge that seeks to overturn Obergefell.

As he reflects of the decision's 10th anniversary, Obergefell has worried aloud about the state of LGBTQ+ rights in the country and the possibility that a case could reach the Supreme Court that might overturn the decision bearing his name.

Eight states have introduced resolutions this year urging a reversal and the Southern Baptist Convention voted overwhelmingly at its meeting in Dallas earlier this month in favor of banning gay marriage and seeing the Obergefell decision overturned. Meanwhile, more than a dozen states have moved to strengthen legal protections for same-sex married couples in case Obergefell is ever overturned.

In 2025, about 7 in 10 Americans — 68% — said marriages between same-sex couples should be recognized by the law as valid, up from 60% in May 2015.

Israel recovers the remains of 3 more hostages from Gaza

By TIA GOLDENBERG and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — The Israeli military said Sunday that it has recovered the remains of three hostages held in the Gaza Strip. At least four Palestinians were killed in an Israeli airstrike and 22 wounded while waiting for humanitarian aid, according to a local hospital.

The military identified the remains as those of Yonatan Samerano, 21; Ofra Keidar, 70; and Shay Levinson, 19. All three were killed during Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack into Israel that ignited the ongoing war. The militant group is still holding 50 hostages, less than half of them believed to be alive.

The military did not provide any details about the recovery operation, and it was unclear if the airstrike was related to it.

"The campaign to return the hostages continues consistently and is happening alongside the campaign against Iran," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said in a statement.

Kobi Samerano said in a Facebook post that his son's remains were returned on what would have been Yonatan's 23rd birthday.

War in Gaza rages on as new front opens with Iran

Hamas-led militants killed some 1,200 people, mostly civilians, and abducted 251 people in the Oct. 7 attack. More than half the hostages have been returned in ceasefire agreements or other deals, eight have been rescued alive and Israeli forces have recovered dozens of bodies.

Israel's retaliatory offensive has killed over 55,000 Palestinians, according to Gaza's Health Ministry, which has said that women and children make up more than half of the dead. It does not distinguish between civilians and combatants.

Four people were killed on Sunday in an airstrike in the built-up Nuseirat refugee camp in central Gaza,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 51 of 52

according to Al-Awda Hospital, where the bodies were brought. It said another 22 people were wounded while waiting for aid trucks.

Palestinian witnesses and health officials say Israeli forces have repeatedly opened fire on crowds seeking desperately needed food, killing hundreds of people in recent weeks. The military says it has fired warning shots at people it said approached its forces in a suspicious manner.

Separately, World Central Kitchen, the charity run by celebrity chef José Andrés said it had resumed the distribution of hot meals in Gaza for the first time in six weeks after shutting down because of Israel's blockade, which was loosened last month amid fears of famine.

Hostage families call for their release

The Oct. 7 attack and Israel's offensive ignited a chain of events leading to Israel's surprise attack on Iran last week. The United States entered the war overnight with attacks on three Iranian nuclear sites.

The Hostages Families Forum, the main organization representing families of the hostages, has repeatedly called for a deal to release the remaining captives.

"Particularly against the backdrop of current military developments and the significant achievements in Iran, we want to emphasize that bringing back the remaining 50 hostages is the key to achieving any sort of victory," it said in a statement Sunday.

Hamas has said it will only release the remaining hostages in return for more Palestinian prisoners, a lasting ceasefire and an Israeli withdrawal from Gaza.

Netanyahu has rejected those terms, saying Israel will continue the war until all the hostages are returned and Hamas is defeated or disarmed and sent into exile. Even then, he has said Israel will maintain lasting control over Gaza and facilitate what he refers to as the voluntary emigration of much of its population, plans the Palestinians and others view as forcible expulsion.

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have been trying to broker a new ceasefire and hostage release after Israel ended a truce in March with a surprise wave of airstrikes. Those talks appear to have made little progress as Israel has expanded its air and ground offensive.

Today in History: June 23, Title IX signed into law

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, June 23, the 174th day of 2025. There are 191 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On June 23, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law the Education Amendments of 1972, including Title IX, which barred discrimination on the basis of sex for "any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance."

Also on this date:

In 1888, abolitionist Frederick Douglass received one vote from the Kentucky delegation at the Republican convention in Chicago, making him the first Black candidate to have his name placed in nomination for U.S. president.

In 1931, aviators Wiley Post and Harold Gatty took off from Roosevelt Field in New York on an around-the-world flight that lasted eight days and 15 hours.

In 1947, the Senate joined the House in overriding President Harry S. Truman's veto of the Taft-Hartley Act, designed to limit the power of organized labor.

In 1956, Gamal Abdel Nasser was elected president of Egypt.

In 1969, Warren E. Burger was sworn in as chief justice of the United States by his predecessor, Earl Warren.

In 1985, all 329 people on an Air India Boeing 747 were killed when it crashed into the Atlantic Ocean near Ireland after a bomb planted by Sikh separatists exploded onboard.

In 1992, mob boss John Gotti was sentenced to life after being found guilty of murder, racketeering and other charges. (Gotti would die in prison in 2002.)

In 2016, Britain voted to leave the European Union after a bitterly divisive referendum campaign, top-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, June 23, 2025 ~ Vol. 32 - No. 363 ~ 52 of 52

pling Prime Minister David Cameron, who led the drive to remain in the bloc.

In 2020, the Louisville police department fired an officer involved in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor more than three months earlier, saying Brett Hankison showed "extreme indifference to the value of human life" when he fired 10 rounds into her apartment.

In 2022, in a major expansion of gun rights, the Supreme Court said Americans have a right to carry firearms in public for self-defense.

Today's Birthdays: Author Richard Bach is 89. Computer scientist Vint Cerf is 82. Actor Bryan Brown is 78. Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas is 77. Musician Glenn Danzig is 70. Former "American Idol" judge Randy Jackson is 69. Actor Frances McDormand is 68. Golf Hall of Famer Colin Montgomerie is 62. Actor Selma Blair is 53. French soccer manager and former player Zinedine Zidane is 53. Actor Joel Edgerton is 51. Singer-songwriter Jason Mraz is 48. Rapper Memphis Bleek is 47. Football Hall of Famer LaDainian Tomlinson is 46. Actor Melissa Rauch ("The Big Bang Theory") is 45.