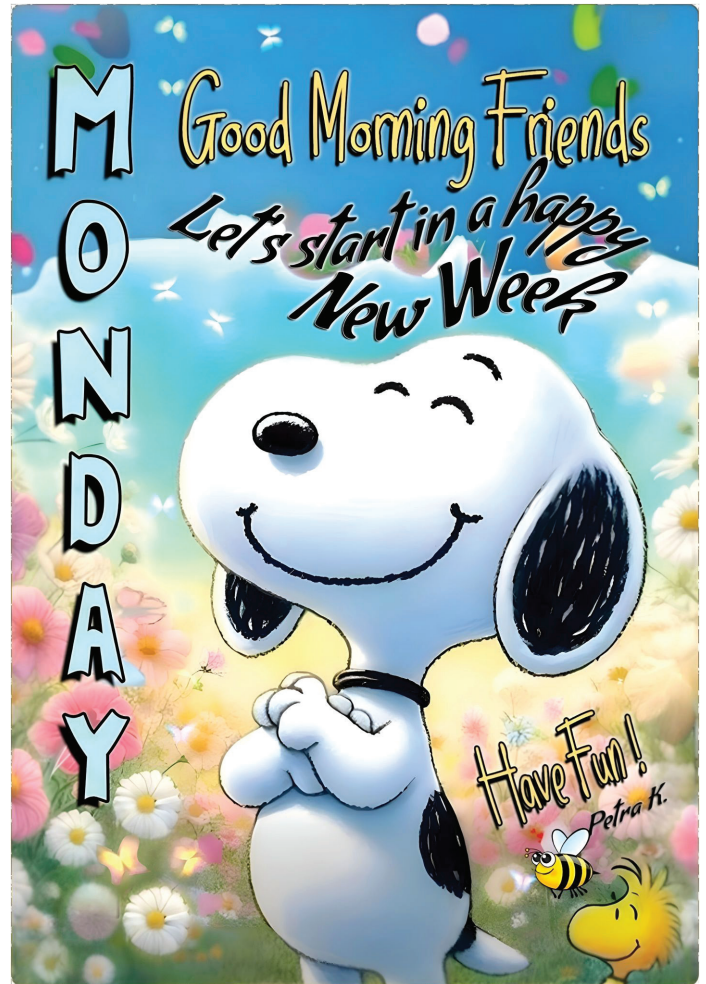


# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 1 of 55

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Baby-sitter Ad](#)
- [4- Graduation Cards Ad](#)
- [5- Lawrence County Fatal Crash](#)
- [6- GDI Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [7- Community Coach Column](#)
- [8- Prairie Doc Perspective](#)
- [9- Card Shower for Betty Strom](#)
- [9- Prairie Mixed Bowling](#)
- [10- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [11- EarthTalk: Food Prices](#)
- [12- SD SearchLight: Closed-door Republican caucus meetings are an insult to government transparency](#)
- [13- SD SearchLight: Lawmakers seek a share of \\$31 million in unallocated funds](#)
- [15- Weather Pages](#)
- [19- Daily Devotional](#)
- [20- Subscription Form](#)
- [21- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [22- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Monday, March 2

- Senior Menu: Sloopy joes, roasted potatoes, winter blend, fruit.
- School Breakfast: Stuffed bagels.
- School Lunch: Pasta bake, corn.
- Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.
- 1st Grade Boys Basketball Practice, 4:30 p.m., elementary gym
- HS Baseball Practice, 6 p.m., HS Gym
- Math and Reading Family Game Night, 5 p.m., elementary school.
- 2nd Grade BB vs. Webster, 6 p.m., Arena

## Tuesday, March 3

- Senior Menu: Kielbasa, mac and cheese, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.
- School Breakfast: Breakfast sliders.
- School Lunch: Chef salad.
- St. John's Lutheran: Ladies Aid LWML, 1 p.m.
- United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.
- City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.
- HS Baseball Practice, 6 p.m., HS Gym
- Region 1A Boys Basketball. Groton does not play in the first round.
- Pickleball, 6 p.m., Elementary Gym
- Biogirls, 3:45 p.m., elementary gym

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 2 of 55

# 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.**

## **Khamenei Killed in Strikes**

Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei was killed over the weekend, targeted as part of a wide-ranging surprise attack by the US and Israel across the country. The head of Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps was also believed killed alongside dozens of other senior leaders.

Khamenei, an 86-year-old hardline cleric, had ruled Iran since 1989, building the country into a regional economic and military power. Despite his age, he had not publicly revealed a succession plan, with the country currently led by an interim three-person council.

Framed as a preemptive strike, more than 1,000 targets have been hit as of this writing. Iranian state media said more than 200 people had been killed, including 165 at a girls school adjacent to a naval base in the country's south.

The attack followed weeks of talks over Iran's nuclear program and a buildup of US forces in the region. It also coincided with a rare meeting of top officials—including Khamenei—in the middle of Tehran.

Iran launched a series of retaliatory strikes across the region yesterday, aimed at various targets in Israel, Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, and elsewhere. Three US service members were killed during operations (the cause was not immediately clear).

The conflict comes after widespread antigovernment demonstrations by Iranians in December. At least 7,000 civilians were killed in the resulting crackdown, though international groups say the toll may be significantly higher.

## **Austin Shooting**

A gunman killed at least two people and wounded 14 others when he opened fire outside a bar in Austin, Texas, early yesterday. The FBI said there were possible indications of terrorism; a motive has not been publicly identified as of this writing. One law enforcement official told The Associated Press the suspect was a 53-year-old naturalized US citizen born in Senegal wearing a sweatshirt that said "Property of Allah" and a T-shirt with an Iranian flag.

Authorities say the shooter drove around the neighborhood multiple times in an SUV before firing out the window at people outside Buford's Bar on Austin's West Sixth Street. He then parked the car nearby and began shooting at pedestrians. Police quickly intervened, killing the suspect. Medics were on the scene within 57 seconds of receiving the first 911 call at 1:59 am. Two weapons were used: a pistol and a rifle.

## **Lacks Lawsuit Settled**

Pharmaceutical giant Novartis reached a settlement with the estate of Henrietta Lacks last week, offering an undisclosed sum for decades of biomedical research and development based on the HeLa cell line.

In 1951, Lacks, then a 31-year-old Black woman, was undergoing surgery for cervical cancer at the then-segregated Johns Hopkins Hospital when a sample of tumor cells was biopsied without her consent—a common practice at the time. In the lab, the cells continued to grow and divide, doubling in number roughly every 24 hours and creating the first "immortal" human cell line. Trillions of HeLa cells have been produced over seven decades, used in research enabling groundbreaking medical advances, including vaccine development, cancer treatments, in vitro fertilization, AIDS research, and more.

Despite her (nonconsensual) contributions to medical science, Lacks remained relatively unknown until the 2010 book "The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks."

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 3 of 55

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

"One Battle After Another" wins top prize at the 2026 Producers Guild Awards; see full list of winners.

"Sinners" wins top prizes at the Actor Awards, formerly SAG Awards; see full list.

Olivia Dean sweeps top prizes at this year's Brit Awards, including artist of the year, song of the year, and album of the year.

"Scream 7" sets franchise record with \$97.2M global opening, best horror opening in Paramount history.

## Science & Technology

North Dakota judge finalizes \$345M ruling against environmental activist group Greenpeace; organization found liable for damages and defamation during 2016-17 protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline .

Stem cell therapy delivered to babies in the womb with spina bifida shows improved outcomes; cells derived from donated placentas were applied during fetal spinal surgery.

Reported US measles cases rise above 1,130 through the first two months of the year, about 50% of all cases reported in 2025; last year was the highest total in more than two decades; see maps and stats.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets close down Friday (S&P 500 -0.4%, Dow -1.1%, Nasdaq -0.9%), driven in part by the collapse of UK mortgage lender Market Financial Solutions.

OpenAI raises an additional \$110B, with funding round led by Amazon, SoftBank, and others at a \$730B premoney valuation.

Anthropic's Claude reportedly used in US strikes in Iran, despite Friday blacklisting by the Trump administration.

Berkshire Hathaway CEO Greg Abel sends first annual shareholder letter after taking over for Warren Buffett, whose letters gained a cult following over five decades.

## Politics & World Affairs

Clashes outside the US Consulate in Pakistan kill at least nine people, leave more than two dozen wounded after Iranian leader Ali Khomeini was killed by US-Israeli strikes.

Afghanistan targets Pakistani jets in Kabul after Pakistan declares open war, launches airstrikes.

Department of Homeland Security taps billions of dollars in FEMA disaster relief funding as standoff over funding enters third week.

Belgium seizes Guinea-flagged oil tanker suspected of being part of Russia's "shadow fleet" in the North Sea with support from the French military

Need a **Babysitter** or **House Cleaner?**

♥ **Babysitting Available!**

**House Cleaning Offered!**

**Text Jeslyn Kosel at (605)-290-7821**

*I'm in Groton but am willing to drive to nearby towns!*

The advertisement features a colorful illustration of a teddy bear, a baby bottle, and a stack of colorful blocks on the left, and a yellow bucket with cleaning supplies on the right. At the bottom, a red car is driving on a road towards a yellow house in a green field.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 4 of 55



## GRADUATION CARDS DESIGNED & PRINTED WHILE YOU WAIT!

Have your graduation cards created at the  
**Groton  
Independent Office**

No ordering online.  
No waiting weeks.  
No shipping delays.

- ✓ Sit down.
- ✓ Help design it.
- ✓ Approve it on the spot.
- ✓ And walk out with your cards in your hands!

★ **ONLY \$50 FOR 100 CARDS** ★



Text Paul at **605-397-7460**  
to set up your appointment today!

*Celebrate your senior. Shop local. Get it done the easy way.*

## Lawrence County Fatal Crash

What: Single vehicle fatal crash  
Where: Interstate 90, exit 10, Spearfish, SD  
When: 8:05 p.m. Saturday, February 28, 2026

Vehicle 1: 2012 Toyota Highlander  
Driver 1: 65-year-old male from Spearfish, SD, fatal injuries  
Seat belt Used: No

Lawrence County, S.D.- A Spearfish man died in a single vehicle crash Saturday evening near exit 10 on Interstate 90.

The name of the person involved has not been released pending notification of family members.

Preliminary crash information indicates the driver of a 2012 Toyota Highlander was traveling west on I-90 and took Exit 10 to the intersection with US 85. The driver continued westbound across US 85, entering the west ditch, vaulted a fence, then went into the Brook View Road ditch where the vehicle overturned and came to rest on its roof. The driver was ejected.

The driver was transported to Spearfish Monument Health where he was pronounced deceased.

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, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 6 of 55

What can **\$20**  
get you?



for  
**SENIOR  
CITIZENS**

*Open 24/7*

**GDI Living**



**Fitness**

or anyone using physical therapy

15 N Main • Ste. 101

**BEST  
RATES  
AROUND!**

### ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP

Student: \$29.82 per month or \$255.60 per year  
Single: \$35.15 per month or \$319.50 per year  
2-Person: \$55.45 per month or \$575.10 per year  
Family: \$67.10 per month or \$702.26 per year

### MONTH-TO-MONTH

Student: \$35.15 per month  
Single: \$40.48 per month  
2-Person: \$59.78 per month  
Family: \$72.43 per month  
Senior/PT: \$20 per month



Call or Text Paul at 605/397-7460  
Call or Text Tina at 605/397-7285

**Same rates for several years!**



**Paula Jensen**  
Senior Vice President



## The Leadership Myth That's Holding Us Back

The Community Coach | Paula Jensen

In small rural communities, leadership matters — but are we unintentionally shrinking our own leadership pool?

We care deeply about who leads. We trust the people who show up, pitch in, and carry history with them. But over time, we've absorbed quiet assumptions about who qualifies as a leader — and those assumptions may be holding us back more than we realize.

We assume leaders must be deeply rooted in the community — born here, raised here, or long-time residents. We assume they need years of experience before they're "ready," must always be available, and should be fluent in budgets, bylaws, and public meetings. We assume stepping into leadership means sacrificing privacy, family time, or even relationships.

If you've ever thought, "That's not for me," you are far from alone.

But here's the truth: real leadership isn't about being perfect — it's about being present. Rural communities aren't built by flawless people. They're built by people who care enough to show up and are willing to learn as they go.

Leadership isn't about having all the answers. It's about asking good questions. It's about listening well. It's about loving your community enough to help steward

its future. Experience helps — absolutely — but commitment, curiosity, and courage matter just as much.

When we widen our understanding of what leadership looks like, something powerful happens. New voices emerge. Younger residents step forward. Newcomers bring fresh energy. Long-time community members share wisdom in new ways. Leadership becomes less about who has always done it, and more about who is willing to try.

Think about the neighbor who quietly organizes freezer meals after a tragedy. Or the parent who always arrives early to set up chairs for the school program. These are the instincts of leaders — even if those people never use the word "leader" to describe themselves.

When we actively and intentionally welcome people — before they have to prove themselves — more potential leaders begin to see their own legitimacy. When we normalize learning on the job and make space for respectful disagreement, leadership feels less risky and more possible.

If you care about your town's future, you are already closer to leadership than you think.

Leading isn't about being perfect, popular, or permanent. It's about being present. And our rural communities need more people who are willing to be present.

Here are three low-risk next steps you can take to move toward leading in your community:

1. Serve on a committee or advisory board. Event-planning committees, housing groups, library boards, parks & recreation boards, and economic development task forces are all great on-ramps.

2. Learn how local government actually works. Sit in on a city council, school board, township, or county commission meeting. No pressure. Just listen.

3. Map your transferable skills. Have you managed a budget? Organized volunteers? Resolved conflict? Run a business? Raised kids? Those are leadership skills.

If you've ever felt frustrated, hopeful, protective, or proud of your community — you already care enough to consider leadership.

You don't have to decide today.

Just take one step.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 8 of 55

## Prairie Doc Perspective

### **Cultivating Trust: A Trauma-Informed Approach to the Therapeutic Alliance**

**By Patti Berg-Poppe, MPT, Ph.D. and Shana Cerny, OTD, OTR/L, BCP**

Health care professionals enter every patient encounter with the goal of helping individuals heal, yet many don't realize how often past adversity shapes the way a person experiences care. Trauma, whether from childhood experiences, medical procedures, accidents, interpersonal harm or environmental conditions, doesn't remain a distant memory. It becomes embedded in the body through biobehavioral adaptations that influence posture, muscle tension, breathing patterns, nervous system sensitivity and low body safety. When we understand that trauma lives not only in stories but also in tissues and reflexes, we begin to see why a trauma-informed approach is essential for building trust.

Trauma and adverse experiences are more common than we may realize. More than two-thirds of the patients that health care providers encounter in practice are likely to have experienced trauma in some form. Trauma-informed care should be a universal precaution, guiding providers to assume that any patient may have a history of adversity, even if it is never disclosed. This mindset shifts the focus from "What's wrong with you?" to "What's happened to you, and how is it affecting your health today?" For clinicians who rely on touch, such as physical and occupational therapists, physicians, nurses and primary care professionals, this awareness is especially important. Touch can be grounding and healing, but it can also activate the sympathetic nervous system, triggering a stress response before a patient has words to explain why.

Trust becomes the foundation of the therapeutic alliance, and trust is built through safety, predictability and respect. Trauma-informed practice encourages providers to slow down, explain what they are doing and invite patients into shared decision-making. Simple actions, such as asking permission before touching, checking in about comfort, offering choices and being transparent about what comes next, signal to the nervous system that the environment is safe. These small shifts can reduce physiological stress responses and create space for true healing.

Research on trauma-informed health care highlights how past adversity can influence patient engagement, adherence and outcomes. When patients feel overwhelmed, misunderstood or rushed, they may appear "non-compliant," when in reality their nervous system is doing its best to protect them. A trauma-informed lens helps clinicians interpret these reactions not as resistance but as communication. It encourages us to look beyond the symptom in front of us and consider the whole person, including their history, their stress load, their strengths and their goals.

Holistic care means recognizing that physical symptoms rarely exist in isolation. Pain, fatigue, dizziness and muscle tension often have emotional and neurological components. When providers acknowledge this mind-body connection, patients feel seen rather than dismissed. They're more likely to share concerns, ask questions and participate actively in their care. This collaboration strengthens the therapeutic alliance, which research consistently links to better health outcomes across disciplines.

Trauma-informed practice is not a specialty; it's a skillset. It requires curiosity, humility and a willingness to adapt. It asks clinicians to be mindful of their tone, body language and pace. It reminds us that healing happens in relationships, and that every interaction, every moment of touch, every explanation, and every pause can either reinforce safety or erode it.

When we approach patients with the assumption that their bodies carry stories we cannot see, we create conditions where trust can grow. And when trust grows, so does the capacity for healing.

Patti Berg-Poppe, MPT, Ph.D., is a physical therapist, professor, and Chair of the Department of Physical Therapy at the University of South Dakota. She has published on trauma-informed care, including work examining how adverse childhood experiences influence patient engagement and how trauma-aware practices can strengthen therapeutic relationships. Her writing and teaching emphasize the importance of trust, safety and respectful communication in all health care interactions. Shana Cerny, OTD, OTR/L, BCP, is an occupational therapist and associate professor in the Department of Occupational Therapy at the University of South Dakota. Her research, service and teaching interests revolve around trauma-informed care, including publication of practice guidelines for trauma-informed occupational therapy, interventions for individuals after exploitation, and the effectiveness of a trauma-informed care curriculum for multi-disciplinary care providers. She is a Trust-Based Relational Intervention® Educator and co-creator of the Child & Adult Advocacy Studies graduate certificate at the University of South Dakota. Follow The Prairie Doc® at [www.prairiedoc.org](http://www.prairiedoc.org), Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Tik Tok. Prairie Doc Programming includes On Call with the Prairie Doc®, a medical Q&A show (most Thursdays at 7pm on SDPB, YouTube and streaming on Facebook), 2 podcasts, and a Radio program (on SDPB, Sundays at 6am and 1pm).

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 9 of 55



## BETTY STROM

*80th Birthday Card Shower*



Help us celebrate this special milestone by showering Betty with birthday cards!

**Send Cards To:**

**Betty Strom**

2904 Douglas Ave • Apt 127  
Yankton, SD 57078

## Groton Prairie Mixed Bowling League Week #15 Results

CHEETAHS WIN the Second Third!

**Team Standings:** Coyotes 4, Foxes 3, Chipmunks 3, Jackelopes 1, Shihtzus 1, Cheetahs 0

**Men's High Games:** Vern Meyers 235, 212, Brad Waage 222, Brad Larson 203

**Women's High Games:** Suzie Easthouse 201, Vicki Walter & Nancy Radke 172, Emily Sternhagen 167

**Men's High Series:** Vern Meyers 640, Brad Waage 585, Austin Schuelke 516

**Women's High Series:** Suzie Easthouse 491, Vicki Walter 470, Nancy Radke 445

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 10 of 55



With the 2025 NFL season officially over, all 32 teams will begin laying the foundation for 2026 and beyond. Some teams have championship aspirations, some teams are hoping to ascend out of the proverbial basement, and some teams will be somewhere between the two. For the Minnesota Vikings, the quest for that ever-elusive Lombardi Trophy begins as it always does, by looking in the rearview mirror.

Today marks the second of four articles that will examine the 2025 roster to reveal which positions and players can be built around, and which need to be upgraded. This week, we finish up the offense with the tight end and offensive line groups.

## Tight Ends

T.J.Hockenson - 51 catches for 438 yards and three touchdowns.

Josh Oliver – 15 catches for 160 yards and four touchdowns.

Ben Sims – three catches for 30 yards.

Ben Yurosek – two catches for 14 yards.

The Vikings had the fourth fewest yards by the tight end position in the NFL last season. T.J. Hockenson is currently the fourth-highest-paid tight end in the NFL, while Josh Oliver comes in at number 20. Something needs to change.

Some people will point out that Hockenson was coming back from injury, which limited his involvement in the beginning of the season, or that the QB position was a mess, which has a direct correlation to the tight end production. Regardless, the Vikings will have to decide if it's worth it to keep two high-priced TEs on the roster.

Luckily, the team has options. They could decide to restructure Hockenson's contract, freeing up cap space. Or they could cut him outright. If he is cut before March 13, that'll free up nearly \$9 million in cap space, or if he's cut with a post-June-1st designation (allowing the team to split his dead cap over two seasons), that will free up \$16 million.

## Offensive Line

An argument could be made that the offensive line is the most important position in football. From protecting the quarterback to opening holes for the running backs, the o-line is the engine that makes the offense go.

The Vikings made significant investments in the offensive line last offseason, bringing in two high-priced free agents (center Ryan Kelly and left guard Will Fries), and using their first-round pick on right guard Donovan Jackson. However, it doesn't matter how good the players are if they can't stay on the field. Will Fries is the only offensive lineman to play in all 17 games last season. Christian Darrisaw missed seven games in 2025, Donovan Jackson missed three, Ryan Kelly missed nine, and Brian O'Neill missed three.

Three o-line positions are set for the upcoming season. Left tackle Christian Darrisaw is one of the best in the league, left guard Donovan Jackson had a solid rookie season, and right guard Will Fries was the team's best (and healthiest) offensive lineman last year.

Two question marks remain. What do the Vikings do with center Ryan Kelly and right tackle Brian O'Neill?

Kelly was a solid player when he was on the field, but he missed significant time in 2025 because of two separate concussions. He will also be 33 years old when the 2026 season starts. If the Vikings cut him, they'd save \$8.75 million.

O'Neill has been one of the most dependable players on the roster since he was drafted in 2018. So the question isn't whether the Vikings should keep him; the question is what price the Vikings are willing to pay for an offensive lineman who is on the wrong side of 30. O'Neill is entering the final year of his contract and has a cap hit of over \$23 million, and if the team cuts him, they can save \$19.5 million. My guess is that the team will either restructure his contract or give him an extension. Both options will free up a significant chunk of the cap space.

## EARTHTALK

### Climate Change Linked To Skyrocketing Food Prices by Marium Zahra

Dear EarthTalk: What is the link between climate-fueled weather extremes and the skyrocketing cost of many foods?

-- M.B., via email

Over the past five years, food prices have increased drastically across the globe. The U.S. alone has seen a 35 percent increase in food costs since 2020. There are many reasons for this, including conflict, greater demand and COVID. Climate-fueled weather extremes have also increased food costs. As climate disasters increase, food systems, especially those serving the poor, are left vulnerable. Many food price spikes across over 18 countries can also be linked to weather disasters like heatwaves and floods. And recent droughts have also caused the price of crop staples to increase worldwide.



**Food costs both in the U.S. and around the world are skyrocketing as a result of climate change wreaking havoc on agriculture.** Photo: Pexels.com.

In April 2024, California and Arizona underwent an 80 percent increase in vegetable prices due to the West African heatwave. In Europe, the price of olive oil increased by 50 percent after extensive droughts. In South Korea, cabbage rose 70 percent following an earlier heatwave. In Mexico, vegetables and fruits spiked almost 20 percent after some of the most severe droughts it faced in the past decade. From Japan to Ghana and the Ivory Coast, food prices are on the rise everywhere due to the rapidly warming planet.

The surge in food prices poses a significant threat to the health of low-income communities in the Global South and beyond. Fast food tends to cost less money, time and effort to consume than healthy produce. In turn, it becomes an attractive option for families that can no longer afford the rising prices of fruits, vegetables, and other healthier food groups. Over time, this lack of a healthy diet can contribute to health complications like malnutrition, Type 2 diabetes and heart disease.

Moreover, as political and social upheavals dominate world affairs, experts say food prices will be affected. Tim Benton, a professor of population ecology at the University of Leeds in England, told CNN in 2025 that "Shortfalls in supply inevitably impact on markets, driving up prices for those people who buy the food. Sadly, this impact on food prices is exacerbated by a tenser, more contested world, where global trade is already under stress from conflict or trade disputes."

Weather and climate shocks are only increasing; researchers calculate that they will cause food prices to increase by .3 percentage points annually in the next 10 years. The rise in inflation serves as a wake-up call to the necessity of sustainably produced food and limiting climate stressors.



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **COMMENTARY**

## **Closed-door Republican caucus meetings are an insult to government transparency**

**by Dana Hess**

The South Dakota Legislature, usually noted for the decorum of its public meetings, punished one of its own last month for being out of order. It's hard for anyone but Republican legislators to know if the punishment fit the crime.

During the House debate on Senate Concurrent Resolution 604, a measure admonishing South Dakotans to pray always and fast in July, Rep. Phil Jensen, a Rapid City Republican, questioned the religious beliefs of some of his House colleagues. For this infraction he was barred from the House Republican caucus for two weeks.

It's difficult for anyone who's not in the Legislature to understand the severity of Jensen's punishment. Each day during the session, Republicans and Democrats in the House and Senate hold caucuses right after lunch to discuss their strategy for the afternoon's floor agenda.

Since the Republican caucuses are closed to the public, there's no way to tell if Jensen is missing out on a valuable debate on the issues of the day or just happy to have some time after lunch to catch up on his reading. Since the caucus is closed to the public, we don't know.

The Republican super-majorities in both chambers have grown so large that factions have emerged within the party. This means that the GOP caucuses have the potential to be the most informative or perhaps the most entertaining meetings of the day.

Jensen is the chairman of a group called the Freedom Caucus. Recent elections have seen an influx of new Republican members in both chambers. Rounding out the enrollment are more traditional Republicans who aren't as great in number as they once were.

Perhaps the caucus discussions are a study in gentility and grace. Maybe they resemble a pro wrestling cage match. We don't know.

For their part, Democrats have much smaller caucuses with just three members in the 35-member Senate and five members in the 70-member House. Democrats keep their caucuses open to the public and also to journalists, but with a caveat. Journalists, it seems, can attend as citizens but any comments made by caucus members would be off the record. That's an odd policy since journalists are the ones who are supposed to provide information to citizens so they won't have to make the trip to Pierre to find out what their government is doing.

The disturbing thing about the GOP caucuses is that their super-majorities in the House and Senate allow them, behind closed doors, to make decisions about how South Dakota will be governed. Sure, it all plays out during the floor session, but the secret nature of the caucus meetings tramples the old-fashioned standard that the public's business should be handled in public.

That standard is exactly what legislators insist on when they make the laws governing how local governments conduct their business. Somehow they can keep a straight face while admonishing city councils and school boards to embrace more transparency, knowing that after lunch they will go into their daily secret meeting.

When lawmakers start to wax poetic, they often refer to the Capitol as the "people's house." Well, it may be the people's house, but the vast majority of people are shut out of the Republican caucuses that

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 13 of 55

take place there. We may not be able to attend the meetings, but we get to pay for the heat, lights and upkeep. We are landlords, denied access to our own property.

Holding the caucuses away from the Capitol complex may seem like a logistical nightmare. However, lawmakers are somehow able to get across town en masse easily enough when a lobbying group is offering a free lunch.

The South Dakota Legislature generally gets high marks for openness and transparency. Every bill, no matter how goofy (see SCR 604) is aired in at least one committee hearing. Citizens have access to all committee meetings and floor votes via South Dakota Public Broadcasting.

That transparency ends when Republicans shut the door for their closed caucuses. The people's business should be conducted in public. Jensen was shut out of the GOP caucus for two weeks. That's nothing. Taxpayers have been shut out for years, with the future of the state being decided in secret.

*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.*

## **Lawmakers seek a share of \$31 million in unallocated funds** **Proposals include money for roads near Air Force base, water projects, grants for nonprofits serving abuse victims**

**BY: MAKENZIE HUBER**

South Dakota lawmakers have whittled down ideas of how to use at least \$31 million in one-time state funding from nearly 30 to under a dozen.

Gov. Larry Rhoden told lawmakers in December that he left \$14.4 million in his recommended budget for them to spend on special projects. Lawmakers learned in February that pot of cash grew by \$16.8 million as updated revenue numbers came in.

Some of the largest special requests from the Legislature include road repair near Ellsworth Air Force Base in western South Dakota, grants to help victims of domestic violence and sexual abuse, and protective gear for volunteer firefighters.

The bills must receive two-thirds majority support from the House and Senate in order to spend the money. The final one-time figure could change as the budget process plays out with two weeks left in this year's legislative session.

### **Senate endorses \$8 million for roads near Ellsworth**

The B-21 Raider stealth bomber will soon call South Dakota home at the Ellsworth Air Force Base near Rapid City. Local roads are stressed by the construction traffic and work underway for projects to accommodate the new planes.

Sen. Helene Duhamel, R-Rapid City, introduced Senate Bill 130, which would transfer \$8 million from the general fund to the South Dakota Ellsworth Development Authority to help restore the roads.

The investment "shows that South Dakota is willing to stand behind this significant federal investment," Duhamel told lawmakers in the Senate on Thursday.

Sen. Taffy Howard, R-Rapid City, also spoke in support of the bill. She said up to 250 double semi trucks drove on roadways "never designed for that volume or weight" during peak construction time. That traffic accelerates degradation of the roads.

"If we fail to act, local communities will shoulder the burden of infrastructure damage caused by a federal mission that benefits our entire state and nation," Howard said.

The bill passed with support from every senator present on Thursday and now heads to the House.

### **'Seed money' for water projects**

A bill introduced by Duhamel would allocate \$3 million from the general fund to a proposed water infrastructure development fund to support the construction, planning and development of water projects in the state. It passed the Senate with a 30-3 vote on Thursday and goes to the House next.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 14 of 55

Duhamel told lawmakers the “seed money” and “savings account for water” would strengthen local systems and reduce long-term costs to taxpayers by avoiding emergency borrowing in times of crisis.

“Clean, dependable water is not optional: It is foundational to agriculture, small towns, schools, hospitals, industry and economic growth. It’s foundational to public health,” Duhamel said.

## Other requests

Senators also passed a bill that would appropriate \$5 million to the state Department of Revenue to deposit into existing rural access infrastructure funds, which help local governments repair and replace critical small bridges and culverts. The bill passed the Senate with a 31-1 vote and will next be considered by the House.

South Dakota representatives supported House Bill 1262 in a 61-5 vote, sending the bill to the Senate. The bill would give the state Department of Education \$2 million to grant to a qualified nonprofit to build a non-residential facility serving students who have behavioral health concerns with school-based, therapeutic services.

Another bill allocating \$5 million to the state Department of Public Safety to offer personal protective equipment grants for volunteer firefighters throughout the state was endorsed by the budget committee and is scheduled to be heard on the Senate floor on Monday. Lawmakers approved similar grant funding four years ago.

Grant funding to nonprofit organizations serving victims of sexual abuse and domestic violence was approved by the Joint Appropriations Committee on Thursday, though with an undetermined amount of funding. The organizations have lost federal funding in recent years and are facing millions of dollars in shortfall, said Rep. Erik Muckey, D-Sioux Falls, who sits on the budget committee.

“If we do not pass this, the devastation to our communities by not having access to these resources would be unimaginable and place a lot of folks in great harm,” Muckey said.

Other general fund appropriation requests still alive include:

House Bill 1244, which allocates \$500,000 toward a program meant to teach life, leadership and educational skills to students facing barriers to graduation, employment or postsecondary education. The funding would be used to expand the program to more schools throughout the state and boost private fundraising for the program; it passed the House on Wednesday with a 51-14 vote and is headed to the Senate.

House Bill 1086, which allocates \$2.7 million to the Department of Corrections to provide a programming grant to support inmates and correctional officers; it will be heard on the House floor on Monday.

House Bill 1202, which allocates an undetermined amount to help Lake Area Technical College to construct a trades center on the Watertown campus. The bill originally requested \$5.2 million; it will be heard on the House floor on Monday.

Senate Bill 220, which allocates \$50,000 to the Department of Corrections to study juvenile corrections and residential facility improvements. The bill failed to get two-thirds majority support in the Senate on Thursday, but the vote was close enough that it could be reconsidered.

Senate Bill 222, which allocates \$10 million to the Department of Agriculture and Natural Resources to provide surface water quality grants. The bill passed the Senate 28-5 this week and is headed to the House.

Education funding bills to boost teacher retention, improve afterschool care for children, establish cardiac emergency plans, address rising costs of utilities and insurance, and create a fund to provide zero interest construction loans for schools were rejected by the Joint Appropriations Committee.

Appropriators also tabled proposals to spend one-time funding on increased benefits for recipients of Temporary Assistance for Needy Families and improve reimbursements for federally qualified health centers, which are public clinics that provide health care to underserved populations. Those bills are dead unless a chamber orders them to the floor.

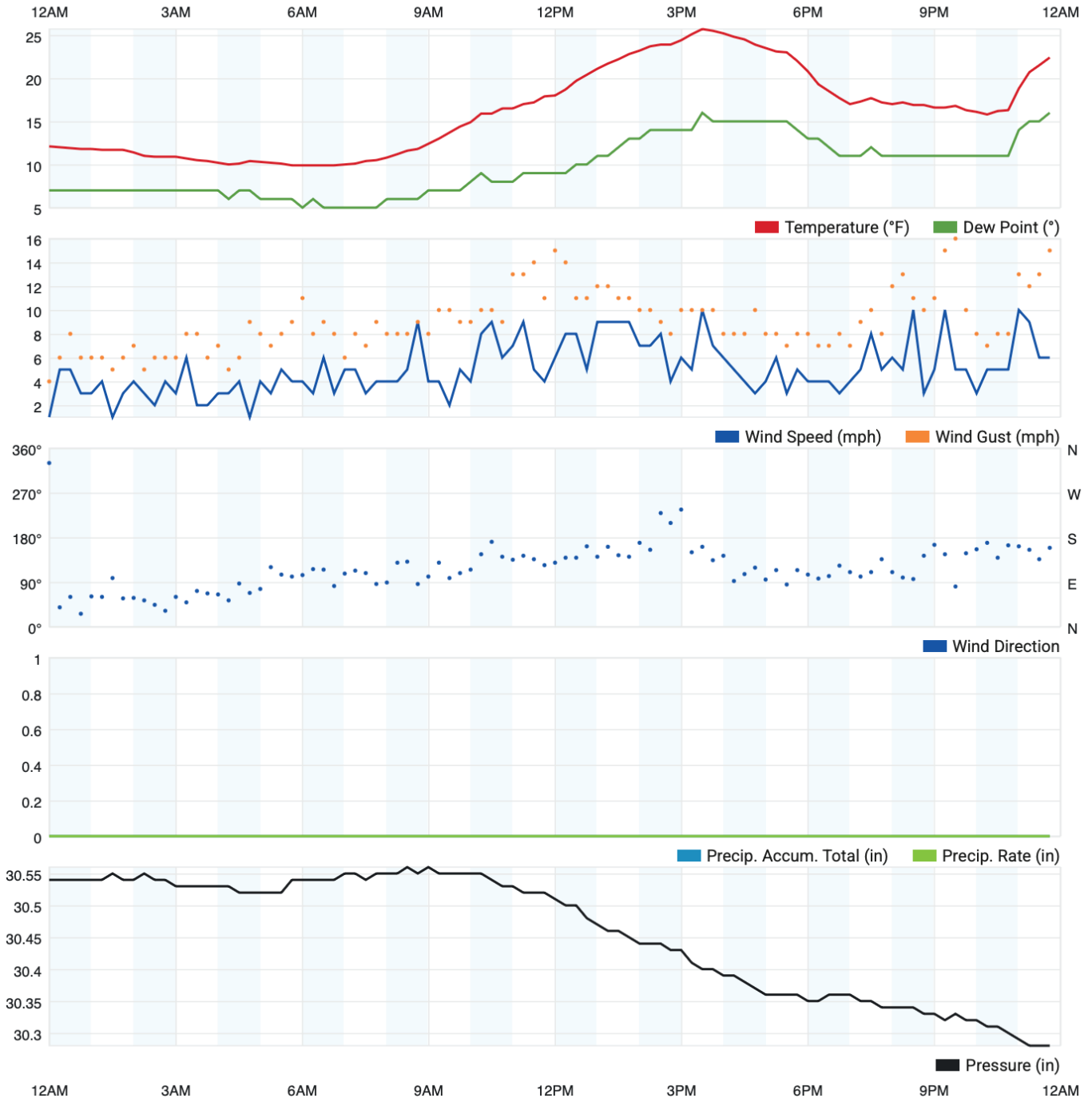
*Makenzie Huber is a lifelong South Dakotan who regularly reports on the intersection of politics and policy with health, education, social services and Indigenous affairs. Her work with South Dakota Searchlight earned her the title of South Dakota’s Outstanding Young Journalist in 2024, and she was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

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 15 of 55

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

March 1, 2026



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 16 of 55

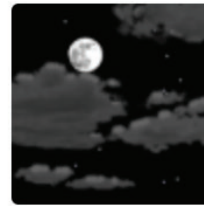
Today

Tonight

Tuesday

Tuesday Night

Wednesday



High: 36 °F

Low: 25 °F

High: 45 °F

Low: 27 °F

High: 55 °F

Partly Sunny

Mostly Cloudy

Mostly Sunny

Partly Cloudy

Sunny

## Monday



Highs

**35 to 54**

Winds: S/SE 15-25 mph

*Tues*

*Wed*



45-55°

50-65°

VRB 5-15 mph S 15-25 mph

[weather.gov/abr](http://weather.gov/abr)

March 2, 2026 3:15 AM

NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE  
OCEANIC AND ATMOSPHERIC ADMINISTRATION



Generally dry weather with above average temperatures expected through mid week. Coldest temperatures will be found in snow covered areas.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 17 of 55

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 26 °F at 3:36 PM

Low Temp: 10 °F at 5:43 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 11:47 AM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 67 in 2021

Record Low: -21 in 1913

Average High: 34

Average Low: 13

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.06

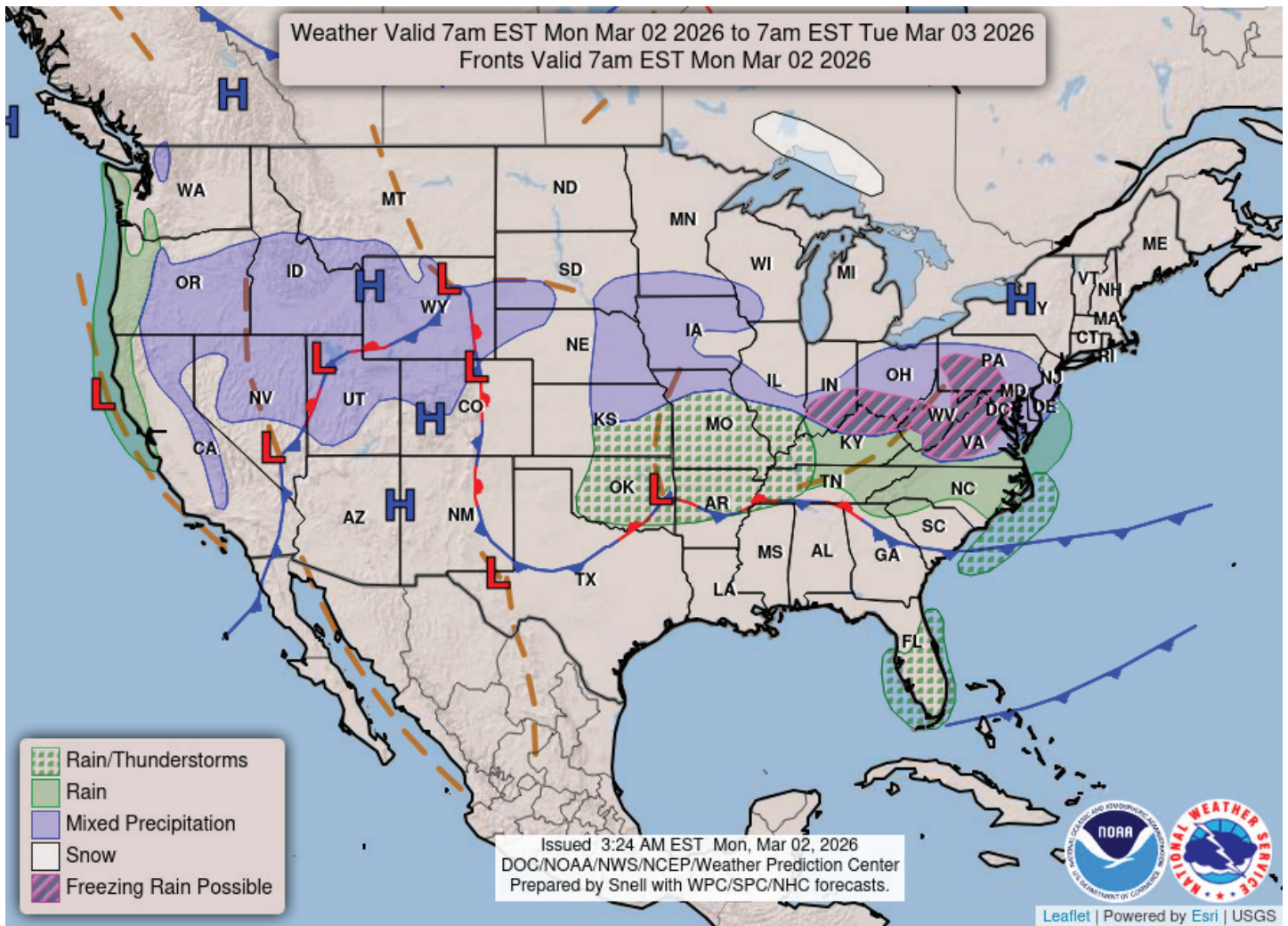
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.00

Average Precip to date: 1.22

Precip Year to Date: 1.33

Sunset Tonight: 6.20 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:07 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 18 of 55

## Today in Weather History

March 2-5th, 1966: The blizzard began late on March 2 in the west and moved very slowly across the state, reaching the extreme east on the 4th and continuing into the 5th. Snow depths ranged from 2 to 4 inches in southeast South Dakota to nearly 3 feet in north-central South Dakota. Winds of 40 to 55 mph with gusts to 70 mph caused widespread blowing snow and near-zero visibilities during the storm. Drifts up to 30 feet were reported in sheltered areas with bare open fields. The storm caused massive livestock losses. Estimated losses were 50,000 cattle, 46,000 sheep, and 1800 hogs. The most substantial losses were in the central and north-central parts of the state. The heavy snow also collapsed many structures. The storm directly caused three deaths due to exposure, and the storm indirectly caused three: 2 due to heart attacks and one by asphyxiation. The blizzard was rated as one of the most severe that has been experienced in South Dakota. Many roads were blocked for days, and many schools and businesses closed.

March 2nd, 2007: An area of low pressure moved slowly northeast across the central and northern plains, bringing widespread snowfall and intense winds. The combination of the falling snow and the existing snow cover resulted in blizzard conditions with visibilities to zero at times. This blizzard event was part of the same upper-level low-pressure trough that brought the heavy snowfall to the area on February 28th. Additional snowfall occurred across the region on March 1st and 2nd as a large area of snow wrapped in from the east. Widespread blizzard conditions developed by noon on March 2nd and continued into the early morning of the 3rd. Snowfall amounts, including the snow on February 28th, ranged from 2 inches to 22 inches across central and northeast South Dakota. The heaviest snowfall amounts were across northeastern South Dakota, where total snow depths were in the 25 to 30-inch range. Northwest winds of 30 to 45 mph with gusts near 60 mph brought zero visibilities across the area, creating large snowdrifts. Schools, businesses, airports, roads, and interstates were closed for up to two days. Travel was not advised across the area. Also, many cars were ditched, along with several accidents. Many travelers were stranded, and several shelters were opened. The Emergency Operations Center was activated in Pierre, and the Governor declared the blizzard area a disaster. Some of the most significant snowfall amounts over the 3 days included 11 inches at Andover, Hosmer, and Redfield, 12 inches at Webster, 13 inches at Miller, 14 inches at Victor, Groton, and Clark, 15 inches at Castlewood and Summit, 16 inches at Watertown and Roy Lake, 19 inches at Sisseton, 20 inches at Milbank, 21 inches at Bryant, and 22 inches at Clear Lake.

1846 — A great storm hit Virginia and the Carolinas. The storm caused half a million dollars damage, and in North Carolina drowned fifty families and a thousand cattle on Notts Island. (David Ludlum)

1927 — Raleigh, NC, was buried under 17.8 inches of snow in 24 hours, a record for that location. Nashville NC received 31 inches of snow. The average snow depth in the state of Carolina was fourteen inches. (The Weather Channel)

1975 — The governor's Tornado in Atlanta did considerable damage to the governor's mansion and surrounding areas resulting in three deaths and 56.5 million dollars damage. (The Weather Channel)

1985 — A massive winter storm struck the Northern Plains Region. The storm produced up to 33 inches of snow in northeastern South Dakota, at Summit and at Milbank, and also produced high winds which whipped the heavy snow into drifts twenty feet high. (Storm Data)

1987 — A storm in the northeastern U.S. produced heavy snow in Maine, with 16 inches reported at West Grand Lake and Guilford. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather in the south central U.S. A tornado at Baton Rouge LA injured two persons, and another tornado caused five million dollars damage at the airport in Lafayette LA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Snow and high winds plagued the western U.S. Up to 16 inches of snow was reported south of Seattle WA, and more than two feet of snow blanketed the Sierra Nevada Range of California. Winds gusted to 89 mph at Hidden Peak UT, and reached 92 mph at Peavine CA. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Mild weather continued across the northern tier of states. Highs of 52 degrees at Saint Johnsbury VT, 63 degrees at Olympia WA, and 64 degrees at Seattle WA were records for the date. (The National Weather Summary)

## The Value of God's Word

**To live fully and joyfully, prioritize spending time with God in His Word.**

2 Timothy 3:14-17: 14 You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned them,

15 and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness;

17 so that the man of God may be adequate, equipped for every good work.

From Genesis to Revelation, Scripture is divinely inspired. In today's passage, we are told that the sacred writings are "profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness; so that [we] may be ... equipped for every good work" (vv. 16-17). No other book holds such value for living.

The Old Testament introduces us to God's nature, ways, and power; it lays the foundation for us to understand the Lord's holiness and humanity's desperate need for a Savior. The New Testament explains that Jesus sacrificially became our "bridge" to the Father (John 14:6). Its writings clarify why we must trust Christ for salvation, how to live as God's children, and what to expect in this life and after death.

We should be excited about the Word of God, which is one of our greatest sources of hope. It is filled from cover to cover with instructions that lead to victory, both during earthly life and after physical death. That's why reserving a portion of each day for Scripture meditation is wise. Whether it's five minutes or an hour, spend time with the Father in the pages of His Word. He wants to help you understand and apply its teachings so you can live joyfully and experience the depths of His great love.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 20 of 55

## The Groton Independent Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition Subscription Form

- All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax
- Black & White ..... \$52.00/year
  - Colored ..... \$80.00/year
  - Colored ..... \$49.00/6 months
  - E-Weekly\* ..... \$35.00/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](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent [www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com) Subscription Form

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

- 1 Month ..... \$16.00
- 3 Months..... \$28.00
- 6 Months..... \$38.00
- 9 Months..... \$52.00
- 12 Months ..... \$60.00

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](https://paypal.me/paperpaul)

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 21 of 55



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:  
03.01.26

10 11 12 35 56 4

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 25 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.27.26

11 18 39 43 67 23

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$473,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 10 Mins 25 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.28.26

3 5 18 43 51 4

All Star Bonus: 3x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$16,580,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 25 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.28.26

10 12 27 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$20,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 16 Hrs 40 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.28.26

10 15 23 28 38 3

TOP PRIZE:  
**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 9 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:  
02.28.26

6 20 35 54 65 10

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:  
**\$249,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 9 Mins 26 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

## News from the **AP** Associated Press

### War widens to include Iranian-backed militias as Israeli and American planes pound Iran

By JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING and SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran and Iranian-backed militias fired missiles at Israel and Arab states, apparently hitting the U.S. Embassy compound in Kuwait, while Israel and the United States pounded targets in Iran as the war expanded on Monday with statements of defiance and increasing casualties.

At least 555 people have been killed in Iran so far by the U.S.-Israeli campaign, the Iranian Red Crescent Society said, and more than 130 cities across the country having come under attack. Eleven people have been killed in Israel, according to authorities there.

In Kuwait City, as fire and smoke rose from inside the U.S. Embassy compound, the country's defense ministry said "several" American warplanes had also crashed in the country. The ministry did not elaborate on what caused the crashes or how many aircraft were involved, but said the pilots were taken to a hospital and were in stable condition.

Iranian state television claimed Iran had targeted a U.S. aircraft, without elaborating. The U.S. military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The embassy compound was hit not long after U.S. issued a warning to Americans there to take cover and for others to stay away. There were no immediate reports on damage or casualties.

Meantime, as the American and Israeli airstrikes continued, top Iranian security official Ali Larijani vowed on X that "we will not negotiate with the United States."

In Iraq, a pro-Iranian militia claimed responsibility for a drone attack targeting U.S. troops at the Baghdad airport, the day after it said it fired at a U.S. base in the city of Irbil in the north, and Cyprus said a drone attack targeted a British base on the Mediterranean island nation.

Israel and the U.S. bombed Iranian missile sites and targeted its navy, claiming to have destroyed its headquarters and multiple warships.

#### Iran expands attacks to regional oil infrastructure

With world markets already rattled by the fighting and oil prices soaring, Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura oil refinery came under attack Monday from drones, with defenses downing the incoming aircraft, a military spokesman made the announcement on the state-run Saudi Press Agency.

Online videos from the site appeared to show thick black smoke rising after the attack. Even successfully intercepted drones cause debris that can spark fires and injure those on the ground.

Ras Tanura, near the city of Dammam in eastern Saudi Arabia, is one of the world's largest with a capacity over half a million barrels of crude oil a day. It was temporarily shut down as a precaution after the attack, Saudi state television reported.

And Oman said a bomb-carrying drone boat exploded against Marshall Islands-flagged oil tanker in the Gulf of Oman on Monday, off the coast of the sultanate's capital of Muskat, killing one mariner on board. The state-run Oman News Agency identified the vessel as the MKD VYOM and said the dead crew member was from India.

Earlier in the day, debris fell on Kuwait's Ahmadi oil refinery, injuring two workers, after drones were shot down, the state-run KUNA news agency reported.

Iran's decision to expand its attacks to major regional oil infrastructure adds a new element to the war gripping the Middle East, directly targeting the lifeblood of the area's economy.

"The attack on Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura refinery marks a significant escalation, with Gulf energy infrastructure now squarely in Iran's sights," said Torbjorn Soltvedt, an analyst at the risk intelligence company Verisk Maplecroft.

"An extended period of uncertainty lies ahead as Iran seeks to impose a heavy economic cost by putting tankers, regional energy infrastructure, trade routes and U.S. security partners in the crosshairs," he added.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 23 of 55

Iran has also threatened ships in the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf through which a fifth of all oil traded passes. Several ships have been attacked as well there.

Sascha Bruchmann, a defense analyst with the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Bahrain, told The Associated Press that Iran's goal in hitting energy infrastructure is to "cause global backlash and impose costs" on the U.S. president.

So far, however, "this is not the wholesome destruction of critical infrastructure the Iranian regime seeks," Bruchmann said.

Meanwhile, Iran's Ambassador to the U.N. nuclear watchdog, the International Atomic Energy Agency, Reza Najafi, told reporters that the U.S.-Israeli airstrikes had targeted Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment site on Sunday.

"Again they attacked Iran's peaceful safeguarded nuclear facilities yesterday," he said. "Their justification that Iran wants to develop nuclear weapons is simply a big lie."

Israel and the U.S. have not acknowledged strikes at the site, which the U.S. bombed back in the 12-day war between Iran and Israel in June. The Israeli military also did not immediately comment on Najafi's allegation.

Israel has not publicized specific targets in Iran but has said that it is targeting "leadership and nuclear infrastructure."

Hezbollah fires on Israel, prompting massive response

As the attacks on Iran continued, Hezbollah said it fired missiles from Lebanon into Israel early Monday in response to the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei and "repeated Israeli aggressions." There were no reports of injuries or damage, and Israel said that it had intercepted one projectile while several fell in open areas.

Israel retaliated with strikes on Lebanon, killing at least 31 people and wounding 149 others, according to Lebanon's Health Ministry. About two thirds of the dead were in the country's south.

Lebanon's government said it was holding an emergency meeting after Hezbollah's attack on Israel triggered the Israeli airstrikes.

Iran has been firing missiles at Israel and Arab states in a counteroffensive since the joint America-Israeli attack Saturday that killed Khamenei and many top Iranian officials.

Casualties rise as attacks spread

Gulf Arab states have warned that they could retaliate against Iran after strikes that hit key sites and killed at least five civilians, and U.S. President Donald Trump promised Washington would "avenge" the deaths of three American troops who were killed in Kuwait, while predicting more casualties.

"Sadly, there will likely be more before it ends," Trump said. "That's the way it is."

Trump has urged Iranians to "take over" their government and, while he has also signaled he would be open to dialogue with new leadership there following the death of Khamenei, suggested Sunday there was no end in sight to the military operations.

"Combat operations continue at this time in full-force, and they will continue until all of our objectives are achieved," he said in a video message. "We have very strong objectives," he added, without elaborating.

The U.S. military said B-2 stealth bombers struck Iran's ballistic missile facilities with 2,000-pound bombs. Trump said on social media that nine Iranian warships had been sunk and that the Iranian navy's headquarters had been "largely destroyed."

Others have mostly stayed out of the war and pressed for diplomacy. But in an indication that the conflict could draw in other nations, Britain, France and Germany said Sunday they were ready to work with the U.S. to help stop Iran's attacks.

Early Monday, Cyprus said an uncrewed drone "caused limited damage" when it hit a British air base on the southern coast. Further details were not immediately available, but it came after British Prime Minister Keir Starmer said the U.K. would help the U.S. in the war against Iran.

The weekend attacks were the second time in eight months that the U.S. and Israel had combined against Iran, in a startling show of military might for an American president elected on an "America First" platform and pledged to keep out of "forever wars."

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 24 of 55

In the 12-day war last June, Israeli and American strikes greatly weakened Iran's air defenses, military leadership and nuclear program. But the killing of Khamenei, who ruled Iran for more than three decades, creates a leadership vacuum, increasing the risk of regional instability.

Iranian proxies join the fray

Hezbollah's launch of missiles at Israel was the first time in more than a year that the militant group has claimed an attack.

Iran's proxies were a chief concern for American and Israeli officials before they suspended negotiations with Iran last week and moved ahead with strikes on Iran.

Israel said the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group had "joined the campaign" alongside Iran as it retaliated with strikes on Beirut, Lebanon's capital.

Associated Press journalists in Beirut were jolted awake by a series of loud explosions that shook buildings and caused windows to shatter. Warplanes could be heard flying low overhead.

"The strikes continue," said Maj. Gen. Rafi Milo, head of Israel's Northern Command. "Their intensity will increase."

The Iraqi Shiite militia Saraya Awliya al-Dam claimed a drone attack Monday targeting U.S. troops at the airport in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, further widening the retaliation over the killing of Khamenei. It had claimed a drone attack on Sunday against a U.S. air base in Irbil, in Iraq's north.

The group is one of a number of Shiite militias operating in Iraq. The U.S. and Iraq did not immediately comment on the claims.

In the Persian Gulf, Iran's retaliatory strikes pushed the conflict into cities that have long marketed themselves as regional safe havens. Three people were reported killed in the United Arab Emirates and one each in Kuwait and Bahrain.

In the United Arab Emirates, authorities said most Iranian missiles and drones were intercepted. But some either got through or fell as debris, causing the deaths and significant damage. Bahrain and Kuwait said Iranian strikes in both countries hit civilian targets outside the U.S. bases where Iran had pledged to retaliate.

WHO calls for protection of civilians

Tehran's streets have been largely deserted with people sheltering during airstrikes. The paramilitary Basij force, which has played a central role in crushing recent protests, set up checkpoints across the city, according to witnesses.

In the northern Iranian city of Babol, a student, speaking anonymously over concerns of retribution, told the AP that armed riot police were on the streets Saturday night and into the early hours of Sunday after the death of Khamenei.

"We don't know whether to be happy about the elimination of the criminals who oppress us or to remain silent in the face of the U.S. and Israel's war against the country and its interests and the terror that is taking place," he said.

In Israel, rescue services have confirmed several locations have been hit by Iranian missiles, including Jerusalem and a synagogue in Beit Shemesh, where nine people were killed and 28 wounded, bringing the overall death toll in the country to 11.

The World Health Organization called Monday for sparing civilians and healthcare facilities in the Middle East amid the escalating conflict.

"The protection of civilians and health care must be absolute," Hanan Balkhy, regional dietitian at WHO wrote on social media. "All parties must ... ensure medical facilities remain protected."

## Where things stand after the US and Israeli strikes on Iran

By CARA ANNA Associated Press

The United States and Israel targeted Iran in coordinated attacks over the weekend that killed Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and dozens of other senior figures and kicked off a furious Iranian response that threatens a wider regional war.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 25 of 55

Allies of the U.S. pledged to help stop Iran's missile and drone strikes. The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah claimed strikes on Israel for the first time in more than a year, and Israel fired back.

The first U.S. military deaths have been reported. Other deaths have been confirmed in Israel and Gulf nations, while Iran has said hundreds of people have been killed there.

With Khamenei's death, the Islamic Republic must now choose a supreme leader for the first time since 1989. U.S. President Donald Trump has urged Iranians to seize the moment and overthrow the theocracy that cracked down on nationwide protests early this year. There was no sign that was happening.

Around the world, some protested. Others cheered.

The attacks came two days after the latest U.S.-Iran talks aimed at putting controls on Tehran's nuclear program. They echoed the events of last year, when talks were cut short by an Israeli attack that led to a 12-day war and U.S. bombing of Iranian nuclear sites. Washington has claimed that Iran was rebuilding its nuclear program in recent months.

Iran has said it hasn't enriched since June, but it has blocked IAEA inspectors from visiting the sites America bombed.

Here's where things stand.

Iran

The 86-year-old Khamenei was killed when his compound was bombed Saturday morning. Iran's ballistic missile sites, navy headquarters and warships were attacked as well. Iran said strikes also targeted the Natanz nuclear enrichment site.

Khamenei had no designated successor. Iran has set up a three-member leadership council, and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said a new supreme leader would be chosen in "one or two days." On the streets, there have been scattered celebrations over Khamenei's death. Internet restrictions in Iran have complicated efforts to monitor what's happening.

In retaliation, Iran's military has struck Israel, where several people have been killed. Iran has also targeted U.S. bases in the region. The U.S. military said three service members were killed, the first known U.S. casualties. Other Iranian strikes have killed a handful of people in Gulf nations including the United Arab Emirates and Kuwait, and hundreds of flights have been affected at some of the world's busiest airports.

What to watch for: further military strikes, the selection of a new supreme leader, and reactions from the Iranian people.

United States

The strikes came after the U.S. built up its biggest military presence in the region in decades. Israeli and U.S. authorities spent weeks tracking the movements of senior Iranian leaders. Trump has said the "heavy and pinpoint bombing" in Iran would continue through the week or longer.

U.S. military bases throughout the region remain a potential target of Iranian attacks.

The U.S. has signaled it is willing to talk to Iran's new leaders, eventually. Meanwhile, some leaders in Congress have protested at the launch of the strikes without congressional authorization.

What to watch for: further military strikes, effects on U.S. bases and forces, and any diplomacy with Iran's new leadership.

Israel

Israel sees Iran as an existential threat and has long sought to end its nuclear and ballistic missile programs, while also targeting armed allied groups like Hamas in Gaza and Hezbollah in Lebanon. Israeli attacks have weakened those groups since Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel that started the war in Gaza.

Israel launched strikes in Lebanon early Monday in retaliation for missiles that Hezbollah launched across the border.

Now Israel has pledged "nonstop" strikes and at one point said 100 fighter jets were simultaneously striking targets in Tehran. During last year's war, Israel pitched Trump a plan to kill Khamenei. Now they have.

Israelis dashed to shelters for safety all weekend, but most of Iran's attacks have been intercepted. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under international criticism for the war in Gaza, is claiming a win for Israel's security.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 26 of 55

But risk remains from Iranian-backed groups like the Houthi rebels in Yemen who have vowed to resume attacks on Red Sea shipping routes and on Israel.

What to watch for: further military strikes, as well as attacks by and against Iranian proxies.

The Middle East and beyond

The current conflict is already far more intense than last year's Israel-Iran war, where the U.S. inserted itself near the end by bombing Iranian nuclear sites and Iran responded with a calculated attack on a U.S. military base in Qatar.

Now, hundreds of Iranian missile and drone strikes have sent people scrambling across Gulf nations that had previously been relatively insulated from the volatility in the region.

The United Arab Emirates said Dubai's main airport had been affected, and tourists and others flinched at the booms of interceptors. Saudi Arabia said it intercepted attacks, and summoned Iran's ambassador. Top diplomats of six Gulf states said they had the "right to self-defense."

Oil prices rose sharply when market trading began Sunday as traders bet that supply from the critical region would slow or stop. Attacks on and near the Strait of Hormuz, the world's most critical oil chokepoint, are also raising concerns about supply.

In response, eight countries that are part of the OPEC+ oil cartel said they would boost production of crude.

And on Monday, the world might learn the first details about any effects on Iran's nuclear program as the International Atomic Energy Agency's Board of Governors holds a meeting on the conflict.

What to watch for: oil prices, details on Iran's nuclear program, and diplomatic efforts.

## What to know about the latest US-Israeli attacks on Iran

By FOSTER KLUG and ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

The war in the Middle East expanded on multiple fronts Monday, with attacks from Iran and Iranian-backed militias hitting Israel and Arab states. A senior Iranian official signaled that there would be no negotiations with the United States, and the Iranian Red Crescent Society said at least 555 people have been killed so far in the Islamic Republic.

Strikes by Israel and the United States were happening in Iran, and Israeli forces were hitting targets in southern Lebanon where at least 31 were killed, in a war that began with the killing of Iranian Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. A strike in Iran on Monday apparently took Iranian state television off air.

Fallout from the fighting has been felt around the globe, with canceled flights, deadly protests and suspended shipping and stock markets. Reaction has ranged from jubilation to condemnation. The joint U.S.-Israeli strikes on Iran, which started Saturday, stoked fears of a wider war and damage to the world economy.

As Israeli strikes targeted Tehran, Iran fired drones and missiles at Israel and sites around the Gulf. Three close U.S. allies — Britain, France and Germany — said they were ready to defend their interests in the region.

Trump said in a video posted Sunday that the operation in Iran — "one of the most complex, most overwhelming military offensives the world has ever seen" — will continue until "all of our objectives" are achieved.

Iran's provisional governing council is expected to name a new supreme leader. Iran's theocracy has struggled with growing dissent following nationwide protests over the economy that morphed into anti-government ones.

Khamenei killed in one of first strikes

Israel said it had worked with the United States for months to plan the attacks. The U.S. military said targets in Iran included Revolutionary Guard command facilities, air defense capabilities, missile and drone launch sites and military airfields.

One of the first strikes hit near the offices of the 86-year-old Khamenei, who had ruled since 1989 and held ultimate power. Iranian state media reported Khamenei's death, without details. Israel said that it

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 27 of 55

also killed dozens of other top Iranian military officials.

The Trump administration has asserted that Iran had been rebuilding its nuclear program, which Tehran has insisted is for peaceful purposes.

Witnesses said an attack Monday in northern Tehran's Niavaran neighborhood struck one of the transmitters used for Iranian state TV. Since then, its satellite signals have dropped. Iran has not offered any details on its materiel losses.

The Iranian Red Crescent Society said that in addition to at least 555 deaths, 131 cities have come under attack so far in the war.

Iran strikes Israel and US bases in retaliation

A top Iranian security official, Ali Larijani, said Monday on social media: "We will not negotiate with the United States."

Iran launched retaliatory missiles and drones targeting Israel and nearby Arab Gulf countries hosting U.S. forces. Three U.S. service members have been killed, according to U.S. Central Command.

Several U.S. warplanes crashed Monday in Kuwait, the country's defense ministry said, with all the pilots safely bailing out. It did not elaborate on what caused the crashes but it came during an intense period of Iranian fire targeting the country. The U.S. military did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The island kingdom of Bahrain said Monday that one person was killed by shrapnel from an intercepted missile.

Bahrain, home to the U.S. Navy's 5th Fleet, says it has intercepted 61 missiles and 34 attack drones launched against it. Some fire has gotten through, striking buildings and the naval base.

Eleven people have been killed in Israel as loud explosions caused by missile impacts or interceptions could be heard in Tel Aviv. Israel's rescue services said that nine people were killed and more wounded in a strike that hit a synagogue in the central town of Beit Shemesh.

Iran's foreign minister has suggested his country's military units are acting independently from any central government control after being pressed about attacks on Gulf Arab nations that have served as intermediaries for Tehran in the past.

An Iraqi Shiite militia claimed a drone attack Monday targeting U.S. troops at the airport in Iraq's capital, Baghdad.

Fire and smoke poured out of the U.S. Embassy compound in Kuwait after an Iranian attack on the small Mideast nation Monday. Video obtained by The Associated Press showed the smoke with an alarm wailing.

Saudi Arabia's Ras Tanura oil refinery came under attack Monday from drones, the kingdom's defense ministry said, with authorities downing the incoming aircraft.

Israel hits Lebanon, orders people to leave villages

Israel's Chief of Staff says the military has launched an offensive campaign in Lebanon that could include "many prolonged days of combat ahead." Hezbollah launched several rockets and drones toward Israel overnight, and Israel responded by striking dozens of targets in Beirut and southern Lebanon. Israel also recommended that residents of 53 villages in southern Lebanon evacuate, causing massive traffic jams.

Israel is keeping "all options on the table" for a possible ground operation in Lebanon, according to Israel's military spokesman Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin.

Israeli airstrikes on Lebanon after Hezbollah attacked it have killed at least 31 people, Lebanon's Health Ministry said Monday. The Health Ministry said that the strikes also wounded 149 people. It said about two thirds of the dead were in southern Lebanon.

The war reverberates around the world

At least 22 people were killed in clashes with police in northern Pakistan and in the southern port city of Karachi after hundreds of protesters stormed the U.S. Consulate there, authorities said.

Shipping companies suspended their vessels' traffic through the Suez Canal. The strikes could rattle global markets, particularly if Iran makes the Strait of Hormuz unsafe for commercial traffic. A fifth of worldwide traded oil passes through the strait.

There were global repercussions from disrupted air travel in the region, with hundreds of thousands of travelers stranded or diverted to other airports after Israel, Qatar, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait and Bahrain

closed their airspace.

The United Arab Emirates said it is shutting the country's main stock exchanges for the start of the trading week.

## Oil prices soar and stock prices fall as US-Israel war with Iran rattles markets

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — The U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran rattled world markets on Monday, with U.S. futures falling more than 1% and oil prices soaring, though gains for defense contractors and oil companies helped limit losses in Asian trading.

The futures for the S&P 500 and Dow Jones Industrial Average sank 1.7%.

The price of a barrel of U.S. benchmark jumped 9% to \$73 per barrel. Brent crude jumped nearly 10% to nearly \$80 per barrel.

European markets opened sharply lower. Germany's DAX dropped 2.2% to 24,737.47, while in Paris the CAC 40 lost 1.9% to 8,413.91. Britain's FTSE 100 slipped 1% to 10,800.63.

Shares fell in most Asian markets but they rose in Shanghai, where higher oil prices lifted some oil company stocks such as CNOOC, China Petroleum & Chemical and PetroChina to the 10% limit.

The Shanghai Composite index climbed 0.5% to 4,182.59, while in Hong Kong, the Hang Seng lost 2.1% to 26,059.85.

Japan's Nikkei 225 index initially fell more than 2%. It closed 1.4% lower at 58,057.24. Offsetting other losses, shares in defense-related stocks including Mitsubishi Heavy Industries and IHI Corp. advanced.

Australia's S&P/ASX 200 ended flat, at 9,200.90.

In India, which could face disruptions to its access to oil due to the hostilities, the Sensex fell 2.1%.

Taiwan's benchmark lost 0.9% and Singapore's dropped 2.3%. In Bangkok, a major tourism destination for the Middle East, the SET fell 3.1%.

Markets were closed in South Korea for a holiday.

The price of gold, which usually is viewed as a safe haven for investment in times of uncertainty, rose 3.4% to about \$5,426 per ounce.

The U.S. dollar also gained, rising to 157.20 Japanese yen from 156.27 yen late Friday. The euro slipped to \$1.1708 from \$1.1762.

Traders are betting the war will disrupt oil supplies from Iran and elsewhere in the Middle East. Attacks throughout the region, including on two vessels traveling through the Strait of Hormuz, the narrow mouth of the Persian Gulf, have constrained oil exports to the rest of the world.

"Roughly one-fifth of global oil and LNG (liquefied natural gas) flows squeeze through the Strait of Hormuz. This is not an obscure canal. It is the aorta of the global energy system," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management said in a commentary.

A prolonged war would likely result in higher prices for other fuels and gasoline and could cascade throughout the global economy, adding to production costs overall.

Prolonged interruptions to oil flows through the Middle East would have "huge implications for oil and LNG and every market everywhere if it occurs. Energy is an input to ALL production," RaboResearch Global Economics & Markets said in a report.

Iran exports roughly 1.6 million barrels of oil a day, mostly to China. It may need to look elsewhere for supply if Iran's exports are disrupted, another factor that could increase energy prices.

The size of China's strategic oil reserves is a state secret. But a recent report by John Kemp of Base Research estimated them at 1.1 billion to 1.2 billion barrels — equivalent to around 100 days or just over three months of imports.

The war's impact on markets was muted somewhat because the attacks were anticipated, with a massive buildup of U.S. forces in the Middle East. So traders had adjusted their positions to take that risk into account.

The conflict has shifted attention, for now, away from issues surrounding artificial intelligence that have dominated markets in recent months.

On Friday, the S&P 500 fell 0.4% to finish just its second losing month in the last 10. The Dow industrials dropped 1.1%, and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.9%.

Treasury yields fell in the bond market as investors sought safer places for their money.

"When markets are fragile, they do not need a knockout blow. They just need another weight on the bar," Innes said.

Also hurting the broad market was a report Friday showing that inflation at the U.S. wholesale level was at 2.9% last month, much higher than the 1.6% that economists expected.

That could pressure the Federal Reserve to hold off longer on its cuts to interest rates. Lower rates would give the economy and prices for investments a boost, but they risk worsening inflation.

## **FBI investigates Texas bar shooting that killed 2 and wounded 14 as possible terrorist act**

By JACK MYER, ALANNA DURKIN RICHER, JOHN SEEWER and KATHLEEN RONAYNE Associated Press AUSTIN, Texas (AP) — A gunman wearing clothes with an Iranian flag design and the words "Property of Allah" killed two people and wounded 14 early Sunday at a Texas bar, a law enforcement official told The Associated Press. The FBI is investigating the shooting, which erupted a day after the U.S. and Israel launched an attack on Iran, as a potential act of terrorism.

Police in Austin shot and killed the gunman, who used both a pistol and a rifle to carry out the attack, police said.

The shooting happened outside Buford's Backyard Beer Garden just before 2 a.m. along Sixth Street, a nightlife destination filled with bars and music clubs and only a few miles (kilometers) from the University of Texas at Austin.

Nathan Comeaux, a 22-year-old senior, had spent the evening there with friends and said the bar was "full of college students, probably mostly UT kids, shoulder to shoulder, hundreds just enjoying their nights."

The suspect drove past the bar several times before stopping and shooting from the window of his SUV at people on a patio and in front of the bar, according to Austin Police Chief Lisa Davis.

He then parked, got out with a rifle and began shooting at people walking along the street before officers rushed to the intersection and shot him, Davis said. Three of the injured were in critical condition Sunday morning, she said.

The gunman was identified as 53-year-old Ndiaga Diagne, the Department of Homeland Security said in a statement.

A student witnesses the gunfire

Comeaux had left the bar to grab pizza at a food truck across the street about 10 minutes before the first gunshots were fired. No one around the pizza truck understood what was happening, he said, with some thinking the noise was fireworks or a loud motorcycle.

Comeaux said he hid behind a bench for about a minute before getting out, and he saw police officers running toward the scene. He pulled out his phone to begin recording. That's when more shots rang out. Comeaux said he saw the suspect turn his gun on police before officers shot him.

He said he knows someone who was shot and guessed that many other UT students do as well.

"The UT community has definitely been majorly affected by this," he said.

FBI says attack may be terrorism

Authorities haven't provided a clear motive for the attacks but found "indicators" on the gunman and in his vehicle leading them to look into the possibility of terrorism, said Alex Doran, the acting agent in charge of the FBI's San Antonio office.

"It's still too early to make a determination on that," Doran said Sunday morning.

Diagne first entered the U.S in 2000 on a B-2 tourist visa and became a lawful permanent resident six years later after marrying a U.S. citizen, according to DHS. He became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 2013,

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 30 of 55

the department said. Diagne was originally from Senegal, according to multiple people briefed on the investigation who spoke on the condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to publicly discuss the investigation.

The White House said President Donald Trump had been briefed on the shooting.

Texas officials weigh in

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott warned that the state would respond aggressively to anyone trying to “use the current conflict in the Middle East to threaten Texas.”

University of Texas at Austin President Jim Davis said on social media that some of those affected included “members of our Longhorn family.”

“Our prayers are with the victims and all those impacted,” said university President Jim Davis.

The entertainment district has a heavy police presence on weekends, and officers were able to confront the gunman within a minute of the first call for help, Davis said.

Austin Mayor Kirk Watson praised the fast response by police and rescuers.

“They definitely saved lives,” he said.

The scene the following evening was quiet in the typically bustling entertainment district amid downtown Austin’s hills and vintage homes, including that of the governor, whose residence is just blocks away.

Police had taped off several square blocks around Sixth Street, while local police and federal agents, including ATF agents were at the site, according to Austin police serving as sentries.

Unmarked law enforcement vehicles were coming and going, as were firetrucks. Bystanders and news reporters and camera crews stood at the corners outside the yellow tape, trying to catch a glimpse of the activity.

There have been at least two other high-profile shootings in Austin’s Sixth Street entertainment district within the past five years, including one in the summer of 2021 that left 14 people wounded. Although this weekend’s shooting doesn’t meet the definition of a mass killing, there have been five of those so far this year.

## Rev. Jesse Jackson returns home to South Carolina to lie in state

By JEFFREY COLLINS Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — After a long career of fighting for civil rights, the Rev. Jesse Jackson Sr. is visiting his home for one last time to lie in state at the South Carolina capitol on Monday.

The final full honors from the state where he was born is a far cry from his childhood in segregated Greenville, where in 1960 he couldn’t go inside the local library’s much better funded whites-only branch to check out a book he needed.

Jackson led seven Black high school students into that segregated branch, where they sat down and read books and magazines until they were arrested. The branches closed, then quietly reopened for all.

With that action, Jackson launched his career — and crusade — fighting for equality for all. He would catch the attention of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and join the voting rights march King led from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama.

Jackson died Feb. 17 at age 84 after battling a rare neurological disorder that affected his mobility and ability to speak in his later years.

The South Carolina services are part of two weeks of events. It began with Jackson’s body lying in repose and the public invited last week to his Rainbow PUSH Coalition’s Chicago headquarters.

After South Carolina, Jackson will be returned to Chicago for a large celebration of life gathering at a megachurch and the final homegoing services at the headquarters of Rainbow PUSH. Plans for a service in Washington, D.C., to honor him have been postponed until a later date.

Nationally, Jackson advocated for the poor and underrepresented for voting rights, job opportunities, education and health care. He scored diplomatic victories with world leaders.

Through his Rainbow PUSH Coalition, he channeled cries for Black pride and self-determination into

corporate boardrooms, pressuring executives to make America a more open and equitable society. He stepped forward as the Civil Rights Movement's torchbearer after King's assassination, and would run for the Democratic presidential nomination in 1984 and 1988.

Jackson continued to be active in his home state, pushing in 2003 for Greenville County to honor King by matching the federal holiday in his honor and in 2015 by advocating for removing the Confederate flag from South Carolina Statehouse grounds after nine Black worshipers were killed in a racist shooting at a Charleston church.

Jackson is just the second Black man to lie in state at the South Carolina capitol. State Sen. Clementa Pinckney was honored in 2015 after he was shot and killed in the Charleston church shooting.

## **What to know about Iran's Revolutionary Guard, a powerful force within the country's theocracy**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Iran's paramilitary Revolutionary Guard has grown into a powerful force within the country's theocracy, answering only to its supreme leader and overseeing its ballistic missile arsenal and launching attacks overseas.

The force is again in the spotlight as Iran widens its attacks across the Middle East following the start of a U.S.-Israeli airstrike campaign that's already killed the country's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Here's what to know about the Guard.

**Born out of a revolution**

The Guard rose out of Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution as a force meant to protect the country's Shiite cleric-overseen government and later became enshrined in its constitution. It operated parallel to Iran's regular armed forces, growing in prominence and power during a long and ruinous war with Iraq in the 1980s.

Though it faced possible disbandment after the war, Khamenei granted it powers to expand into private enterprise, allowing the force to thrive.

The Guard runs a massive construction company called Khatam al-Anbia and has firms that also build roads, man ports, run telecommunication networks and even offer laser eye surgery.

**Foreign operations are key for the Guard**

The Guard's expeditionary Quds Force was key in creating what Iran describes as its "Axis of Resistance" against Israel and the United States. It backed Syria's former President Bashar Assad, Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group, Yemen's Houthi rebels and other groups in the region, growing in power in the wake of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003.

U.S. officials say the Guard taught Iraqi militants how to manufacture and use especially deadly roadside bombs against U.S. troops there. The Quds Force, as well as Iranian intelligence agencies, are believed to have hired criminal gangs and others to target dissidents and Iran's perceived enemies abroad.

Since the latest Israel-Hamas war, Israel has arrested citizens it has accused of receiving orders from Iran to surveil targets or conduct vandalism. Iran has denied being involved in those plots. The Guard is also believed to be heavily involved in smuggling throughout the Middle East.

**Guard's intelligence arm is tied to arrests of foreigners**

The Guard also operates its own intelligence services and has been behind a series of arrests and convictions of dual nationals and those with Western ties on espionage charges in closed hearings.

Western nations and others described Iran as using those prisoners as bargaining chips in negotiations, particularly over its nuclear program.

**War with Israel puts new pressure on the Guard**

The Guard's carefully laid "Axis of Resistance" has faced its greatest challenge in the wake of the Oct. 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel that triggered the war in Gaza. The Palestinian militant Hamas group is among those backed by Iran. Israel is still battling Hamas in Gaza even as it has targeted other Iranian-backed groups, decimating Hezbollah and repeatedly targeting the Houthis in Yemen.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 32 of 55

In Syria, Assad's government fell in December 2024, taking away a key ally for Tehran and the Guard. Israel and Iran exchanged missile fire, something overseen by the Guard.

In June, Israel launched a massive airstrike campaign targeting Iran. In its first day, those strikes killed top generals in the Guard, throwing the force into disarray. Israeli attacks also destroyed ballistic missile sites and launchers, as well as Guard-manned air defense systems.

Crackdown on recent protests

In Iran, one of the main ways its theocracy can squash demonstrations is through the Basij, the Guard's all-volunteer arm.

Videos from the protests that began on Dec. 28 show Basij members holding long guns, batons and pellet guns. Their forces have been seen beating protesters and chasing them through the streets. One well-known Basij commander even went on state television to warn parents to keep their children at home as he called for the force's members to assemble to put down the demonstrations.

The European Union in January listed the Guard as a terrorist organization over Tehran's bloody crackdown on the protests.

Who controls the Guard now in question

Iran's foreign minister has suggested his country's military units are acting independently from any central government control after being pressed about attacks on Gulf Arab nations that have served as intermediaries for Tehran in the past.

Already, there have been attacks on Oman, which served as an intermediary in recent nuclear talks with the United States, and on Qatar, which also has negotiated with Tehran and shares a massive offshore natural gas field in the Persian Gulf with the Islamic Republic.

"What happened in Oman was not our choice. We have already told our, you know, army, armed forces to be careful about the targets that they choose," Abbas Araghchi told Al Jazeera on March 1. "As a matter of fact, our, you know, military units are now in fact independent and somehow isolated and they are acting based on instructions — you know, general instructions — given to them in advance."

Militaries around the world do contingency planning for wars, including what to do if their central governments are affected. But Iran is a special case given that the Guard controls its vast ballistic missile arsenal and much of its stockpile of bomb-carrying drones.

Araghchi's comments also could serve as an excuse for the attacks as well to try to ease tensions with Iran's Gulf Arab neighbors, who have grown increasingly enraged by the constant fire targeting them despite efforts at easing tensions in recent years.

## 'Sinners' takes top prize at the Actor Awards, setting up an Oscar showdown

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

After a near awards-season sweep by "One Battle After Another," "Sinners" won best ensemble at the Screen Actors Guild's 32nd Actor Awards on Sunday, shaking up the Oscar race and setting up a potential nail-biter finale in two weeks at the Academy Awards.

The guild's awards, formerly known as the SAG Awards, are one of the most closely watched Oscar precursors. Actors make up the largest slice of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences and their choices at the Actor Awards often align.

The victory for Ryan Coogler's blues-soaked vampire saga showed that it has a strong chance to win at the Oscars, too, despite an almost unblemished run of awards for Paul Thomas Anderson's "One Battle After Another." It's won at the Golden Globes, the Producers Guild Awards, the BAFTAs and the Directors Guild Awards.

But the win Sunday, in a Netflix-streamed ceremony at the Shine Auditorium in Los Angeles, flipped that awards-season script. Writer-director Ryan Coogler, whose "Black Panther" triumphed at the guild's awards in 2019, became the first filmmaker to steer two ensembles to the guild's top prize.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 33 of 55

"From the bottom of our hearts, to the bottom of your hearts, thank you so much for everything," said Delroy Lindo, who spoke on behalf of the film's cast.

Moments earlier, Michael B. Jordan also won best male actor, upsetting the category favorite, Timothée Chalamet, and handing the 39-year-old Jordan the most significant prize of his acclaimed career. Even Jordan looked shocked as the audience rose to its feet and Viola Davis, the award's presenter, celebrated.

"I wasn't expecting this at all," said Jordan, who reflected on starting out as actor before he paused to appreciate the moment. "Yeah, man, this is pretty cool."

As expected, Jessie Buckley won best female actor for her performance in "Hamnet." But the other actor races have been harder to call. On Sunday, Sean Penn (who didn't attend) won best supporting male actor for "One Battle After Another" and Amy Madigan won best supporting female actor for "Weapons."

The 75-year-old Madigan, who had never before been nominated by the guild, was visibly surprised. Partway through her winding and charming acceptance speech, she looked down at the statuette.

"It's like when you were little and you had the Barbie and then you got Ken and whipped down his drawers and went, 'Hey, that's nothing,'" joked Madigan before apologizing for getting distracted.

A posthumous prize for Catherine O'Hara

Catherine O'Hara posthumously won best female actor in a comedy series for her performance as a movie executive in the showbiz satire "The Studio." O'Hara died at the age of 71 on Jan. 30 from a blood clot in the lungs. At the Shine Auditorium in Los Angeles, the crowd stood in a standing ovation for O'Hara after she was announced as the winner.

Seth Rogen, co-creator of "The Studio," accepted the award on her behalf. He recalled a passionate collaborator who would, the night before a scene, invariably send a polite email with suggested rewrites. Rogen said O'Hara "showed that you could be a genius and you could be kind."

"If you have people in your lives who don't know her work," Rogen said, "show them O'Hara dancing to Harry Belafonte in 'Beetlejuice,' show them O'Hara hurting her knee in 'Best in Show' and doing that amazing thing where she hobbles around, and tell the people as they are laughing that that's Catherine O'Hara and we were lucky that we got to live in a world where she so generously shared her talents with us."

A ceremony that skirted politics

The ceremony, presented by the actors guild SAG-AFTRA, were hosted by returning emcee Kristen Bell, who kicked off the show on a light, song-and-dance note despite the war in Iran and entertainment industry upheaval. Sean Astin, SAG-AFTRA president, offered a "a prayer for peace" in his remarks.

The Actor Awards were the biggest Hollywood bash since Paramount reached an agreement to acquire Warner Bros. Discovery for \$111 billion. The merger, which awaits regulatory approval, sent shock waves through Hollywood. Netflix chief executive Ted Sarandos, whose company lost out to Paramount competing bid, walked the red carpet in jeans.

The win for "Sinners" insures that Warner Bros. will head into the Academy Awards with the two clear best pictures favorites in it and "One Battle After Another" — an awards-season coup for a studio set to be sold.

Before the ceremony began, the award for best stunt ensemble went to a Paramount release: "Mission: Impossible — The Final Reckoning." Among the TV awards, "The Studio" won for comedy series and "The Pitt" won for drama series. Individual winners included Keri Russell ("The Diplomat"), Rogen ("The Studio"), Michelle Williams ("Dying for Sex"), Owen Cooper ("Adolescence") and Noah Wyle ("The Pitt").

A Harrison Ford tribute

Harrison Ford was honored with the SAG-AFTRA Life Achievement Award, a prize presented with warm sarcasm by Woody Harrelson. The 83-year-old actor said he was humbled.

"I'm in a room with actors, many of whom are here because they've been nominated to receive a prize for their amazing work, while I'm here to receive a prize for being alive," said Ford, who called it "the half point" of his career.

Ford teared up for much of his speech, reflecting on a career that he noted was "not an overnight success." He called the award "very encouraging."

"I'm indeed a lucky guy," said Ford. "Lucky to have found my people. Lucky to have work that challenges me. Lucky to still be doing it."

## US and Israel pound Iran as Trump signals willingness to talk to new leaders after Khamenei's death

By JON GAMBRELL, MELANIE LIDMAN, JOSH BOAK and ERIC TUCKER Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The U.S. and Israel pounded targets across Iran on Sunday, dropping massive bombs on its ballistic missile sites and wiping out warships as part of an intensifying military campaign following the killing of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei.

Blasts rattled windows across the country and sent plumes of smoke high into the sky above Tehran. More than 200 people have been killed since the start of the strikes, according to Iranian leaders.

As the bombardment went on, the conflict widened beyond the U.S., Israel and Iran. Iran-supported militant groups in Iraq and Lebanon claimed strikes on Israel and a U.S. base. Gulf states warned that they could retaliate against Iran after strikes that hit key sites and killed at least five civilians. And after Britain said it would let the U.S. use its bases as part of the war effort, Cyprus said a drone attack targeted a British base on the island.

Iran vowed revenge, firing missiles at Israel and Arab states in a counteroffensive that killed three U.S. service members — the first known American casualties from the conflict. Israeli rescue services said strikes hit several locations, including Jerusalem and a synagogue in Beit Shemesh, where nine people were killed and 28 wounded, bringing the overall death toll in the country to 11.

The attacks on Iran showed no signs of relenting as the U.S. and Israel took aim at warships and ballistic missile sites. It was a startling show of military might for an American president who swept into office on an "America First" platform and pledged to keep out of "forever wars."

Trump vows vengeance for US deaths

The three who were killed were Army soldiers deployed to Kuwait as part of a supplies and logistics unit, according to a person familiar with the situation who was not authorized to comment publicly and spoke on condition of anonymity.

Israel announced several waves of fighter jet attacks targeting Tehran, including buildings belonging to Iran's air force, its missile command and its internal security force, which violently quashed anti-government protests in January.

The U.S. military said B-2 stealth bombers struck Iran's ballistic missile facilities with 2,000-pound bombs. Trump said on social media that nine Iranian warships had been sunk and that the Iranian navy's headquarters had been "largely destroyed."

Others have mostly stayed out of the war and pressed for diplomacy. But in an indication the conflict could draw in other nations, Britain, France and Germany said Sunday they were ready to work with the U.S. to help stop Iran's attacks, and a group of Gulf Arab countries said it reserved the right to respond to Iranian strikes.

The weekend attacks were the second combined strikes in eight months from the U.S. and Israel against Iran. In the 12-day war last June, Israeli and American strikes greatly weakened Iran's air defenses, military leadership and nuclear program. But the killing of Khamenei, who ruled Iran for more than three decades, creates a leadership vacuum, increasing the risk of regional instability.

Trump, who a day earlier had encouraged Iranians to "take over" their government, signaled Sunday that he was open to dialogue with Iran's new leadership.

"They want to talk, and I have agreed to talk, so I will be talking to them," he told The Atlantic.

War expands beyond US bases, Iran and Israel

In the Gulf, Iran's retaliatory strikes pushed the conflict into cities that have long marketed themselves as regional safe havens. Three were reported killed in the United Arab Emirates and one each in Kuwait and Bahrain.

In the United Arab Emirates, authorities said most Iranian missiles and drones were intercepted. But some either got through or fell as debris, causing the deaths and significant damage. Bahrain and Kuwait said Iranian strikes in both countries hit civilian targets outside the U.S. bases where Iran had pledged to retaliate.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 35 of 55

In Lebanon and Iraq, Iranian-supported militant groups also entered the conflict.

The Iraqi Shiite militia Saraya Awliya al-Dam claimed a drone attack Monday targeting U.S. troops at the airport in Iraq's capital, Baghdad, further widening the retaliation over the killing of Khamenei.

The group is one of a number of Shiite militias operating in Iraq. The U.S. and Iraq did not immediately comment on the claim. A security official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss intelligence information, confirmed that the attack occurred.

Israel also launched strikes on Beirut, after Hezbollah fired missiles across the Lebanon-Israel border early Monday.

It was the first strike the Lebanese militant group claimed against Israel in more than a year. The Israeli military said Hezbollah had "joined the campaign" alongside Iran.

Hezbollah said in a statement that its strikes were retaliation for the killing of Khamenei and "repeated Israeli aggressions."

Associated Press journalists in Beirut were jolted awake by a series of explosions that shook buildings and shattered windows. Warplanes were heard flying low overhead.

Lebanese government officials had urged Hezbollah not to enter the fray in support of Iran, fearing another war. The country has not recovered from the last Israel-Hezbollah war, which nominally ended with a U.S.-brokered ceasefire in November 2024. Since then, Israel has continued to launch near-daily strikes in Lebanon aimed at stopping Hezbollah from regrouping.

Iran's proxies were a chief concern for American and Israeli officials before they suspended negotiations and moved ahead with strikes on Iran.

The streets of Tehran are largely deserted

In Tehran, there was little sign Iranians had heeded Trump's call for an uprising against the government.

The streets were largely deserted as people sheltered during airstrikes, witnesses told The Associated Press, speaking anonymously for fear of retribution. The paramilitary Basij, which has played a central role in crushing protests, set up checkpoints across the city, they said.

An Iranian medical professional in northern Iran said he and colleagues spent the early hours of Sunday celebrating Khamenei's death indoors because armed security forces are still heavily deployed in his city.

There were forces stopping and interrogating people celebrating in their cars, but there was no gunfire, said the doctor, who spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisal.

"It was one of the best nights, if not the best night of our lives," the doctor said in a voice message from the city of Rasht. "We didn't sleep at all. And we don't even feel tired."

An eyewitness in the city told AP that the windows of their apartment shook violently, and residents came out onto the streets fearing it was too dangerous to stay inside. The witness spoke on condition of anonymity for fear of reprisals. Video footage from Tehran showed plumes of smoke filling the skyline, and the state-run IRNA news agency reported that parts of the building of the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting were struck Sunday.

In southern Iran, at least 165 people were killed Saturday when a girls' school was struck, and dozens more were wounded, IRNA reported. The Israeli military said it was not aware of strikes in the area. The U.S. military said it was looking into the reports.

Iran promises revenge and moves to choose new leader

As supreme leader, Khamenei had final say on all major policies since 1989. He led Iran's clerical establishment and the Revolutionary Guard, the two main centers of power in the governing theocracy.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian said in a prerecorded message that a new leadership council had begun its work. Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said a new supreme leader would be chosen in "one or two days."

Araghchi blamed the U.S. and Israel for starting the war. He said he had spoken to his counterparts in the Gulf countries and urged them to pressure the U.S. and Israel to end it.

"You have crossed our red line and must pay the price," Iran's parliamentary speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, said in a televised address. "We will deliver such devastating blows that you yourselves will

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 36 of 55

be driven to beg.”

In a social media post, Trump warned against any retaliation, saying “IF THEY DO, WE WILL HIT THEM WITH A FORCE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE!”

The chance to kill senior leaders called a ‘golden opportunity’

An Israeli military official described Saturday’s mission against the Iranian leadership as the result of months of “extremely high coordination” with the U.S. The official, speaking on condition of anonymity to discuss a covert operation, said a variety of factors created a “golden opportunity.” Those factors included weeks of training and monitoring the movements of senior figures, along with “real time intelligence” that the targets were gathered together.

The results, the official said, were near-simultaneous strikes, within 60 seconds of one another, in three locations 1,000 miles (1,609 kilometers) from Israel that killed Khamenei and some 40 senior figures, including the head of the Revolutionary Guard and the country’s defense minister.

## **Gaza’s ceasefire had some momentum. Now, some fear a new war will distract the world**

By WAFAA SHURAF, TOQA EZZIDIN and CARA ANNA Associated Press

DEIR AL-BALAH, Gaza Strip (AP) — Some Palestinians say they fear the widening war sparked by U.S. and Israeli attacks against Iran could overshadow the fragile situation in Gaza, just over a week after U.S. President Donald Trump rallied billions of dollars in pledges for the territory’s reconstruction and tried to nudge a ceasefire forward.

Residents say they are scared of neglect and deprivation, with Israel in the wake of the weekend strikes closing all crossings into their shattered territory of over 2 million people.

COGAT, the Israeli military body overseeing civilian affairs in Gaza, asserted in its announcement of the closings that the food supply inside the territory “is expected to suffice for an extended period.” It added that the rotation of humanitarian workers in and out of Gaza is postponed.

COGAT did not respond to a request for comment Sunday.

Palestinians told The Associated Press they were rushing to markets, haunted by memories of painful food scarcity last year under months of Israel’s blockade. Part of Gaza, around Gaza City, was found to be in famine.

“When the crossings shut down, everything was suspended from the market,” said Osamda Hanoda from Khan Younis. “The prices go up, and people live in misery.”

Reports show prices of goods rising sharply

The shaky Israel-Hamas ceasefire had led to more humanitarian aid and other supplies entering Gaza, even as the United Nations and aid partners say more of everything from basic medical supplies to fuel is needed.

Now, Palestinians are hoarding again, with reports of prices rising sharply for basic goods such as bags of flour.

“We are afraid of not finding milk” and diapers for the kids, or food and water, said Hassan Zanoun, who was displaced from Rafah.

It was not clear when any crossing might reopen. Israeli authorities focused on Iran, and citizens dashed repeatedly for shelter as sirens wailed.

Ramadan is disrupted

The war in Gaza began with the Hamas-led attack on Israel on Oct. 7, 2023, and it’s been marked from the start by restrictions on people and supplies being allowed into the territory — and terrified people, including medical evacuees in need of treatment, getting out.

A month ago, Gaza’s main Rafah border crossing with the outside world — its only crossing not with Israel — reopened, allowing a small and tightly controlled flow of Palestinian traffic in both directions. No cargo was allowed through.

Now all crossings are closed again in the middle of the holy Muslim fasting month of Ramadan, a time

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 37 of 55

of chosen deprivation, evening feasts and prayer. Images have shown Palestinians lined up at long tables in the middle of bombed-out debris.

The strikes on Iran shook that routine.

"All the people rushed to markets, and they all wanted to shop and hide," said Abeer Awwad, who was displaced from Gaza City, as word of the explosions in Tehran began to spread.

Under the Oct. 10 U.S.-brokered ceasefire, the heaviest fighting has subsided, though regular Israeli fire continues in Gaza. The U.N. World Food Program has noted progress in the enclave but said in its latest food security analysis last week that hunger remains.

"Households reported an average of two meals per day in February 2026, compared to one meal in July," it said. "Still, one in five households consumed only one meal daily."

The World Central Kitchen, meanwhile, warned that it would run out of supplies this week if Israel kept the strip's crossings closed.

"We need food deliveries every single day to feed hungry families who are not part of this war," José Andrés, the celebrity chef who founded the organization, said in a social media post.

He said WCK provides 1 million meals a day in Gaza, and that the group and others working in war-torn Gaza need food and other supplies every day

"We cannot wait...let the humanitarian trucks go through today!" he said.

A challenge for aid groups and others

Refocusing the world's attention on Gaza is a challenge for aid groups and others as Iran scrambles for new leadership and explosions continue in Tehran, Israel and around the Middle East.

Trump has said bombing in Iran could continue through the week or longer, and warned Tehran of "A FORCE THAT HAS NEVER BEEN SEEN BEFORE!" if it escalates attacks.

It's a dramatic turn from Trump's launch less than two weeks ago of his new Board of Peace, a gathering of world leaders that is aimed at ending the war in Gaza but has ambitions of resolving conflicts elsewhere.

Even with that bump in momentum on Gaza, major challenges remain for the ceasefire. They include disarming Hamas, assembling and deploying an international stabilization force, and getting a newly appointed Palestinian committee meant to govern Gaza into the territory.

As the Middle East turns to another war, some Palestinians see a benefit: Israel's military is distracted.

"The good thing is that the sound of booms and demolitions is rare now near the yellow line," said Ahmed Abu Jahl, of Gaza City, speaking about the line dividing Gaza and marking out roughly half the territory controlled by Israeli forces.

"Even the drones, they are still flying overhead, but their number has gone down."

## **Calls for peace and flashes of anger after US and Israeli attacks kill Iran's Khamenei**

By CLAUDIA CIOBANU and ANGELA CHARLTON Associated Press

PARIS (AP) — Three close allies of the United States said Sunday they are ready to join forces to defend their interests in the Middle East and stop Iran's retaliatory missile and drone strikes following the killing of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, as others around the world raised concerns that the conflict sparked by coordinated U.S.-Israel attacks could spread into a wider war.

Britain, France and Germany said they were prepared to work with the United States.

"We will take steps to defend our interests and those of our allies in the region, potentially through enabling necessary and proportionate defensive action to destroy Iran's capability to fire missiles and drones at their source," their statement said. "We have agreed to work together with the US and allies in the region on this matter."

Massive explosions rocked the Iranian capital for a second day as Israel's military said it was targeting the "heart" of Tehran. Iran pressed on, targeting Israel and U.S. military bases in Gulf states.

Iranian officials hurried to plan a future after the death of Khamenei, who had no designated successor, as some Iranians who had long suffered from political repression celebrated.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 38 of 55

On streets around the world, there were protests in outrage or bursts of celebration.

Pope Leo XIV, the first pope from the United States in the history of the Catholic Church, said he was "profoundly concerned" about the U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran and urged both sides to "stop the spiral of violence before it becomes an irreparable abyss."

Allies will work with US to defend interests

The statement by British Prime Minister Keir Starmer, French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Friedrich Merz said they are "appalled" by Iran's "reckless" strikes on their allies, which threaten their service members and citizens in the region.

A drone strike damaged a hangar at a French naval base at the port of Abu Dhabi, France's defense minister said. British Defense Minister John Healey said Iranian missile and drone strikes came within a few hundred yards (meters) of a group of 300 British military personnel in Bahrain.

Healey also said two missiles were fired in the direction of Cyprus, where the U.K. has bases, though a Cyprus government spokesman said on social media those reports were not valid.

Starmer said the U.K. will not join in strikes on Iran but has newly agreed to let Washington use British bases for attacks on Iran's missiles and their launch sites.

Top diplomats from the 27 European Union nations held an emergency meeting Sunday to discuss the situation and next steps for the bloc.

"The death of Ali Khamenei is a defining moment in Iran's history. What comes next is uncertain," EU foreign policy chief Kaja Kallas said. "But there is now an open path to a different Iran, one that its people may have greater freedom to shape."

Iran is urged to 'return to your senses'

Perhaps cautious about upsetting already strained relations with U.S. President Donald Trump, many nations, including several in the Middle East, refrained from commenting directly or pointedly on the joint strikes but condemned Tehran's retaliation.

The 22-nation Arab League called the Iranian attacks "a blatant violation of the sovereignty of countries that advocate for peace and strive for stability." That coalition of nations has historically condemned both Israel and Iran for actions it says risk destabilizing the region.

"Return to your senses ... and deal with your neighbors with reason and responsibility before the circle of isolation and escalation widens," Anwar Gargash, an adviser to the United Arab Emirates' president, told the Iranian theocracy. The UAE closed its embassy in Iran and announced the withdrawal of its diplomatic mission after Iranian strikes hit the country.

The UAE foreign minister met with counterparts from five other Gulf states Sunday for an emergency virtual meeting. The top diplomats said their countries retain "the legal right to respond and the right to self-defense" under international law.

Russia and China criticize the killing of Khamenei

Russian leader Vladimir Putin blasted Khamenei's killing, which he called "a cynical violation of all norms of human morality and international law."

"The blatant killing of the leader of a sovereign state and the incitement of regime change are unacceptable," China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi said in a phone call with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov, according to China's official Xinhua News Agency. "These actions violate international law and the basic norms governing international relations."

Wang said attacking a sovereign state without U.N. Security Council authorization undermines the foundation for peace established after World War II.

At least 22 people were killed in clashes with police in northern Pakistan and in the southern port city of Karachi after hundreds of protesters stormed the U.S. Consulate there, authorities said.

In Iraq, hundreds wore black and waved flags belonging to Iran-backed Iraqi militias and red flags that symbolize vengeance in the Shiite Muslim faith as they marched across Sadr City to decry the killing of Khamenei.

Anger flashed at protests in Istanbul and among Shiite Muslims in India.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 39 of 55

Demonstrations were also held in cities including New York, Berlin, Paris and Vienna by members of the Iranian diaspora and their supporters, celebrating the end of Khamenei's rule. Some demonstrators waved flags of the Iranian monarchy, with Israeli and U.S. flags also on display.

## Some celebrate in Iran after supreme leader's death, but deep fear and uncertainty remain

By AMIR-HUSSEIN RADJY, SARAH EL DEEB, KAREEM CHEHAYEB and LEE KEATH Associated Press  
CAIRO (AP) — Some of the jubilation was open and even raucous — people dancing in Iranian streets, honking car horns in celebration, screaming joyfully from windows and rooftops over the killing of the country's supreme leader. But as bombardment by the United States and Israel fell from the air for a second day Sunday, many expressed fear and uncertainty over what direction Iran will take.

The death of Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who stood at the pinnacle of Iran's Islamic Republic for nearly four decades, along with a number of top military leaders in the first day of the U.S.-Israeli campaign, stunned Iranians and stirred a mix of complex emotions in a divided nation.

"Inside, we are in party mode," said one man in northern Tehran who expressed joy over Khamenei's death. He was reached via messaging apps. "But unless we are safe from them, people are not celebrating publicly because they are ruthless and even more vengeful."

Authorities moved to show public support, rallying massive crowds in several cities to mourn a leader that state media declared a martyr. Video run on state media — verified by the AP — showed tens of thousands filling the sprawling main squares of the southern and central cities of Isfahan and Yazd, waving Iranian flags and chanting, "Death to America."

Several of those who joined past anti-government protests, reached by The Associated Press on Sunday, said the state's security grip remained too strong to go out for a new round of mass demonstrations, despite calls by U.S. President Donald Trump for Iranians to "seize their government." With communications into Iran unstable, AP contacted eight Iranians, some of whom spoke on condition of anonymity for security reasons.

Golshan Fathi, a woman living in Tehran, said the Basij paramilitary, which played a key role in the bloody crushing of mass protests last month, was showing a heavy presence in the streets of the capital. A doctor in the northern city of Rasht said Basijis pulled one man out of his car after he honked his horn in celebration.

Iranian society at the moment, Fathi said, is living "between hope and fear."

Some cheered, some honked

Iranian society is deeply divided. Hundreds of thousands marched in the streets across Iran last month, chanting "Death to Khamenei" in what were likely the biggest protests ever against the clerics' rule in place since 1979. A bloody crackdown crushed the street movement, but not the bitterness against the government. At the same time, large numbers of loyalists remain tied to the system for religious, social or patronage reasons.

Iran's leadership quickly moved to show it was still in control even after the deaths of Khamenei, the defense minister, army chief of staff and a top security adviser. President Masoud Pezeshkian said a new leadership council had begun its work, and the foreign minister said a new supreme leader would be chosen in "one or two days."

Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf delivered an address on state TV on Sunday, saying the government and military did not depend on individuals.

"We prepared ourselves for these moments and set plans for all scenarios," he said, "even for after the martyrdom of our dear Imam Khamenei."

State media announced Khamenei's death just after dawn on Sunday. Celebrations erupted in some areas. Videos circulating online and verified by the AP showed dozens cheering and dancing and cars honking their horns in the streets of Karaj, a city near Tehran. Fathi in Tehran and the doctor in Rasht said cheers and celebratory chants were heard from windows and rooftops around their neighborhoods.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 40 of 55

"It was one of the best nights, if not the best night, of our lives," the doctor said in a voice message. "It was actually my first time ever smoking a cigarette. ... We didn't sleep at all. And we don't even feel tired."

During the day, Iranians faced the reality of living under bombardment, with no idea when it will end. Blasts in Tehran sent a huge plume of smoke into the sky in an area where there are government buildings. Iranian authorities say more than 200 people have been killed in the strikes, including at least 165 killed in a strike at an all-girls school in the country's south.

Residents of Tehran rushed to supermarkets on Sunday, emptying shelves of bottled water, bread, eggs and milk. Long lines at gas stations across the capital suggested fears of possible fuel shortages or plans by many to leave the city. State television footage showed heavy traffic on major highways, with cars packed bumper-to-bumper as families attempted to reach northern provinces. Others said they were staying home, deciding that was safer.

Iran fired missiles at an ever-widening list of targets in Israel and Gulf Arab states in retaliation while Israel pledged "non-stop" strikes against Iran's leaders and military.

Some talk about a possible 'new page' for Iran

Fathi said she fears the Islamic Republic will hold onto power, "leading to chaos or even causing the splitting of the nation."

"But maybe, maybe from this morning, that new page for Iran where everything changes has begun. People are hopeful," she said. As she spoke, she heard the sound of explosions in the capital. "Right now, you see, Israel is hitting us. Fighters have violated our country's airspace and are freely bombing us and we are just sitting here."

Iranians are still reeling from last month's crackdown, when security forces killed thousands. That and the ensuing wave of arrests have made many fearful of taking the streets again. Others are wary of U.S. and Israeli intentions or fear that Iran will be thrown into chaos and division.

"I don't think that the people have their determination in their own hands yet," the doctor in Rasht said. "This is a foreign war at the end of the day. But if the regime is so weakened and then another call for protests is made, this is another story."

Reza Mehrabi, 67, said celebrations of the deaths of Iranian senior leaders seem premature. He recalled similar celebrations after the 1979 revolution when the Shah was deposed, and the Islamic Republic's reign began.

"I saw some people were happy about the losses, but when I remember 1979 revolution and its aftermath, I need more consideration to understand if the nation and the country is on the right path."

But there's uncertainty about how much the strikes will embolden Iranians

One 27-year-old Tehran resident said a strike fell a few hundred yards (meters) away from her house, terrifying her with the explosion. "I have no idea which direction we are heading," she said. "I wish all these things were just a bad dream that vanishes when I wake up."

Despite Trump's calls for Iranians to rise up, experts say launching a new wave of mass demonstrations may not be so simple.

"The reality is, the Iranian people don't have the means to displace the Islamic Republic on their own," said Esfandiyar Batmanghelidj, adjunct professor at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies-Europe.

The strikes will embolden some people, he predicted, but many will be wary of taking to the streets again "because the regime retains its repressive capacity ... and there should be no doubts it would be willing to use violence again against protesters."

"Even within families and within neighborhoods there may be very disparate views" about Khamenei's killing, especially because it was at the hands of foreign powers, he said.

Both in last summer's 12-day war with Israel and so far in this round of bombardment, "the political and military apparatus has been hit hard, but they have replaced people and maintained their cohesion," said Arang Keshavarzian, professor of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University.

During the 1979 Islamic revolution, Iranians from across society held massive protests lasting for months, eventually leading to the shah fleeing the country. "But we are far from the 1979 model in which Iranians

organized strikes and nationwide organizations of merchants, students, and clerics," Keshavarzian said.

"Just because Iranians have many grievances and make claims on the state on a daily basis, it does not necessarily mean that this will scale up to a social revolution," he said. "And bombing Iran does not change this."

## **Dubai's image as a safe, tax-free haven is rocked by blasts from Iranian airstrikes**

By BRIAN MELLEY Associated Press

The United Arab Emirates has sold itself to foreigners for years as a sunny, safe, tax-free oasis.

That peaceful image was shattered Saturday as Iranian weaponry rained down on Dubai, setting fire to a five-star resort, threatening the world's tallest building, and killing one person and injuring seven others at the airport in the capital city of Abu Dhabi.

Iran has hit the UAE and several of its neighbors as it strikes back from the major attack by U.S. and Israeli forces, causing fear and chaos in a place that until Saturday was predictably calm.

"This is Dubai's ultimate nightmare, as its very essence depended on being a safe oasis in a troubled region," Cinzia Bianco, an expert on the Persian Gulf at the European Council on Foreign Relations wrote on X. "There might be a way to be resilient, but there is no going back."

Officials tried to reassure residents and visitors that the country's air defense system was among the best in the world, blasting down drones and missiles.

"I know it's a scary time for a lot of the residents," Reem Al Hashimy, minister of state for international cooperation, told CNN. "We don't hear these types of loud sounds. But at the same time, those are sounds of interception. And where there has been damage — that has been primarily debris."

Fallout from the attacks has undermined the Emirates' efforts to de-escalate tensions with Iran despite longtime suspicions of its neighbor across the Gulf. The UAE closed its airspace Saturday, shuttered its embassy in Tehran on Sunday, and withdrew its diplomats because of the attacks.

"This decision reflects its firm and unwavering position against any aggression that threatens its security and sovereignty," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement. It called the attacks an "aggressive and provocative approach" that threatens the region.

The oil-rich federation of seven sheikhdoms has relied on its image as a place of serenity to lure wealthy tourists, businesspeople and future residents who want to live largely tax-free in luxury in the desert by the sea. Nearly 90% of the estimated 11 million residents are foreigners.

Real estate firms sell glimmering high-rises and poolside villas to rich Europeans and Americans by promoting a welcoming climate and business-friendly policies, and touting it as one of the safest places on earth.

Hundreds of drone and missile attacks later, though, that reputation has been rocked.

"Last night was pretty surreal," said British racehorse trainer Jamie Osborne, who was in Dubai for the Emirates Super Saturday. "You're standing in the paddock watching missiles get shot through the sky."

The Ministry of Defense said Sunday that air defenses had dealt with 165 ballistic missiles, two cruise missiles and more than 540 Iranian drones over two days.

While officials said they intercepted all air attacks Saturday, debris from the knocked-down weapons sparked blazes at some of Dubai's most iconic locations.

Social media videos and photos showed a fire outside the Fairmont hotel on the prestigious man-made Palm Jumeirah island, flames licked at the facade of the famous Burj Al Arab hotel, and smoke rose into the sky near Burj Khalifa, the 2,723-foot (830-meter) skyscraper.

There also was a fire at Dubai's Jebel Ali Port, the city's main sea terminal and a major shipping hub, and the Dubai International Airport was damaged and four employees were injured, according to the Dubai Media Office.

Kristy Ellmer, who was on a business trip from New Hampshire, said she was staying away from the windows of her hotel but felt relatively safe despite the numerous blasts.

"You hear a lot of explosions at times, you know, there's hundreds of them," she said. "It's unsettling. We're not used to hearing bombs, right, or missiles."

Louise Herrle, an American tourist whose flight home with her husband from Dubai was scrapped, said it was her third time trying to visit the area. Previous trips were canceled by the COVID-19 pandemic and the Hamas attack on Israel in October 2023.

With their current Abu Dhabi and Dubai tour over, she is less likely to return to the Emirates or the region. "I would probably be inclined to avoid this part of the world when there's increased tensions, it just explodes so quickly," Herrle said.

Maybe, she said, "the universe was trying to tell us something."

## **Stranded travelers scramble to make new connections as war shuts much of Middle East to air travel**

By MARC LEVY Associated Press

Hundreds of thousands of stranded travelers scrambled to make new connections and get through to airlines on jammed phone lines Sunday after the attack on Iran by the United States and Israel shut down much of the Middle East to air travel.

Tourists and business travelers crowded hotels and airports, with no word on when many airports would reopen or when flights to and through the Middle East would resume. Some governments advised their stranded citizens to shelter in place.

Shutdown airports in Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Doha — including Dubai International Airport, one of the busiest in the world — are important hubs for travel between Europe, Africa and the West to Asia. All three were directly hit by strikes.

Mohammad Abdul Mannan, in the crowd at Hazrat Shahjalal International Airport in Dhaka, Bangladesh, said he wasn't concerned about the war, but that he needs to get his flight to the Middle East to make a living.

"We have set out to go for work, and we must go," he said. "My only concern is how to go abroad and how to earn an income."

Confusion reigned for many travelers as they tried to get answers on online portals or through busy phone lines.

In Dubai, stranded travelers could hear fighter jets overhead and an explosion when the Fairmont Palm Hotel was hit by a missile strike.

Many were unable to get updated flight information from tour operators or Dubai-based Emirates, which suspended all flights to and from Dubai until at least Monday afternoon.

Louise Herrle and her husband had their flight to Washington canceled on their way back to their Pittsburgh home after a tour of Dubai and Abu Dhabi, with no word when they could reschedule.

"We're in the hotel room, we are not leaving it, so you're not going to give it up until we know we have a flight out of here," Herrle said. "I'm sure everyone else is in the same situation."

Flights canceled, airports and airspaces still closed

Cirium, an aviation analytics firm, said it is hard to calculate the number of travelers stranded worldwide. However, it estimated that at least 90,000 people alone change flights daily in the airports in Dubai, Doha or Abu Dhabi on just three airlines, Emirates, Qatar Airways and Etihad Airways.

Airspace or airports in Israel, Qatar, Syria, Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman and the United Arab Emirates were closed, according to flight tracking sites and government agencies there.

More than 2,800 flights were canceled Sunday to and from airports across the Middle East, including those that remained open in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt, according to flight tracking site FlightAware. International airports in London, Mumbai, Delhi, Bangkok, Istanbul, Sri Lanka and Paris each reported dozens of flights canceled, as well.

Cancellations will extend beyond Sunday, at least.

Emirates suspended all flights to and from Dubai until at least Monday afternoon. Air India suspended

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 43 of 55

all flights to and from the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Israel and Qatar until Tuesday. Israeli airline EL AL said it was preparing to fly home Israelis stranded abroad once the airspace reopened and closed ticket sales for flights through March 21 to ensure stranded customers get priority.

Two airports in the United Arab Emirates reported strikes as the government there condemned what it called a "blatant attack involving Iranian ballistic missiles" on Saturday.

Officials at Dubai International Airport said four people were injured, while Zayed International Airport in Abu Dhabi said one person was killed and seven others were injured in a drone strike. Strikes were also reported at Kuwait International Airport.

Iran did not publicly claim responsibility.

Flight disruptions are likely to continue

Airlines urged passengers to check their flight status online before heading to the airport. Some airlines issued waivers to affected travelers that will allow them to rebook their flight plans without paying extra fees or higher fares. Others offered full refunds.

"For travelers, there's no way to sugarcoat this," said Henry Harteveltdt, an airline industry analyst and president of Atmosphere Research Group. "You should prepare for delays or cancellations for the next few days as these attacks evolve and hopefully end."

Mike McCormick, who used to oversee air traffic control for the Federal Aviation Administration, said countries might reopen their airspace once American and Israeli officials tell airlines where military flights are operating and how capable Iran remains at firing missiles.

'No one really knows what's going on'

The reverberations echoed far outside the Middle East — for example, airport authorities in the resort island of Bali in Indonesia said more than 1,600 tourists were stranded at I Gusti Ngurah Rai International Airport on Sunday after five flights to the Middle East were canceled or postponed.

Airlines that are crossing the Middle East will have to reroute flights around the conflict with many flights headed south over Saudi Arabia. That will cause delays and higher costs.

Kristy Ellmer, an American who had been on business meetings in Dubai, said she was staying in a hotel and keeping multiple flights booked in case airports reopen.

She said she was gaining confidence in the government's ability to protect the city from missiles, but also keeping away from windows when she hears explosions.

"You hear a lot of explosions at times, there's hundreds of them," Ellmer said. "And so when we hear them we sort of just don't stay near the windows just in case the glass was to break or there was some impact."

## At least 22 people killed in Pakistan as protesters try to storm US Consulate

By ADIL JAWAD AND MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

KARACHI, Pakistan (AP) — Violent clashes between protesters and security forces in Pakistan's southern port city of Karachi and in the country's north left at least 22 people dead and more than 120 others injured as demonstrators supportive of the Iranian government attempted to storm a U.S. Consulate on Sunday, authorities said.

In the north of the country, demonstrators attacked U.N. and government offices.

The violence came after the United States and Israel attacked Iran, killing its Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. Police and officials at a hospital in Karachi said that at least 50 people were also wounded in the clashes and some of them were in critical condition.

President Asif Ali Zardari expressed his "profound sorrow over the martyrdom" of Khamenei and conveyed his condolences to Iran, according to his office. He said: "Pakistan stands with the Iranian nation in this moment of grief and shares in their loss."

Summaiya Syed Tariq, a police surgeon at the city's main government hospital, confirmed six bodies and multiple injured people were brought to the facility. However, she said the death toll rose to 10 after four

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 44 of 55

critically wounded people died.

In addition, 12 people were killed and over 80 wounded in clashes with police in the northern Gilgit-Baltistan region when thousands of protesters angered by U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran attacked the offices of the U.N. Military Observer Group and the U.N. Development Programme (UNDP), local police official Asghar Ali said.

A government spokesman, Shabir Mir, said all staff working for those organizations was safe. He said protesters repeatedly clashed with police at various places in the region, damaged the offices of a local charity, and set fire to police offices. However, he said authorities had deployed troops and brought the situation under control.

The U.S. Embassy in Pakistan said in a post on X that it was monitoring reports of ongoing demonstrations at the U.S. Consulates General in Karachi and Lahore, as well as calls for additional protests at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad and the consulate general in Peshawar.

It advised U.S. citizens in Pakistan to monitor local news, stay aware of their surroundings, avoid large crowds and keep their travel registration with the U.S. government up to date.

U. S. Consulate windows smashed

In Karachi, which is the capital of southern Sindh province and Pakistan's largest city, senior police official Irfan Baloch said that protesters briefly attacked the perimeter of the U.S. Consulate, but were later dispersed.

He dismissed reports that any part of the consulate building was set on fire. However, he said that protesters torched a nearby police post and smashed windows of the consulate before security forces arrived and regained control.

Protests in the area surrounding the consulate went on for hours, with dozens of youth, some covering their faces, throwing stones at law enforcement officials and vowing to reach the consulate where hundreds of police and paramilitary officers have been deployed.

The clashes prompted Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to issue an appeal for calm.

"Following the martyrdom of Ayatollah Khamenei, every citizen of Pakistan shares in the grief of the people of Iran," Naqvi said in a statement, but urged people not to take the law into their own hands and to express their protests peacefully. The provincial government of Sindh also urged citizens to express their views peacefully and warned against engaging in violence.

Protests took place elsewhere in Pakistan

In Islamabad, police fired tear gas and swung batons as hundreds of protesters, angered by the killing of Khamenei, tried to march toward the U.S. Embassy. The clashes took place outside the city's diplomatic enclave, where the embassy is located, and additional police had been deployed.

Meanwhile, in the northwestern city of Peshawar, authorities also used tear gas and batons to disperse thousands of demonstrators attempting to approach the U.S. Consulate to hold a rally and to denounce the killing of the Iranian leader, police said.

Protesters also held a peaceful rally in Multan, a city in Punjab province, chanting slogans against Israel and the United States.

Mamoona Sherazi, who attended the rally, said that she was protesting Khamenei's killing. "God willing, we will never bow before America and Israel," she said.

Protesters also rallied and clashed with police repeatedly near the U.S. Consulate in Lahore, the capital of eastern Punjab province, police said. Authorities said that the government has stepped up security around the U.S. Embassy in the capital, and consulates across the country to avoid any further violence.

## Teeth, finger bones and blessings: Buddhist relics inspire belief

By DEEPA BHARATH Associated Press

ROSEMEAD, Calif. (AP) — Katherine Nguyen stood with hands folded and head bowed at the altar of a Buddhist temple in Southern California.

Before her were tooth and finger bone relics believed to belong to Shakyamuni Buddha, the founder of

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 45 of 55

Buddhism who is said to have attained enlightenment in India about 2,500 years ago.

"To be able to see the Buddha, to get close to him and feel the energy — it's very special for a Buddhist," Nguyen said.

Every Lunar New Year, the Wei Mountain Temple in Rosemead, California, publicly displays what it calls the "10,000 Buddha Relics," though the actual number contained in several glass display cases and miniature stupas or reliquaries is far larger, according to the temple's founder, Master YongHua.

The collection prominently features bones and teeth believed to have come from the bodies of the Buddha, his relatives and disciples. It also includes numerous shariras — colorful pearl- or crystal-like objects said to have been culled from the cremated ashes of Buddhist masters and the Buddha.

Relics in Catholicism and Orthodox Christianity are venerated as links to the saints or Christ, while Buddhist relics are primarily seen as living, active sources of blessings imbued with supernatural qualities. It's believed they can appear on their own, grow or even multiply, which is how Buddhists often explain the mystery of why there are so many spread across the world. Relics of the Buddha or revered monks are typically enshrined in a stupa — a sacred, dome-shaped monument that Buddhists also use for meditation and pilgrimage.

Belief in relics is a matter of faith

At the Rosemead temple, the teeth and finger bone relics are significantly larger than those in the average human body. YongHua said that's because they have "grown" over the years. The tooth relic, he said, produces "baby shariras," the multicolored crystals believed to have multiplied and filled several containers in their exhibit.

Most Buddhist sects acknowledge the spiritual significance of relics even if some teachers have tried to shift the focus to Buddha's teachings that emphasize mindfulness and kindness. Relics can be found in every country where Buddhism has a deep history: India, Japan, Myanmar, Nepal, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Taiwan and Thailand. In temple and monastic settings, the authenticity of these items is rarely questioned; spiritual leaders avoid subjecting them to scientific tests over worries that it might strip them of what makes them extraordinary.

Over the years, there have been many reports of fake tooth and bone relics as well as manufactured acrylic shariras flooding markets in Asia and online shopping platforms, often sold with falsified authenticity certificates.

Singapore's Buddha Tooth Relic Temple and Museum houses a tooth relic said to have been recovered from the Buddha's funeral pyre in a giant stupa fashioned from 705 pounds (320 kilograms) of gold. That relic came under scrutiny in 2007 after dental experts pointed out that the 3-inch (7.5 centimeter) tooth's characteristics were incompatible with the dimensions of a human tooth and most likely belonged to a cow or a buffalo. The temple's abbot, the Venerable Shi Fazhao, said at the time that he had never questioned its authenticity and "if you believe it's real, it's real."

YongHua says the main purpose of the relics donated to the Rosemead temple about 14 years ago by a collector is to inspire faith. He has no doubts about their ethereal nature.

"I have seen them multiply with my own eyes," he said. "They move on their own, they levitate. ... I've seen people get cured of various ailments just by being in their presence."

John Strong, professor emeritus of religion at Bates College in Lewiston, Maine, wrote the book "Relics of the Buddha" in 2004. He said the earliest accounts of Buddha's funeral are found in Pali texts dating from about the 2nd century B.C.E. Later commentaries describe the relics that came out of the Buddha's ashes as glittering jewels — some as small as mustard seeds and others resembling gems or golden nuggets.

Theories abound about what generates these relics and why, Strong said, adding that they do serve the important purpose of connecting Buddhists to the Buddha, who is "essentially absent" because he became enlightened and liberated from the cycle of birth, death and reincarnation.

Relics are signs of a spiritually realized yogi

Geshe Tenzin Zopa, a Tibetan monk and educator, said relics are "the most precious, most sacred, most powerful holy objects in our understanding." As a young monk in Nepal, he believes he saw his teacher,

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 46 of 55

Geshe Lama Konchog — who was recognized as a realized yogi by the Dalai Lama — generate relics as his body was being cremated. The guru died in October 2001.

Zopa said he observed pearl-like relics popping out of the crematorium “like popcorn.” He said senior monks advised that the structure be sealed and left undisturbed for three days. When they returned, disciples found hundreds of relics and to their shock, the guru’s intact heart, tongue and eyes, Zopa said.

“I’d never seen anything like that in my life. It was truly a miracle,” he said. It’s widely believed the relics later multiplied; most are enshrined in a memorial stupa at Kopan monastery in Nepal.

For students of yogis, looking for relics in cremains is not a morbid fascination, but an act of unshakeable faith and an expectation that their guru would leave behind a message — a physical sign of their spiritual realization, Zopa said. They’re not easy to produce either.

“We believe that the relics are left behind due to the kindness of these holy gurus for the sake of us sentient beings to collect merit and purify ourselves,” Zopa said. “One has to make very strong and extensive prayers and preserve pure morality for many lifetimes in order to create the causes that produce relics.”

Not all Buddhist teachers view relics the same way

In Southern California, at the U.S. headquarters for the Fo Guang Shan Buddhist order, the Venerable Hui Ze explained that their founder, Venerable Master Hsing Yun, taught his followers not to solely focus on relics.

“Our venerable master emphasized Humanistic Buddhism — how we can bring Buddha’s teachings into our daily lives with good thoughts, words and actions,” said Hui Ze. “He instructed us that relics should not distract us from the path to liberation.”

The order’s headquarters in Taiwan houses a Buddha tooth relic gifted to Hsing Yun by a lama, Kunga Dorje Rinpoche, who carried the sacred object as he fled Tibet in 1968 and safeguarded it for three decades. Hui Ze said he was moved by the relic the moment he saw it.

“I had this really intimate experience and felt like I had connected with the Buddha who was here 2,600 years ago, and that connection is priceless,” he said.

Hsing Yun had instructed disciples not to look for relics in his ashes. He died Feb. 5, 2023, at age 95. Following the master’s cremation, his disciples sifted through the cremains and found several colorful, pearly relics.

But in deference to the master’s wishes, they’ve been left in the ashes to be spread across the order’s dozen centers across five continents.

Hsing Yun’s ashes containing the relics will be enshrined in the Southern California headquarters during a ceremony on March 21.

## Trump expects his Fed pick and AI to deliver a replay of the ‘90s boom. Economists have doubts

By PAUL WISEMAN AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump, his Treasury secretary and his choice to lead the Federal Reserve believe they can coax the U.S. economy into partying like it’s 1999.

They are putting their faith in artificial intelligence to duplicate what happened when another technology arrived in the 1990s: the internet. Back then, the American economy surged as businesses became more productive, unemployment tumbled and inflation remained in check.

Trump is confident that his nominee to become Fed chair, Kevin Warsh, can unleash an even greater economic bonanza by jettisoning what the president sees as the central bank’s hidebound reluctance to slash interest rates.

Many economists are skeptical.

The world looks a lot different today than it did when the Spice Girls ruled radio and “Titanic” dominated the box office. And the story the Trump team is telling — that a visionary Fed chair, Alan Greenspan, fueled the ‘90s boom by keeping interest rates low — is incomplete at best.

“The administration is offering a rather distorted version of what actually happened in the 1990s,”

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 47 of 55

economist Dario Perkins of TS Lombard said in a commentary.

Nonetheless, the Trump administration believes history can repeat itself. All that's been missing, in the president's view, is a Fed chair with Greenspan's foresightedness.

AI's influence over interest rates

Trump has repeatedly attacked current Fed chief Jerome Powell, whose term as chair ends in May, for his reluctance to lower rates aggressively while inflation hovers above the central bank's 2% target. Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on social media in January that the president sought to replace Powell with someone with "an open, Greenspan-like mind."

"Our nation can see productivity boom like we did in the '90s when we are not encumbered by a Federal Reserve which throws the brakes on," Bessent said.

On Jan. 30, Trump said he was picking Warsh.

In speeches and writings, Warsh has argued that AI-driven improvements in productivity could justify lower interest rates.

These views align with Trump's desires for Fed rate cuts but mark a break with Warsh's own past as an inflation hawk. In the aftermath of the 2007-2009 Great Recession, Warsh — then a Fed governor — objected to some of the central bank's efforts to help the struggling economy by pushing down rates even though unemployment exceeded 9%. Warsh warned then, wrongly, that inflation would soon accelerate.

At issue now are gains in productivity and the possibility that AI will make them bigger — much bigger.

To economists, productivity improvements are almost magical. When companies roll out new machines or technology, their workers can become more efficient and produce more stuff per hour. That allows firms to earn more and to raise employees' pay without raising prices. In short: Surging productivity can drive economic growth without spurring inflation.

Greenspan and the internet

In the mid-1990s, Greenspan was contending with a strange set of economic circumstances: Wages were rising, but inflation wasn't heating up.

Big productivity gains might have explained things, but government data showed no sign of them. Other Fed policymakers worried that surging wages and tame inflation couldn't co-exist and that higher prices were coming. They wanted to raise interest rates.

But Greenspan suspected the official productivity numbers were missing something. For one thing, they didn't jibe with the amazing tales of efficiency improvements the Fed was hearing from companies investing in computers and turning to the internet.

So he ordered his lieutenants to dig through decades of productivity numbers. The official statistics they assembled told an implausible story: Services firms — from retailers to legal practices — had supposedly seen productivity fall over the years, despite intense competitive pressure and massive investments in technology.

Greenspan didn't believe it. He persuaded his Fed colleagues that the government's numbers were wrong and were understating productivity. They agreed in September 1996 to hold off on raising rates.

The economy took flight.

Tardily, productivity advances began to show up in the official data. Overall, American economic growth surpassed 4% every year from 1997 through 2000, something it would do again only once in the next quarter century. The unemployment rate plunged to 3.8% in April 2000, lowest in three decades. Inflation stayed in its cage, coming in below 2% -- later the Fed's official target -- for 17 straight months in 1997-1999.

History repeats itself ... maybe?

American productivity certainly looked strong in the second and third quarters of 2025, and some economists attribute the improvements to early adoption of AI; they see bigger gains and stronger economic growth ahead.

Others aren't so sure.

Joe Brusuelas, chief economist at the consulting firm RSM, wrote that the 2025 productivity improvements "are not because of artificial intelligence" but reflect investments in automation that companies made when they couldn't find enough workers during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. "Those investments

are starting to pay off," Brusuelas wrote.

Economist Martin Baily, senior fellow emeritus at the Brookings Institution, believes it will take time for AI to have a big impact on the way companies do business and on the nation's productivity.

"Companies don't change that fast," said Baily, chair of President Bill Clinton's Council of Economic Advisers. "It's expensive to change. It's risky to change. The managers don't necessarily understand the new technology that well. So they have to learn how to use it. They have to train their staff. All that stuff takes a long time."

A productivity boom can raise the economy's speed limit — how fast it can grow without pushing prices higher. But it might not justify lower interest rates, Federal Reserve Gov. Michael Barr said in a speech earlier this month.

Businesses will borrow to invest in AI, putting upward pressure on interest rates. Likewise, American workers and their families likely would save less and borrow more in anticipation of higher wages, the payoff for being more productive; that would put still more pressure on rates to rise.

Bottom line, Barr said: "The AI boom is unlikely to be a reason for lowering policy rates."

Even Greenspan's Fed eventually came to the same conclusion, reversing course and starting to raise its benchmark rate in mid-1999, taking it from 4.75% to 6.5% in less than a year. (The rate Trump complains about now is around 3.6%.)

"Warsh and Bessent talk only about the dovish 1995/96 version of Greenspan; they overlook the hawkish 1999/2000 variant," Perkins wrote.

Then and now

Many of Warsh's potential future colleagues on the Fed's interest-rate setting committee see the late 1990s experience differently than he does, setting up what could be a clash at the central bank if the Senate confirms Warsh as chair.

Austan Goolsbee, president of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago, said earlier this week that "the analogy to the late 90s is a little harder for me to understand." Greenspan's insight was that productivity gains meant the Fed could hold off on raising rates, not that it should slash them, Goolsbee noted.

"It wasn't, 'Should we cut rates because productivity growth is higher?'" he said.

The economic backdrop that awaits Warsh is also far less friendly than the one Greenspan enjoyed.

Greenspan was avoiding rate hikes at a time when the usually profligate U.S. government was running rare budget surpluses and didn't need to borrow so desperately. Now, after a series of spending hikes and tax cuts, deficits are piling up year after year, and the Congressional Budget Office expects federal debt to hit a historic high of 120% of America's GDP by 2035.

Nor was productivity the only thing controlling inflation in the 1990s. Countries were lowering tariffs and dismantling trade barriers. Immigration was surging.

Now, thanks largely to Trump's own policies, notably his sweeping taxes on imports and his crackdown on immigration, the world is much different. "Trade barriers are going up," Perkins wrote. "Globalization has given way to de-globalization."

"That benign era is clearly behind us," said Michael Pearce, chief U.S. economist at Oxford Economics.

## **Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who led the Islamic Republic since 1989, is dead at 86**

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, who assembled theocratic power in Iran over the decades as its top leader and sought to turn it into a regional powerhouse, bringing it into confrontation with Israel and the United States over its nuclear program while crushing democracy protests, has been killed in U.S. and Israeli strikes. He was 86.

Iranian state media reported the death early Sunday, after a major attack launched by Israel and the United States. U.S. President Donald Trump said hours earlier that Khamenei had been killed in the joint operation.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 49 of 55

Khamenei dramatically remolded the Islamic Republic since he took the reins after the death of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini in 1989. Khomeini was the fiery, charismatic ideologue who led the overthrow of the shah and installed rule by Shiite Muslim clerics tasked with spreading religious purity. It fell to Khamenei, a stodgier figure with weaker religious credentials and a leaden demeanor, to turn that revolutionary vision into a state establishment.

He ended up ruling far longer than Khomeini. He greatly expanded the Shiite clerical class and built the paramilitary Revolutionary Guard into the most important body underpinning his rule. The Guard became a military and business behemoth, the country's most elite force and head of its ballistic missile arsenal, with hands across Iran's economic sectors.

But the strains became harder to contain. Political repression and the faltering economy fueled successively bigger waves of mass protests. Anger over the 2022 death of Mahsa Amini, detained for not wearing her mandatory headscarf properly, escalated into demonstrations against social restrictions. In early January, hundreds of thousands marched in cities across the country, many chanting, "Death to Khamenei."

Khamenei responded with the deadliest crackdown seen in nearly 50 years of clerical rule as security forces opened fire on crowds, killing thousands.

At the same time, the Mideast wars sparked by Hamas' Oct. 7, 2023, attack on Israel set in motion the collapse of the regionwide "Axis of Resistance" built by Khamenei. Israel and Iran attacked each other directly for the first time in 2024. Israel struck Iran again in June 2025, as it and the United States targeted the country's nuclear program and killed top military officers and nuclear scientists. Iran retaliated by sending missiles and drones at Israel.

Khamenei's death raises questions about the future of the Islamic Republic.

The 88-seat Assembly of Experts, a group of mostly hard-line clerics, will choose Khamenei's replacement. But no clear successor is in place.

As he launched the bombing Saturday, U.S. President Donald Trump called on Iranians to "take over your government. It will be yours to take. This will be probably your only chance for generations." What happens next may depend greatly on bodies like the Revolutionary Guard, which has repeatedly shown its willingness to use overwhelming force to keep power even as many of Iran's 90 million people grow disenchanted.

"Culturally, the government is bankrupt," said Mehdi Khalaji, an analyst at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said in 2017. "The ideology of the Islamic Republic did not work at all."

Khamenei's daughter and son-in-law, a grandchild and a daughter-in-law also were killed in Saturday's attack, according to the semiofficial Fars news agency, citing unidentified sources.

Iran's government declared 40 days of public mourning and a seven-day nationwide public holiday to commemorate Khamenei's death.

From a questioned start to a hard-line grip on Iran

Ali Khamenei was born into a religious family in the northeastern holy city of Mashhad, a hotbed of revolutionary fervor during the struggle against the Western-allied shah, Mohammad Reza Pahlavi.

Like many other Iranian leaders, he studied under Khomeini at the seminary in the holy city of Qom, south of Tehran, in the early 1960s, before Khomeini's exile to Iraq and France.

Khamenei joined the anti-shah movement, facing time in both prison and in hiding. When Khomeini returned to Iran in triumph in February 1979 and proclaimed the Islamic Republic, Khamenei was appointed to the secretive Revolutionary Council. In 1981, he was elected Iran's third president; that same year, a bombing by opponents left him with one hand paralyzed.

With his thick, heavy-framed glasses, Khamenei lacked the steely gaze and fiery aura of Khomeini, the father of the Islamic Revolution. He fell far short of Khomeini's religious scholarship, holding the relatively low rank of "hojatolislam" in the Shiite clerical hierarchy.

After being named supreme leader after Khomeini's death, he bounded overnight to the level of grand ayatollah, at the top of the hierarchy, and for years had to deal with skepticism over his credentials.

Khamenei acknowledged the doubts with humility. "I am an individual with many faults and shortcomings and truly a minor seminarian," he said in his first speech in his new post.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 50 of 55

Despite his lack of charisma, Khamenei stabilized Iran after the 1980s war with Iraq and governed for over three decades — far longer than Khomeini.

Hard-liners considered him second only to God in his authority. Khamenei created an ever-growing bureaucracy of Shiite clerics and governmental agencies that blurred responsibilities and left him as the ultimate arbiter. As Iran questioned whether to keep the Revolutionary Guard after the war with Iraq, Khamenei came to its rescue and allowed the paramilitary force to gain a powerful grip on Iran's economy. He also used a system of appointees to undercut the civilian government elected by its people.

The rise and fall of Iran's proxy forces

Under Khamenei's reign, Iran shifted fully from conventional warfare to support for proxies, building the so-called Axis of Resistance to advance its interests in the region. The Lebanese militant group Hezbollah, established with Iran's help in the 1980s, drove Israel from southern Lebanon in 2000 and battled it to a stalemate in the monthlong 2006 war.

Through Hezbollah, Iran perfected a strategy of making local militant groups its allies to project power — often through violence. Iran followed that model when backing Yemen's Houthi rebels, who in 2014 seized the country's capital, Sanaa, and held on for over a decade in a stalemated war in the Arab world's poorest nation — despite facing a Saudi-led coalition and later, U.S.-led airstrikes over their attacks in the Red Sea corridor.

Elsewhere, suspected Iranian-backed militants bombed a Jewish center in Buenos Aires in 1994, killing 85 people. Iran also was allegedly linked to the 1996 bombing of the Khobar Towers housing complex in Saudi Arabia, which killed 19 members of the U.S. military. Iran denied responsibility for both attacks.

Iran emerged as a prime beneficiary of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq in 2003, which replaced its main regional threat, Saddam Hussein, with a friendly Shiite-led government. Iranian-backed militias waged a brutal insurgency against U.S. forces and embedded themselves within the country's political landscape.

Khamenei used the Guard's expeditionary Quds Force most successfully after the Sunni extremists of the Islamic State group seized large swaths of Iraq and Syria in 2014. Guard troops advised Shiite militias, the best fighters in Iraq, and gave crucial support to President Bashar al-Assad in Syria's civil war.

That secured Assad for a decade, until the chaos sparked by Hamas' attack on Israel in 2023. Israel devastated the Gaza Strip and launched airstrikes and ground operations pulverizing Hamas, which Iran had armed and funded for years. Israel is widely believed to have killed Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh in an operation in Tehran in 2024, further embarrassing the Islamic Republic.

Hezbollah found its ranks targeted by exploding pagers and an Israeli campaign killed its longtime leader Hassan Nasrallah. Then, in December 2024, rebel fighters toppled Assad in an offensive in Syria, ending a half-century of his family's autocratic rule.

Nuclear program advances to near-weapons-grade levels

The supreme leader remained deeply suspicious of the U.S., referring to it as the "Great Satan" even after President Barack Obama came into office in 2009, offering dialogue and a fresh start.

He shrugged off U.N. sanctions and pushed ahead with Iran's nuclear program, which the U.S. and its allies say hid a secret project to build a nuclear weapon up until 2003. Khamenei issued a verbal fatwa, or religious ruling, that nuclear weapons are un-Islamic, but vowed the country would never give up its right to develop what he called a peaceful nuclear energy program.

Under Iran's 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, Tehran agreed to drastically reduce its stockpile and enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. But only three years later, Trump in his first term unilaterally withdrew Washington from the accord, arguing it didn't go far enough.

Iran has since broken all the limits of the nuclear deal and accumulated a stockpile of uranium enriched to nearly weapons-grade levels, now large enough to pursue several nuclear weapons if it chose to do so. Diplomatic efforts to restore the deal under President Joe Biden stalled.

In a March 2011 speech, Khamenei used toppled Libyan dictator Moammar Gadhafi, who had given up his own nuclear program years earlier, as an example of why Iran's nuclear program remained so important in the wake of the Arab Spring upheavals in the Middle East.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 51 of 55

"Just the way you give a lollipop to a child, Westerners gave 'incentives' to them and they gave up everything," Khamenei said.

Protests and demands for change intensified

Khamenei's first major challenge came in 1997, when pro-reform politicians gained control of parliament and cleric Mohammad Khatami was elected president by a landslide, riding a large youth vote. The reformists demanded a loosening of the strict social rules imposed by the revolution and called for improved ties with the outside world, including the U.S.

Khamenei-backed hard-liners moved to contain the liberal movement, fearing it would eventually call for an end to clerical rule. Khamenei stopped parliament from loosening restrictions on the media in an unusually overt intervention. Clerical bodies blocked other key liberal legislation and banned many reformist lawmakers from running for reelection, ensuring a return of hard-liner control in the 2004 elections.

That set the stage for the election of hard-line President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in 2005 and his disputed reelection in 2009 amid charges of vote-rigging. Mass protests broke out, posing the greatest threat in decades to Iran's clerical leadership. The Revolutionary Guard, Basij militia and police unleashed a crackdown in which dozens were killed and hundreds arrested.

The turmoil, and reports of protesters being tortured to death or raped in prison, dealt a severe blow to Khamenei's prestige.

As sanctions bit further, popular unrest rose. Economic protests broke out in 2017 and demonstrations escalated in 2019 over a rise in government-set gasoline prices. A bloody crackdown that followed killed over 300 people, according to activists.

Although Khamenei struggled to preserve the ideological purity of the Islamic Revolution, Iran's government has largely failed to rid the country of Western influence. Satellite dishes, banned in theory, crowd Tehran's rooftops. Banned social media sites are widely used, even by some prominent politicians, despite being blocked.

Protests erupted again in 2022 over the death of Amini, a young woman detained for not wearing her hijab, or headscarf, to the liking of authorities. More than 500 people were killed and tens of thousands arrested when security forces crushed the demonstrations again.

In late December 2025, new economic protests erupted and would grow into what appeared to be the biggest protest movement ever. Hundreds of thousands across the country took to the streets, overtly demanding an end to the Islamic Republic. Some even chanted for the return of the shah's son, living in exile since 1979. The ferocity of the crackdown stunned Iranians.

Confrontation with US

With U.S. President Donald Trump, Khamenei faced a more aggressive and unpredictable American drive to stop Iran's nuclear program. Trump unilaterally withdrew America from Iran's nuclear deal with world powers in 2018, bringing a return of sanctions.

The two sides came close to war with the United States after an American drone strike killed Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani in January 2020. At Soleimani's mass funeral that drew millions to the streets, Khamenei wept over the casket of the man he once called a "living martyr." Two days later, the Guard mistakenly shot down a Ukrainian airliner after its takeoff from Tehran, killing all 176 people aboard.

Iran ramped uranium enrichment back up, reaching 60% purity — a short, technical step away from weapons-grade levels of 90%. Still, when Trump returned to the White House in January 2025, Khamenei resumed talks, underscoring the deep toll the sanctions had taken. Iran's long-ailing economy entered a freefall, worsening domestic unrest.

But a deal remained elusive. In June, Israel and the U.S. bombed Iranian nuclear facilities, inflicting heavy damage. How far back it set the program remained unclear.

During the crackdown on nationwide protests in January, Trump renewed threats to strike, demanding Iran make major concessions at the negotiating table. Then came three rounds of indirect talks. Then came Saturday.

## How succession works in Iran and who could be the country's next supreme leader

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — The death of Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei after almost 37 years in power raises paramount questions about Iran's future.

The contours of a complex succession process began to take shape the morning after Khamenei's killing in an airstrike campaign by the United States and Israel.

Here is what to know:

Temporary leadership council

As outlined in its constitution, Iran on Sunday formed a council to assume leadership duties and govern the country.

The council is made up of Iran's sitting president, the head of the country's judiciary and a member of the Guardian Council chosen by Iran's Expediency Council, which advises the supreme leader and settles disputes with parliament.

Iran's reformist president, Masoud Pezeshkian, and hard-line judiciary chief Gholamhossein Mohseni Ejei, are its members who will step in and "temporarily assume all the duties of leadership."

Panel of clerics

Though the leadership council will govern in the interim, an 88-member panel called the Assembly of Experts "must, as soon as possible" pick a new supreme leader under Iranian law.

The panel consists entirely of Shiite clerics who are popularly elected every eight years and whose candidacies are approved by the Guardian Council, Iran's constitutional watchdog.

That body is known for disqualifying candidates in various elections in Iran and the Assembly of Experts is no different. The Guardian Council barred former Iranian President Hassan Rouhani, a relative moderate whose administration struck the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, from election for the Assembly of Experts in March 2024.

Khamenei's son

Clerical deliberations about succession and machinations over it take place far from the public eye, making it hard to gauge who may be a top contender.

Previously, it was thought that Khamenei's protege, hard-line President Ebrahim Raisi, may try to take the mantle. However, he was killed in a May 2024 helicopter crash.

That has left one of Khamenei's sons, Mojtaba, a 56-year-old Shiite cleric, as a potential candidate, though he has never held government office.

But a father-to-son transfer in the case of a supreme leader could spark anger, not only among Iranians already critical of clerical rule, but also among supporters of the system. Some may see it as un-Islamic and in line with creating a new, religious dynasty after the 1979 collapse of the U.S.-backed Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi's government.

Rare transition

There has been only one other transfer of power in the office of supreme leader of Iran, the paramount decision-maker since the country's 1979 Islamic Revolution.

In 1989, Grand Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini died at age 86 after being the figurehead of the revolution and leading Iran through its eight-year war with Iraq. This transition now comes after Israel launched a 12-day war against Iran in June 2025 as well.

Vast powers

The supreme leader is at the heart of Iran's complex power-sharing Shiite theocracy and has final say over all matters of state.

He also serves as the commander-in-chief of the country's military and the powerful Revolutionary Guard, a paramilitary force that the United States designated a terrorist organization in 2019, and which Khamenei empowered during his rule.

The Guard, which has led the self-described "Axis of Resistance," a series of militant groups and allies across the Middle East meant to counter the U.S. and Israel, also has extensive wealth and holdings in Iran.

## Afghanistan says it thwarted Pakistani airstrike on Bagram Air Base as fighting enters 4th day

By ABDUL QAHAR AFGHAN and ELENA BECATOROS Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Afghanistan thwarted attempted airstrikes on Bagram Air Base, the former U.S. military base north of Kabul, authorities said Sunday, while cross-border fighting between Pakistan and Afghanistan stretched into a fourth day.

The fighting has been the most severe between the neighbors for years, with Pakistan declaring that it's in "open war" with Afghanistan. The conflict has alarmed the international community, particularly as the area is one where other militant organizations, including al-Qaida and the Islamic State group, still have a presence and have been trying to resurface.

Pakistan accuses Afghanistan's Taliban government of harboring militant groups that stage attacks against it and also of allying with its archrival India.

Border clashes in October killed dozens of soldiers, civilians and suspected militants until a Qatari-mediated ceasefire ended the intense fighting. But several rounds of peace talks in Turkey in November failed to produce a lasting agreement, and the two sides have occasionally traded fire since then.

On Sunday, the police headquarters of Parwan province, where Bagram is located, said in a statement that several Pakistani military jets had entered Afghan airspace "and attempted to bomb Bagram Air Base" at around 5 a.m. The statement said Afghan forces responded with "anti-aircraft and missile defense systems" and had managed to thwart the attack.

There was no immediate response from Pakistan's military or government regarding Kabul's claim of attempted airstrikes on Bagram or the ongoing fighting.

Bagram was the United States' largest military base in Afghanistan. It was taken over by the Taliban as they swept across the country and took control in the wake of the chaotic U.S. withdrawal from the country in 2021. Last year, U.S. President Donald Trump suggested he wanted to reestablish a U.S. presence at the base.

The current fighting began when Afghanistan launched a broad cross-border attack on Thursday night, saying it was in retaliation for Pakistani airstrikes the previous Sunday.

Pakistan had said its airstrike had targeted the outlawed Pakistani Taliban, also known as Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, or TTP. Afghanistan had said only civilians were killed.

The TTP militant group, which is separate but closely allied with Afghanistan's ruling Taliban, operates inside Pakistan, where it has been blamed for hundreds of deaths in bombings and other attacks over the years. Pakistan accuses Afghanistan's Taliban government of providing a safe haven within Afghanistan for the TTP, an accusation that Afghanistan denies.

After Thursday's Afghan attack, Pakistani Defense Minister Khawaja Mohammad Asif declared that "our patience has now run out. Now it is open war between us."

In the ongoing fighting, each side claims to have killed hundreds of the other side's forces — and both governments put their own casualties at drastically lower numbers.

Two Pakistani security officials said that Pakistani ground forces were still in control on Sunday of a key Afghan post and a 32-square-kilometer (12-square-mile) area in the southern Zhob sector near Kandahar province, after having seized it during fighting Friday. The captured post and surrounding area remain under Pakistani control, they added. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity, because they weren't authorized to speak publicly.

In Kabul, the Afghan government rejected Pakistan's claims. Deputy government spokesman Hamdullah Fitrat called the reports "baseless."

Afghan officials said that fighting had continued overnight and into Sunday in the border areas.

The police command spokesman for Nangarhar province, Said Tayyeb Hammad, said that anti-aircraft missiles were used from the provincial capital, Jalalabad, and surrounding areas on Pakistani fighter jets flying overhead Sunday morning.

Defense Ministry spokesman Enayatullah Khowarazmi said that Afghan forces had launched counterattacks with snipers across the border from Nangarhar, Paktia, Khost and Kandahar provinces overnight. He said that two Pakistani drones had been shot down and dozens of Pakistani soldiers had been killed.

Fitrat said that Pakistani drone attacks hit civilian homes in Nangarhar province late Saturday, killing a woman and a child, while mortar fire killed another civilian when it hit a home in Paktia province.

There was no immediate response to the claims from Pakistani officials.

## Italian skier Sofia Goggia wins super-G to regain commanding lead in World Cup discipline standings

SOLDEU, Andorra (AP) — Sofia Goggia won her second super-G of the season Sunday and regained a commanding lead in the race to the World Cup discipline title.

The Olympic downhill bronze medallist extended her advantage in the super-G standings to 84 points over Alice Robinson of New Zealand and 116 over Emma Aicher of Germany in third, with two events left.

A race win is worth 100 points.

"I'm still not thinking about it," said Goggia, who bounced back in impressive style, a day after the Italian had her lead reduced to just 20 points following a sixth-place finish in another super-G.

"I'm really thinking day by day, race by race. It was a solid run today, I got back the points I lost yesterday," she added.

With a trademark gutsy run, Goggia beat Saturday's winner Aicher by 0.24 seconds and third-placed Kajsja Vickhoff Lie of Norway by 0.31.

Robinson finished 0.94 seconds behind in seventh.

"It was a really similar race to yesterday. But we decided to adopt a different strategy to get into the central pitch, and it paid off," Goggia said.

Goggia and Robinson set up their duel for the super-G title early in the season when they won the first two races, but neither added another win until the Italian's victory Sunday.

Goggia now has nine career wins in super-G but is chasing her first season title in the discipline, having won the crystal globe in downhill four times, most recently in 2023.

"I still haven't won in downhill yet (this season), and this is maybe a bit strange for everyone, because I have been doing so many podiums in downhill in my career," said Goggia, who was the 2018 Olympic downhill champion.

"I have a really solid feeling with the super-G, so I'm happy with it. Now it's important to stay really focused for the next ones in which we play for everything."

Olympic super-G champion Federica Brignone came nearly a second behind her Italian teammate in eighth, improving from her 15th-place finish in Saturday's race when she was more than two seconds off the pace.

Brignone returned from a broken left leg just before the Milan Cortina Games and then won gold in super-G and giant slalom.

Mary Bock earned her career-best result leading the U.S. ski team in 11th, one position ahead of her teammate Keely Cashman.

Olympic downhill champion Breezy Johnson was nearly three seconds off the pace in 30th.

Aicher's seventh podium result of the season saw the German close in on second-ranked Camille Rast in the overall standings. The Swiss skier has 963 points while Aicher is on 914.

Mikaela Shiffrin leads with 1,133 points as the American aims for her sixth overall title. She hasn't competed in speed races this season except for one super-G start last December.

Shiffrin is expected back in action for a GS and slalom in Sweden on March 14-15.

The World Cup continues with two downhills and a super-G in Italy next weekend.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 2, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 270 ~ 55 of 55

## Today in History: March 2, Wilt Chamberlain's 100-point game

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, March 2, the 61st day of 2026. There are 304 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 2, 1962, Wilt Chamberlain scored 100 points for the Philadelphia Warriors against the New York Knicks, a single-game NBA record that still stands. Philadelphia won by a score of 169-147.

Also on this date:

In 1807, the Act Prohibiting Importation of Slaves was signed by President Thomas Jefferson. (The domestic trade of enslaved people was not affected.)

In 1861, the state of Texas, having seceded from the Union, was admitted to the Confederacy.

In 1877, Republican Rutherford B. Hayes was declared the winner of the 1876 presidential election over Democrat Samuel J. Tilden, despite Tilden winning the popular vote. Tilden remains the only presidential candidate to get over 50% of the popular vote (50.9%) and not win the presidency.

In 1943, the three-day Battle of the Bismarck Sea began in the southwest Pacific during World War II; U.S. and Australian warplanes inflicted heavy damage on an Imperial Japanese convoy.

In 1955, nine months before Rosa Parks' more famous act of defiance, Claudette Colvin, a Black high school student in Montgomery, Alabama, was arrested after refusing to give up her seat on a public bus to a white passenger.

In 1985, the U.S. government approved a screening test for AIDS that detected antibodies to the virus, allowing possibly contaminated blood to be excluded from the blood supply.

In 2011, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled, 8-1, that a grieving father's pain over mocking protests near his Marine son's funeral had to yield to First Amendment protections for free speech in a decision favoring the Westboro Baptist Church of Topeka, Kansas.

In 2020, a tornado outbreak began in Tennessee, killing 24 people and causing massive destruction as at least six twisters tore through the state over two days.

Today's birthdays: Author John Irving is 84. Actor-comedian Laraine Newman (Saturday Night Live) is 74. Golf Hall of Famer Ian Woosnam is 68. Musician Jon Bon Jovi is 64. Actor Daniel Craig is 58. Rapper-actor Method Man is 55. Musician Chris Martin (Coldplay) is 49. Actor Rebel Wilson is 46. Actor Bryce Dallas Howard is 45. Hockey Hall of Famer Henrik Lundqvist is 44. Actor Robert Iler is 41. Actor Nathalie Emmanuel is 37. Country musician Luke Combs is 36. Singer-actor Becky G is 29.