

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 1 of 52

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- 1440 News Headlines](#)
- [3- Baby-sitter Ad](#)
- [4- Prairie Doc](#)
- [5- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [6- Burger Night ad](#)
- [7- Graduation Cards Ad](#)
- [8- GDI Fitness Center Ad](#)
- [9- EarthTalk: Phantom Load](#)
- [10- SD SearchLight: Trade mission to Japan, South Korea carried hope of diversifying soybean market beyond China](#)
- [12- Weather Pages](#)
- [16- Daily Devotional](#)
- [17- Subscription Form](#)
- [18- Lottery Numbers](#)
- [19- News from the Associated Press](#)



## Monday, March 30

Senior Menu: Soft tacos, Spanish rice with beans, lettuce and cheese, corn, fruit.

School Breakfast: Egg bake.

School Lunch: Oriental chicken, rice.

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

Pickleball, 5:30 a.m., Elementary Gym

HS Baseball Practice, 6 p.m., GHS Gym

## Tuesday, March 31

Senior Menu: Scalloped potatoes, carrots, fruit, dinner roll.

School Breakfast: Muffins.

School Lunch: Tater tot hot dish, mixed vegetables.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Indoor Track Meet at NSU, 3:30 p.m.

Biogirls, 3:45 p.m., elementary gym

Softball: Sisseton at Groton Area, Varsity at 4 p.m., JV at 5 p.m.

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 2 of 52

# 1440

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

## 'No Kings' Rallies

As many as 8 million people participated in "No Kings" rallies Saturday, according to organizers, with participants demonstrating against what they characterized as authoritarian overreach by the Trump administration. Roughly 3,300 events were scheduled across the country, with nearly 40 rallies held internationally.

The turnout, if confirmed, would make the protests the second-largest in US history. In some cities, organizers put the estimate above officials' estimates—for example, placing turnout in Minnesota at 200,000 people, whereas local officials estimated 100,000. Among Minnesota headliners were Jane Fonda and Bruce Springsteen, the latter performing his song "Streets of Minneapolis" in protest of the federal immigration crackdown.

The US' largest single-day protests ever held were the 1970 Earth Day rallies and teach-ins, in which an estimated 20 million people participated. Explore top protests in the US here.

## Next Steps in Iran

The Pentagon is preparing for weeks of potential ground operations in Iran, The Washington Post reported Saturday. The news comes after separate reports suggested President Donald Trump is considering several plans to deal a "final blow" to Iran.

Plans to install troops on Iranian soil would reportedly fall short of a full-scale invasion. Instead, officials say they would involve a combination of special operations raids and conventional infantry soldiers. Late last week, Axios reported several options being presented to Trump, including taking over one or more islands critical to Iran's control of the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's oil typically passes. That includes Kharg Island, Larak, Abu Musa, and several more, or seizing Iranian ships. See a map here.

## Huskies Stun Blue Devils

The men's college basketball Final Four was set yesterday, capped by an upset of top-ranked Duke by No. 2 Connecticut, 73-72. The Huskies, seeking their third title in four years, are joined by No. 1 seeds Michigan and Arizona and No. 3 Illinois in Saturday's semifinals.

Trailing the Blue Devils by as many as 19 points, Connecticut brought the score within five with less than two minutes to go. Leading by two with 10 seconds left, Duke guard Cayden Boozer turned the ball over attempting to pass it upcourt. The resulting scramble gave the Huskies a final chance at a long-range three-pointer—a shot nailed by freshman Braylon Mullins with 0.3 seconds on the clock.

On the women's side, No. 1 seeds UCLA and Connecticut both advanced to the Final Four yesterday. Play rounds out tonight with No. 1 Texas facing No. 2 Michigan (7 pm ET, ESPN), followed by No. 1 South Carolina taking on No. 3 TCU (9 pm ET, ESPN).

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

Kimi Antonelli wins Japanese Grand Prix, becomes youngest driver in Formula 1 history to lead the championship standings at age 19.

Influencer known as "Clavicular," a prominent figure in the "looksmaxxing" trend, is arrested for alleged battery in Florida.

Actor James Tolkan, known for roles in "Top Gun," "Back to the Future," dies at age 94.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 3 of 52

## Science & Technology

AI study shows chatbots are 50% more sycophantic—providing affirmative feedback and praise—than humans when advising on interpersonal dilemmas; users showed preference for such models.

The brains of stroke victims with severe motor impairment can experience “youthful” rewiring in their undamaged hemisphere, suggesting the brain attempts to compensate for the injury.

What happens during a stroke?

Eye drops derived in part from pig semen kill cancer cells and slow tumor growth in mice with retinoblastoma; the rare childhood cancer typically develops in humans before age 5.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets continue to fall Friday (S&P 500 -1.7%, Dow -1.7%, Nasdaq -2.2%); both Dow and Nasdaq in correction territory, down more than 10% from recent highs amid war in Iran.

Pharma giant Eli Lilly signs nearly \$2.8B deal with Hong Kong-based Insilico Medicine to commercialize AI-discovered drugs.

Federal judge pauses merger of broadcast companies Nexstar and Tegna amid antitrust lawsuits.

Bank of America to settle lawsuit with victims of deceased sex criminal Jeffrey Epstein for \$72.5M; deal does not include statement of liability by company.

## Politics & World Affairs

President Donald Trump says he would allow Russian oil tanker to reach Cuba, effectively ending fuel blockade on the country.

North Korea tests missile the country claims can reach the US mainland.

Man drives car into crowd of pedestrians in the English city of Derby, injuring seven people; police have not publicly identified a motive as of this writing.

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!*

## Anatomical Variations: Breaking Down the Basic Details of Tumors and Cancer

Cells are the basic building blocks of all living organisms. In a healthy body, cells follow an orderly life cycle: they develop from a systematic process called mitosis, perform important physiological functions to maintain body homeostasis (i.e., a stable internal environment), and die via apoptosis when they become dysfunctional, old, or no longer needed. This cycle is tightly regulated by DNA – the body’s genetic code that controls when and how each cell functions.

With about 30 trillion cells in each human body, some cells naturally develop mutations in their genetic code that disrupt their life cycle. Mutations can be caused by genetic issues, environmental exposures (e.g., tobacco smoke, radiation), infections, lifestyle, and other etiologies.

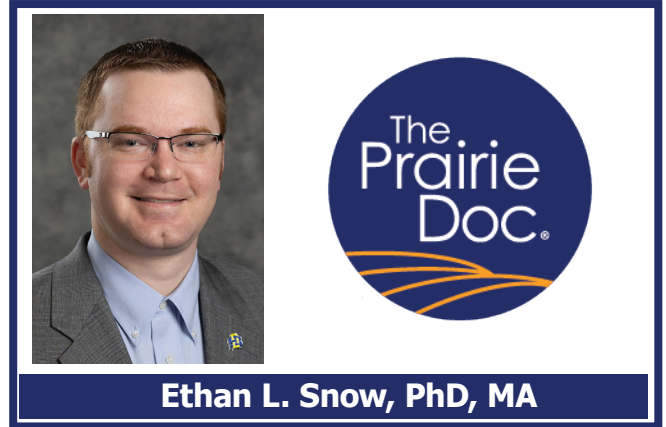
Cells with mutated genetic codes are usually detected and removed by the body’s immune system, or they stop working and die on their own. However, sometimes these altered cells survive and gain a competitive growth advantage, causing them to replicate more rapidly than normal. Over time, this uncontrolled growth can create a mass of cells known as a tumor.

Tumors can develop anywhere cells are present (i.e., essentially anywhere in the body), and they are classified as benign or malignant. Benign tumors are non-cancerous, and they typically grow slowly and exhibit clear boundaries. Contrariwise, malignant tumors are invasive to nearby tissues – a hallmark of cancer – and are characteristically more aggressive. A biopsy is often necessary to confirm whether a tumor is benign or malignant. Notably, not all tumors are cancer (e.g., a benign tumor is not cancer), and not all cancers produce tumors (e.g., leukemia is a cancer of the blood).

A serious feature of malignant cancers is their ability to spread to other locations in the body – a process known as metastasis. Metastasis occurs when malignant cells break away from the original tumor, travel through the bloodstream or lymphatic system (or other pathway), and seed new tumors in other areas of the body. This makes cancer more difficult to treat and can provoke additional sequelae.

Clinical jargon associated with tumors and cancer can be daunting, but breaking down the terminology can be helpful. For example, the root words “hem-” means blood, “angio-” means vessel, and “-oma” means tumor, so a “hemangioma” is quite literally a “blood vessel tumor”. Additional terminology can be descriptive; for example, a “giant intramuscular lipoma” describes a fatty (“lyp-”) tumor (“-oma”) that is located within (“intra-”) a muscle (“-muscular”) and is at least five centimeters in any one dimension (the criteria for “giant” classification).

While loss of control is the foundational concept for tumor and cancer development, routine screening, avoiding carcinogens, and other controllable actions are important for preventing cancer, detecting it in early stages, and performing early interventional treatment. A lump, bump, or lesion might be just that, or it might be something serious. Tumors and cancer are complex, and they command respect and proper attention. It’s important to consult a physician about such concerns so they can execute a proper workup and assemble a multi-disciplinary healthcare team as warranted.



Ethan L. Snow, PhD, MA is a clinical anatomist who currently serves as an Associate Professor at South Dakota State University in Brookings, South Dakota. Dr. Snow leads the Snow Lab Research Team – a collaborative and interdisciplinary team of undergraduate students, professional students, faculty, and clinicians who analyze rare and unique clinical cases involving anatomical variations. 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 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 5 of 52



After a lackluster 2025 season, it's clear the Minnesota Vikings have quite a few question marks on the depth chart. To make matters worse, because of their salary cap situation, the Vikings cut more players than they brought in through the first wave of free agency.

After doing a position-by-position breakdown, we now know the biggest weaknesses are safety, defensive line, center, and wide receiver. But how will the Vikings address those needs? The biggest available names have already been signed, but there are still some solid free agents remaining. Plus, the Vikings have nine draft picks (four of which are in the first three rounds).

Let's put our GM hats on and look at the available options, starting with the safety position.

Defensive coordinator Brian Flores loves to use three-safety looks. Unfortunately, with the likely Harrison Smith retirement, Josh Metellus is the only reliable safety currently on the roster. So how do we fix that?

The free agency cupboard is pretty bare at this point. Jabrill Peppers, Donovan Wilson, and Kyle Dugger are the best remaining players who could come in and take a starting role.

Jabrill Peppers is intriguing because of his positional versatility. Similar to Metellus, Peppers can play either safety spot, slot cornerback, or drop into the box as a linebacker. The 30-year-old has played for four teams since being drafted in the first round by the Cleveland Browns in 2017. He spent the 2025 season in Pittsburgh, and even though he played in 14 games, only two of them were starts. He might be seen as more of a backup at this point in his career, but I could see the Vikings taking a flyer on him, hoping Flores can unlock his full potential.

Donovan Wilson was a 6th-round pick by the Cowboys in 2019 and is looking to play somewhere besides Dallas for the first time in his career. The 31-year-old might not be the best fit in Minnesota, however. He doesn't have much positional versatility and struggles when asked to be the deep coverage safety, a role the Vikings already have filled with Metellus.

Kyle Dugger played most of his career in New England after the Patriots drafted him in the 2nd round of the 2020 NFL Draft. He was traded to the Steelers last season and didn't show enough for the team to re-sign him this offseason. Similar to Wilson, Dugger isn't a coverage safety, so it's unlikely the Vikings sign him to fill a starting role.

With the limited options available in free agency, the Vikings will likely look to the draft to find a safety. The only "can't miss" safety prospect this year is Caleb Downs out of Ohio State, but he'll likely be a top-10 pick. So here are three realistic options to keep an eye on for the Vikings.

Dillon Thieneman might be available for the Vikings with the 18th pick, and he'd be a great fit in Minnesota. The former Oregon Duck has great speed, running a 4.35-second 40-yard dash. His strength is in coverage, and he also has positional versatility to play either safety spot or in the slot. His tackling is solid, his football IQ is evident, and his work ethic is off the charts. He would be a fantastic Harrison Smith replacement.

Jalon Kilgore is a name to keep an eye on in the 2nd round. He has great size (6'1", 210lbs) and speed (4.4 40-yard dash), but he's a little bit of a project at this point in his career. He can play both safety and corner, but projects better as a safety in the NFL. If the Vikings are willing to be patient with him, Kilgore could become a solid starter in a year or two.

A.J. Haulcy is another safety who should be available in the 2nd round. He's much closer to his ceiling than Kilgore, so he could likely come in and start from day one. But his potential is lower. Haulcy is a coverage safety, and his play recognition immediately jumps off the screen. But his 4.52 40-yard dash is slower than either Thieneman or Kilgore.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 6 of 52



**BURGER NIGHT**



**Groton American Legion**

**Tuesday, March 31**  
**6:00 - 9:00 PM**

***Burger & French Fries!***

**Great Food • Great Company • Support Your Local Legion**



## 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.*

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!**

## EARTHTALK

### Phantom Load Straining Already Maxed Out Electrical Grid by Rachel Berliner

Dear EarthTalk: What does “phantom load” mean with regard to energy consumption, how big of a problem is it, and what can we do to prevent it?

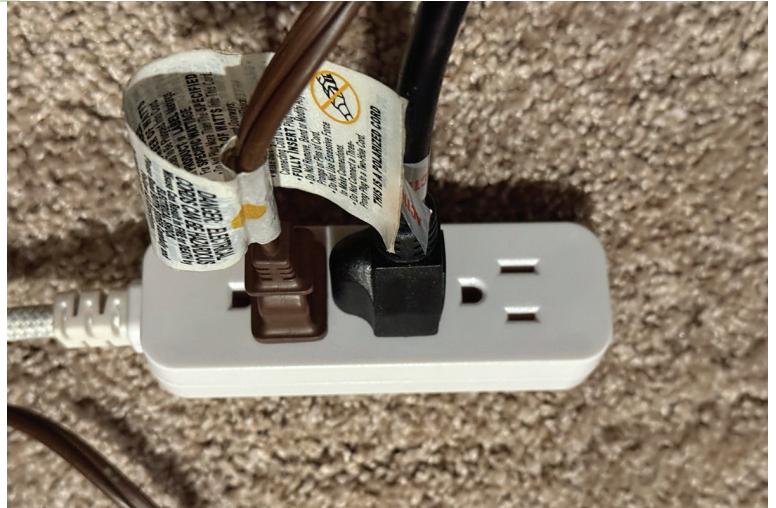
-- Jim C., Provo, UT

Many electronic devices consume energy even while turned off. The total sum of electricity used by devices while in standby mode or powered off is known as a phantom load, an undetected financial and environmental burdens for most households. According to the National Resources Defense Council (NRDC), phantom loads in America accumulate to a cost of \$19 billion each year. Ultimately, each American household spends approximately \$200 annually on phantom loads, as determined by Citizens Utility Board, a nonprofit/nonpartisan advocacy organization created by the Illinois General Assembly.

Most phantom load energy is used by devices with remote controls, indicator lights, motion sensors or timers, like a gaming system control box with a small light or a microwave with a clock. Remote-controlled systems, chargers, printers, DVR systems and kitchen appliances are likely phantom-load contributors, inflating energy bills and greenhouse gas emissions even when not powered on. According to Columbia Climate School Dean Alexis Abramson, phantom load electricity makes-up around five to 10 percent of all home energy use.

There are ways to prevent phantom loads, like unplugging electronic devices when not in use. After a computer, phone, tablet or digital watch has reached full battery, remove idle chargers from outlets. Also, households can invest in a variety of items to more easily control phantom loads. Single-switch power strips allow users to conserve energy by turning off multiple devices in one motion. Larger appliances such as microwaves, toasters and ovens contribute to a phantom load because they have timers, clocks, screens and indicator lights that keep functioning when the appliance is off. When shopping, look for Energy Star appliances, which are designed to limit phantom loads and promote energy efficiency.

Unplugging personal electronic devices is a straightforward undertaking by each individual, but it yields a large cumulative impact. Jonathan Gilligan, an environmental science professor at Vanderbilt University, explains that unplugging devices could help reduce U.S. emissions by 20 percent, which is about 450 tons of carbon dioxide. “If people see that other people are doing actions to reduce their greenhouse gas emissions, they want to do that,” says Gilligan. Unplugging unused devices and chargers or investing in an energy-efficient power strip and appliance is an effective way to lower the cost of energy bills, reduce carbon emissions, and even encourage each other to create a healthy environment.



**Leaving devices plugged in when not in use can tax the power grid beyond capacity.** Credit: Roddy Scheer



## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### **Trade mission to Japan, South Korea carried hope of diversifying soybean market beyond China**

**BY: JOSHUA HAIAR**

South Dakota officials are trying to strengthen trade relationships with Japan and South Korea as soybean farmers look to diversify beyond China, which has reduced its purchases.

Jerry Schmitz, executive director of the South Dakota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, was part of a delegation that visited the two countries earlier this month.

"Really, we're laying the pathway for additional sales in the future," he said.

The delegation also included Lt. Gov. Tony Venhuizen, South Dakota Trade President and CEO Jesse Fonkert, Governor's Office of Economic Development Commissioner Bill Even, and state Agriculture and Natural Resources Secretary Hunter Roberts.

Schmitz said Japan and South Korea are not new markets for South Dakota soybeans or soy-fed pork. He said the trade mission was less about signing immediate contracts and more about building trust with Chinese hog feed suppliers, grocery representatives and other buyers.

Schmitz said the long-term goal is a broader demand for soybeans and more value-added exports, such as pork raised on soybean feed, rather than simply shipping raw beans overseas.

The effort comes as soybean farmers watch China closely. The country continues to shift toward cheaper Brazilian beans.

"China has been a big buyer in the past. They will continue to be," Schmitz said. "But we want to diversify."

Last year, fallout from President Donald Trump's higher tariffs affected soybean farmers. China announced retaliatory tariffs, including an additional tariff on soybeans, and suspended imports. The dispute effectively dried up the Chinese market for South Dakota growers, after China previously purchased about 30% of the state's soybeans.

Then, China agreed to suspend the retaliatory tariffs and to buy at least 12 million metric tons of U.S. soybeans in the last two months of 2025, and at least 25 million metric tons per year from 2026 through 2028. The Trump administration then rolled out a \$12 billion farm aid package to help offset farmers' losses from trade disruptions.

Schmitz said China has so far bought what it agreed to buy, but that's still about 10% less than previous levels. And because South Dakota is far from major ports and transportation costs are high, Schmitz said, federal trade assistance "has not made farmers here whole."

Schmitz said the shortfall matters for farmers, who already face rising costs for fertilizer and fuel. That's due in part to tariffs on imports and disruptions of markets for petroleum-based products caused by Trump's war against Iran.

Lt. Gov. Venhuizen said the delegation also received embassy briefings and met with foreign affairs officials. He said the mission was about building relationships, exchanging information and identifying openings for future deals.

Venhuizen said one of the clearest opportunities is in food processing, which he said could help South Dakota create more value-added opportunities for South Dakota agricultural commodities.

With the state's help, CJ Schwan's is constructing a \$550 million food production plant in Sioux Falls. The company, which is part of the South Korean global conglomerate CJ Group, has also opened an office in downtown Sioux Falls.

Venhuizen said the delegation met with CJ Schwan's in South Korea to discuss the status of the proj-

# Groton Daily Independent

**Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 11 of 52**

ect. He said the company's presence in South Dakota helped give the state credibility with other Korean companies.

Following the trade mission, Fonkert announced his resignation from South Dakota Trade to "prioritize time with my family." Fonkert, who held the job less than a year, succeeded Luke Lindberg, who now serves as U.S. Department of Agriculture undersecretary for trade and foreign affairs.

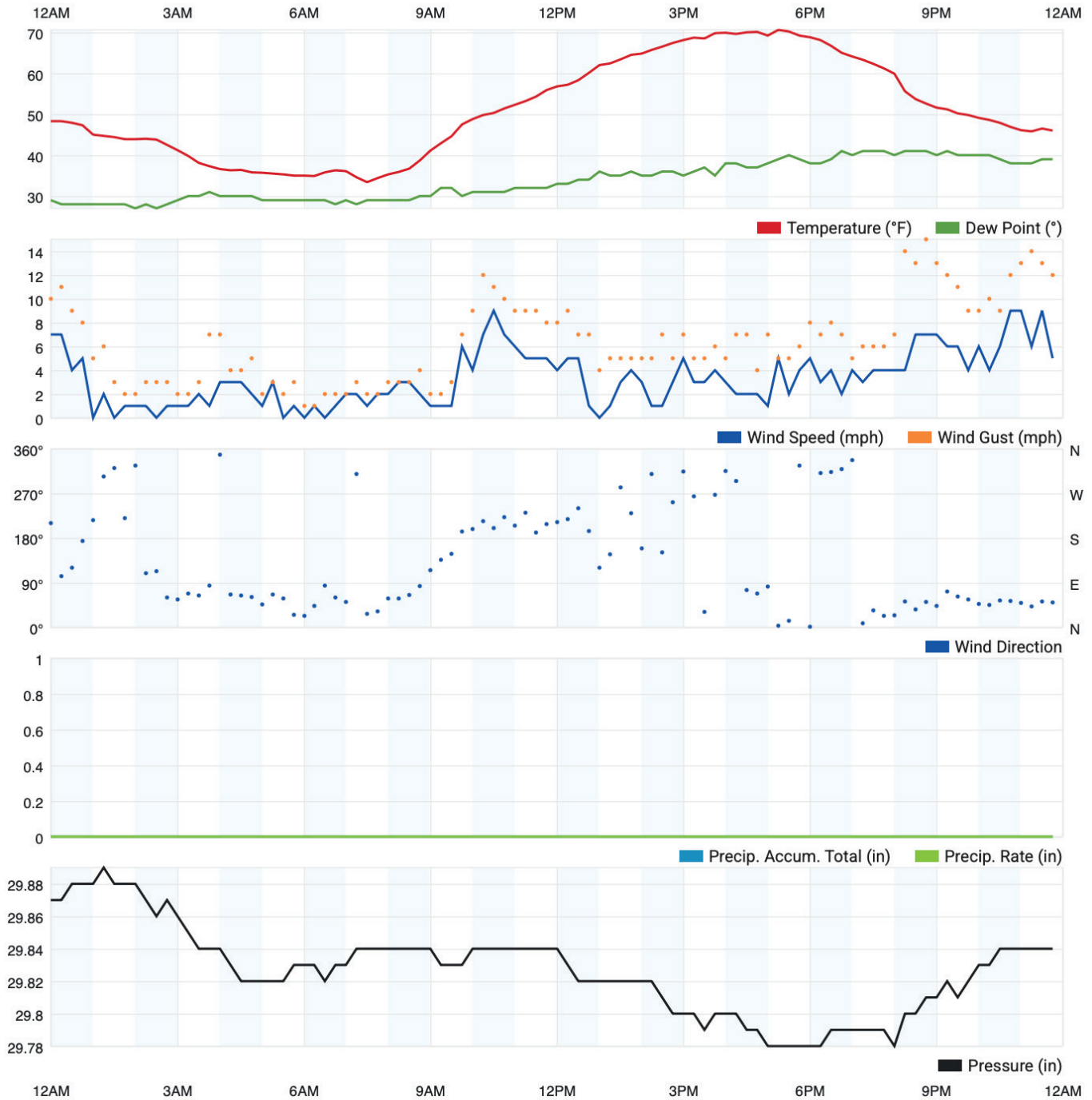
*Joshua Haiar is a reporter based in Sioux Falls. Born and raised in Mitchell, he joined the Navy as a public affairs specialist after high school and then earned a degree from the University of South Dakota. Prior to joining South Dakota Searchlight, Joshua worked for five years as a multimedia specialist and journalist with South Dakota Public Broadcasting.*

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 12 of 52

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

March 29, 2026



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 13 of 52

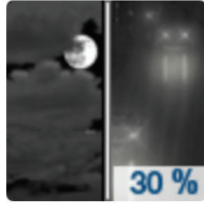
Today



High: 63 °F

Mostly Sunny

Tonight



Low: 33 °F

Partly Cloudy  
then Chance  
Rain and  
Breezy

Tuesday



High: 44 °F

Partly Sunny  
and Breezy

Tuesday Night



Low: 23 °F

Mostly Cloudy

Wednesday



High: 37 °F

Chance Snow



## Work Week Outlook

May 12, 2022  
12:24 PM

Above Average Monday, Some Precip Chances Tue Night-Fri

Monday



Highs: 63-77  
Lows: 27-37

Slight chance  
rain showers  
along ND/SD  
border

Tuesday



Highs: 41-47  
Lows: 20-26

15-30% chance  
rain late  
afternoon into  
overnight

Wednesday



Highs: 40-45  
Lows: 26-29

30-60% chance  
light snow, little  
accumulation  
expected

Thursday



Highs: 42-51  
Lows: 27-33

20-40% chance  
light snow or  
rain/snow mix,  
little accumulation  
expected

Friday



Highs: 44-50  
Lows: 26-32

50-60% chance  
light rain/snow  
mix



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

National Weather Service  
Aberdeen, SD

Monday will be our last above average day for a bit as our highs turn cooler and we move into a more active pattern. Monday will also be windy with gusts of 35 to 45 mph moving in from the west during the evening and overnight hours. These gusts will continue through most of the day Tuesday. Precipitation chances move in Tuesday night and continue through the remainder of the work week

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 14 of 52

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

High Temp: 71 °F at 5:14 PM

Low Temp: 33 °F at 7:24 AM

Wind: 16 mph at 8:37 PM

Precip: : 0.00

## Today's Info

Record High: 81 in 1943

Record Low: -14 in 1969

Average High: 49

Average Low: 25

Average Precip in Mar.: 0.88

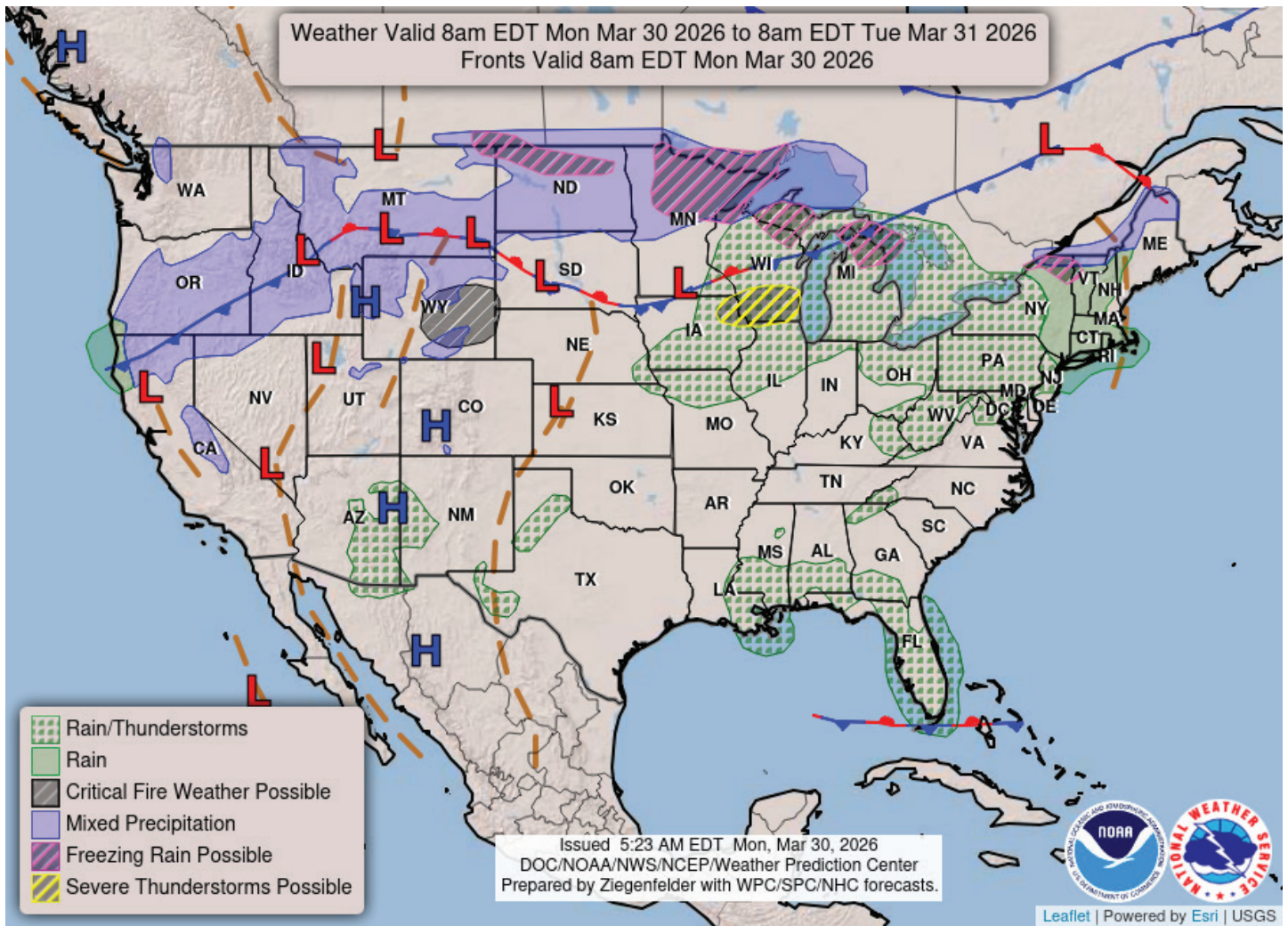
Precip to date in Mar.: 0.29

Average Precip to date: 2.02

Precip Year to Date: 1.62

Sunset Tonight: 7:57 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:14 am



# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 15 of 52

## Today in Weather History

March 30th, 1967: Prolonged strong southerly winds of 20 to 30 mph, with gusts to 55 mph, caused areas of blowing dust in eastern South Dakota, reducing visibilities to near zero. A metal roof on a lumber shed in Vermillion was blown off. The strong winds also piled ice along the shore of Lake Poinsett to heights of 20ft, causing damage to some cabins along the lakeshore.

March 30th, 2009: A major winter storm moved across the Northern Rockies and into the Northern Plains, producing 2 to 22 inches of snowfall and widespread blizzard conditions. Most area schools and events were canceled. Travel was challenging and not advised. Interstate 29 from Watertown to the North Dakota line and Interstate 90 across Jones and Lyman counties closed during the storm. There were several vehicle accidents, but no serious injuries were reported. However, this storm took a toll on area ranchers as the calving season was underway. Storm total snowfall amounts included 6 inches in Blunt, Timber Lake, Gettysburg, and Wilmot; 7 inches in Doland and Pierre; 8 inches in Clark, Clear Lake, Leola, Hosmer, Gettysburg, southeast of McIntosh, and Kennebec; 9 inches south of Bristol, Waubay, and near Chelsea; 10 inches in Eagle Butte and Mobridge; 11 inches in Pollock and Turton. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included 12 inches in Aberdeen, Britton, Andover, Sisseton, and Faulkton; 13 inches at Lake Sharpe, Roy Lake, and eight miles southwest of Keldron; 14 inches in Miller, Redfield, and Webster; 15 inches near Highmore and Columbia; 16 inches southwest of Stratford; 17 inches 14 miles northeast of Isabel; 20 inches in McLaughlin, Ree Heights, and 4 miles northeast of Victor with almost 22 inches northwest of Stephan.

March 30th, 2010: Scattered light rain showers falling into a very dry air mass were responsible for several heat bursts across central South Dakota from Pierre to Onida during the evening hours of March 30th. Between 853 pm and 1053 pm CDT, observations from the Pierre airport (KPIR) showed a marked increase in temperature (+10F), a decrease in dew point temperature (-4F), the pressure falls, and gusty surface winds (a peak wind gust of 48 mph). On a farm outside of Pierre, winds were estimated to be up to 70 mph as some shingles were blown off the roof, and several outbuildings were damaged. The Onida airport recorded a peak wind gust of 66 mph in the early evening.

1823 — A great Northeast storm with hurricane force winds raged from Pennsylvania to Maine. The storm was most severe over New Jersey with high tides, uprooted trees, and heavy snow inland. (David Ludlum)

1899 — A storm which buried Ruby, CO, under 141 inches of snow came to an end. Ruby was an old abandoned mining town on the Elk Mountain Range in the Crested Butte area. (The Weather Channel)

1977 — Hartford, CT, hit 87 degrees to establish a record for the month of March. (The Weather Channel)

1987 — A storm spread heavy snow across the Ohio Valley and Lower Great Lakes Region. Cleveland OH received sixteen inches of snow in 24 hours, their second highest total of record. Winds gusting to 50 mph created 8 to 12 foot waves on Lake Huron. The storm also ushered unseasonably cold air into the south central and southeastern U.S., with nearly one hundred record lows reported in three days. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — A winter-like storm developed in the Central Rockies. Snowfall totals in Utah ranged up to 15 inches at the Brian Head Ski Resort, and winds in Arizona gusted to 59 mph at Show Low. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 — Thunderstorms developing along and ahead of a slow moving cold front produced large hail and damaging winds at more than fifty locations across the southeast quarter of the nation, and spawned a tornado which injured eleven persons at Northampton NC. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 — Low pressure produced heavy snow in central Maine and northern New Hampshire, with up to eight inches reported in Maine. A slow moving Pacific storm system produced 18 to 36 inches of snow in the southwestern mountains of Colorado in three days. Heavier snowfall totals included 31 inches at Wolf Creek Pass and 27 inches at the Monarch Ski Area. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

## Knowing God's Heart

**Seek God with all your heart, and you will find Him.**

Deuteronomy 4:29-30: 29 ``But from there you will seek the LORD your God, and you will find Him if you search for Him with all your heart and all your soul.

30 ``When you are in distress and all these things have come upon you, in the latter days you will return to the LORD your God and listen to His voice.

People long to be understood. This is because we were created in God's image—He is a relational being who desires for His children to know and understand Him.

Just as you don't want to be known for only superficial details, it's not enough to simply know about the Lord. He wants us to learn how He thinks and feels, what's important to Him, and what His purposes are. Of course, it's impossible for us to completely know the mind of the Creator. Isaiah 55:9 tells us, "As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts."

However, we can better understand God's heart and character by seeking Him and learning daily from His Word. If we truly desire to walk in His ways, we must first genuinely know Him. We come to know our friends better by sharing more experiences together. Similarly, we will also understand God better the longer we walk with Him and meditate on His Word.

God wants you to seek Him with all your heart, and He promises that when you do, you will find Him (Jeremiah 29:13). So, the next time you're feeling misunderstood, turn to the One who knows you perfectly. Even more importantly, ask the Lord to help you know Him better.

*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 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 17 of 52

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## Groton Daily Independent

[www.397news.com](http://www.397news.com)

### Subscription Form

This option will grant you access to

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)

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](https://venmo.com/paperpaul)

Phone Number to Confirm:

7460

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 18 of 52



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.29.26

11 17 18 43 53 5

TOP PRIZE:

**\$1,000,000/year**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 45 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.27.26

13 27 28 41 62 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$80,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 30 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.28.26

15 29 30 32 35 9

All Star Bonus: 5x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$20,450,000**

NEXT DRAW: 16 Hrs 45 Mins 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.28.26

4 8 13 31 35

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$37,000**

NEXT DRAW: 2 Days 17 Hrs 13 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.28.26

8 37 56 57 68 21

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 29 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

03.28.26

11 42 43 59 61 25

Power Play: 4x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$180,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 29 Mins 12 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### Trump mulls seizing Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal even as talks show progress

By JON GAMBRELL and DAVID RISING Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — U.S. President Donald Trump openly mused about seizing Iran's Kharg Island oil terminal in the Persian Gulf and the United States and Israel kept up their attacks Monday on the Islamic Republic, even as there were signs of progress in nascent ceasefire talks. Tehran, meanwhile, attacked a key water and electrical plant in Kuwait, part of its campaign targeting the Gulf Arab states, and an oil refinery in northern Israel.

As a diplomatic effort being facilitated by Pakistan toward ending the war moved ahead, Trump said Iran had agreed to allow 20 oil tankers through the Strait of Hormuz starting Monday as "a sign of respect." At the same time, with 2,500 U.S. Marines now in the region and a similar sized contingent on its way, he raised the idea of taking Iran's Kharg Island.

"Maybe we take Kharg Island, maybe we don't," he told the Financial Times in an interview published early Monday. "We have a lot of options."

Iran launches attacks on Israel and hits more infrastructure targets in Gulf states

Sirens sounded at dawn near Israel's main nuclear research center, a part of the country that has been targeted repeatedly in recent days. Israel's military also said it had taken out two drones launched from Yemen, where the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels entered the war on Saturday with their first missile attack.

Later, a fire broke out at an oil refinery in the northern city of Haifa, one of only two in Israel, either from a missile strike or from debris falling from an interception. The blaze was quickly extinguished.

Iran kept up the pressure on its Gulf Arab neighbors, as Saudi Arabia intercepted five missiles targeting its oil-rich Eastern province, Bahrain sounded a missile alert, and a fireball erupted over Dubai as an incoming missile was taken out by defenses.

In Kuwait, an Iranian attack hit a power and desalination plant, killing one worker and injuring 10 soldiers, the state-run KUNA news agency reported.

Desalination plants are crucial to water supplies in the Gulf Arab states, and an Iranian attack previously damaged a desalination plant in Bahrain during the war. The facilities are typically paired with power plants, because of the large amount of energy required to remove salt from the water to make it drinkable.

Israel's military launched a new wave of attacks on Iran, saying it was striking "military infrastructure" across Tehran, and explosions were heard in the Iranian capital. Iranian state media reported a petrochemicals plant in Tabriz, in the north, sustained damage after an airstrike and firefighters had to put out a blaze.

In Lebanon, which Israel has invaded by ground, an Indonesian peacekeeper was killed and three others were wounded when a projectile exploded near a village in the south.

Over the weekend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military will widen its invasion, expanding the "existing security strip" in that country's south as it targets the Iran-linked Hezbollah militant group.

Oil prices rise again as concerns of global energy crisis grow

Iran's attacks on the energy infrastructure of the region and its stranglehold on the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped in peacetime, has sent oil prices skyrocketing and given rise to growing concerns about a global energy crisis.

In early trading, the spot price of Brent crude oil, the international standard, was around \$115, up nearly 60% from when the U.S. and Israel started the war with attacks on Iran on Feb. 28.

As pressure has grown on Trump to bring an end to the conflict, the U.S. has presented Iran a 15-point plan that includes it agreeing to open the Strait of Hormuz to shipping. Iran, meantime, has produced a five-point plan with its own terms, including maintaining its sovereignty over the key waterway.

Pakistan announced Sunday that it would soon host talks between the U.S. and Iran, though there was

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 20 of 52

no immediate word from Washington or Tehran, and it was unclear whether discussions on the monthlong war would be direct or indirect.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar the talks would be held "in the coming days."

Trump says diplomatic approach going well but suggests military expansion is possible

Trump told reporters aboard Air Force One late Sunday that the U.S. was negotiating "directly and indirectly" with Iran, though Iran has insisted that it has not been in any talks with Washington.

"We're doing extremely well in that negotiation but you never know with Iran because we negotiate with them and then we always have to blow them up," Trump said.

Earlier, Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, dismissed the talks in Pakistan as a cover to get more U.S. troops into the area. He said Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever," according to state media.

In the interview with the Financial Times, Trump suggested it could mean a longer-term commitment if the U.S. decided to try and take Kharg Island, saying "it would mean we had to be there for a while."

"I don't think they have any defense," he added. "We could take it very easily."

The U.S. already launched airstrikes once that targeted military positions on the island. Iran has threatened to launch its own ground invasion of Gulf Arab countries and mine the Persian Gulf if U.S. troops land on its territory.

To get an amphibious invasion force to Kharg would mean transiting the Strait of Hormuz and most of the Persian Gulf. Experts say that holding the island would also be a challenge, because in addition to its missiles and drones, it would be well within artillery range from the Iranian mainland.

Iran on Monday confirmed that the head of the Revolutionary Guard's navy, Rear Adm. Alireza Tangsiri, had been killed in an Israeli airstrike, as Israel claimed last week. The Republican Guard praised the admiral's efforts in statement, particularly in helping Iran keep its grip on the Strait of Hormuz.

"Every fighter is a Tangsiri, and we will see what surprises they will bring in the days and months ahead," it said.

Death toll climbs

In Lebanon, officials said more than 1,200 people have been killed and more than 1 million have been displaced. Five Israeli soldiers have also lost their lives.

In Iran, authorities say more than 1,900 people have been killed, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel.

In Iraq, where Iranian-supported militia groups have entered the conflict, 80 members of the security forces have died.

In Gulf states, 20 people have been killed. Four have been killed in the occupied West Bank.

Thirteen U.S. service members have been killed in the war.

## **Australian police kill a suspect 7 months after he allegedly shot 3 officers, killing 2**

By ROD MCGUIRK Associated Press

MELBOURNE, Australia. (AP) — Australian police said they shot dead a man following a three-hour standoff on Monday, seven months after he was suspected of killing two police officers and seriously wounding a third in a remote forest region.

There had been no confirmed sightings of Dezi Freeman, 56, since he allegedly opened fire on police officers who came to serve a warrant at his home near Porepunkah in Victoria state northeast of Melbourne on Aug. 26 last year, Victoria's Chief Commissioner of Police Mike Bush said on Monday.

A man believed to be Freeman was fatally shot by police on Monday at a remote location near Thologong, around two hours' drive north of Porepunkah, a police statement said.

"We believe it is Freeman, but we have to go through a formal identification process," Bush told reporters in Melbourne. Identification could take up to 48 hours through processes including fingerprinting.

Heavily armed Special Operations Group tactical police were involved in a standoff for three hours be-

fore the suspect was shot. He had been inside a shelter like a shipping container and did take up a police offer to surrender, Bush said.

"This was all about bringing this to a conclusion as safely as possible. Our ultimate goal was to arrest the person there ... as peacefully as possible," Bush said.

Bush said he "strongly believed" the suspect was armed. Bush could not say whether the suspect fired at police.

Australian news outlets widely reported that Freeman espoused co-called sovereign citizen beliefs and had grievances with police. He had wilderness survival skills that police feared could sustain him living in the open indefinitely.

The shooting of three police officers led to a massive search across Victoria's heavily forested alpine region. In recent months, police said they suspected Freedman had killed himself.

"We have to follow every avenue of inquiry and there was a lot to suggest that Freedman had taken his own life," Bush said.

Bush would not say whether a tipoff led police to the suspect on Monday. Police had offered a 1 million Australian dollar (\$678,000) reward for information.

Police said they continue to investigate whether others had helped the suspect avoid arrest.

## **Global shares decline as oil prices soar amid fears about escalation in Iran**

By YURI KAGEYAMA AP Business Writer

TOKYO (AP) — Asian shares mostly dipped Monday, as worries continued about soaring oil prices and the potential for further escalation in the U.S. war with Iran, but shares rose moderately in Europe in early trading. U.S. futures were also higher.

France's CAC 40 edged up 0.2% in early trading to 7,716.30, while Germany's DAX added 0.1% to 22,344.39. Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.8% to 10,041.91.

U.S. shares were set to drift higher with Dow futures gaining 0.4% to 45,625.00, while the S&P 500 futures rose 0.5% to 6,445.00. Wall Street finished last Friday with deep declines, for a fifth straight losing week, its longest such streak in nearly four years.

Japan's benchmark Nikkei 225 slipped 2.8% to finish at 51,885.85. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 lost 0.7% to 8,461.00. South Korea's Kospi dove 3.0% to 5,277.30. Hong Kong's Hang Seng lost 0.8% to 24,750.79, while the Shanghai Composite reversed course in the afternoon and was up 0.2% at 3,923.29.

Worries have been great in Japan and the rest of Asia about the effective lack of access to the Strait of Hormuz because of the war in Iran, as the region relies greatly on such access for oil shipments.

In energy trading, benchmark U.S. crude jumped \$1.95 to \$101.59 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, soared \$3.41 to \$115.98 a barrel. Before the war, Brent had been priced at about \$70 to a barrel.

Investors are now bracing for the war to last for some time, which would likely set off inflation in global markets, and eventually may stunt Asia's economic growth.

"Although we do not expect the conflict to be protracted, we anticipate heightened volatility in the near term," said Xavier Lee, senior equity analyst at Morningstar Research.

Oil prices are again climbing after momentarily easing when President Donald Trump extended a self-imposed deadline to "obliterate" Iran's power plants to April 6.

Alarm has been resounding in Japan about the declining value of the yen. In currency trading, the U.S. dollar inched down to 159.76 Japanese yen from 160.32 yen. The euro cost \$1.1494, down from \$1.1510.

"In addition to the crude oil futures market, speculative activity is also said to be increasing in the foreign exchange market," Vice Finance Minister Atsushi Mimura said.

"As we have already stated, we will respond on all fronts, and our focus is spread in all directions," he told reporters, without giving specifics on the possible action.

## Trump says he has 'no problem' with Russian oil tanker bringing relief to Cuba despite blockade

By DARLENE SUPERVILLE Associated Press

ABOARD AIRFORCE ONE (AP) — President Donald Trump on Sunday night said he has “no problem” with a Russian oil tanker off the coast of Cuba delivering relief to the island, which has been brought to its knees by a U.S. oil blockade.

“We have a tanker out there. We don’t mind having somebody get a boatload because they need... they have to survive,” Trump told reporters as he flew back to Washington.

When asked if a New York Times report that the tanker would be allowed to reach Cuba was true, Trump said: “I told them, if a country wants to send some oil into Cuba right now, I have no problem whether it’s Russia or not.”

On Monday, Russia’s Transport Ministry said the oil tanker Anatoly Kolodkin arrived at the Cuban port of Matanzas carrying “humanitarian supplies” of about 730,000 barrels of oil.

The vessel is sanctioned by the United States, the European Union and the United Kingdom following the war in Ukraine.

Trump, whose government has come at its Caribbean adversary more aggressively than any U.S. government in recent history, has effectively cut Cuba off from key oil shipments in an effort to force regime change. The blockade has had devastating effects on the civilians Trump and Secretary of State Marco Rubio say they want to help, leaving many desperate.

Island-wide blackouts have roiled Cubans already grappling with years of crisis, and lack of gasoline and basic resources has crippled hospital and slashed public transport.

Experts say the anticipated shipment could produce about 180,000 barrels of diesel, enough to feed Cuba’s daily demand for nine or 10 days.

Island-wide blackouts have roiled Cubans already grappling with years of crisis, and lack of gasoline and basic resources has crippled hospital and slashed public transport.

Cuba has long been at the heart of geopolitical tug-of-war between the U.S. and Russia, dating back decades. Trump on Sunday dismissed the idea that allowing the boat to reach Cuba would help Russian President Vladimir Putin.

“It doesn’t help him. He loses one boatload of oil, that’s all it is. If he wants to do that, and if other countries want to do it, it doesn’t bother me much,” Trump said. “It’s not going to have an impact. Cuba’s finished. They have a bad regime. They have very bad and corrupt leadership and whether or not they get a boat of oil, it’s not going to matter.”

He added: “I’d prefer letting it in, whether it’s Russia or anybody else because the people need heat and cooling and all of the other things.”

## A youth-led push for change threatens Orbán’s 16-year rule in Hungary’s elections

By JUSTIN SPIKE Associated Press

BUDAPEST, Hungary (AP) — A group of friends in their mid-20s campaigned door to door last week in a small Hungarian city, supporting a political movement that soon could end Prime Minister Viktor Orbán’s 16-year grip on power.

The young men from Hungary’s Lake Balaton region were volunteering for the center-right Tisza party and its leader, Péter Magyar, and campaigning to move past what they described as Orbán’s broken system.

“We’ve lived our whole lives in this system, and we want to see what it could be like outside of it,” said Florián Végh, a 25-year-old student. “I can say on behalf of my fellow university students and my friends that this system is absolutely dysfunctional.”

A generational gap is widening, with Hungary’s youth pushing overwhelmingly for an end to Orbán’s autocratic rule while the oldest citizens remain loyal to the prime minister — a split that could be a decisive

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 23 of 52

factor in the April 12 elections.

Orbán, 62, trails in the polls behind Magyar, a 45-year-old lawyer who broke with Orbán's nationalist-populist Fidesz party over a political scandal in 2024. He has led Tisza on a rapid political rise, inspiring a voting cohort that had largely avoided politics for at least two decades.

Fidesz's declining popularity during economic stagnation and political and corruption scandals has widened the demographic divide. A recent survey by pollster 21 Research Center found that 65% of voters under 30 support Tisza, while 14% are backing Orbán.

### Changing of the guard

One Tisza volunteer, 24-year-old student Levente Koltai, pointed out that Fidesz is an acronym in Hungarian for "Alliance of Young Democrats." But he believes the party no longer lives up to its name.

"Fidesz has lost the title of young, democratic and alliance," he told The Associated Press. "It's gone from young to old, from democratic to tending toward dictatorial, and from an alliance to a circle of cronies."

Andrea Szabó, a senior researcher with Eötvös Loránd University's Institute for Political Science in Budapest, said a changing of the guard was emerging in Hungary, where "a new, active political generation is beginning to unfold before our eyes."

While Orbán's political generation was defined by its fight against Hungary's Soviet-era socialist system in the 1980s and 1990s, "now, we have reached the point where after 25 years, there is a new political generation that is against the Orbán regime," Szabó said.

### 'Illiberal' drift toward Russia and China

Orbán's government defines itself as both Christian-national and "illiberal," and has drifted away from partners in the European Union in favor of closer relations with Russia and China.

Long accused by critics of taking over Hungary's institutions, clamping down on press freedom and overseeing entrenched political corruption — charges he denies — Orbán has become an icon in the global far-right movement.

Admirers approve of his opposition to immigration and curtailing of LGBTQ+ rights, and applaud benefits to young families such as abolishing income tax for mothers with multiple children and providing state-backed loans to first-time homebuyers.

Such policies, as well as a pension supplement for retirees, appeal to many older voters. Fidesz leads Tisza 50% to 19% among retirement-age Hungarians, according to the 21 Research Center Poll.

Zsuzsanna Prépos, a retiree, said at one of Orbán's recent campaign rallies that she was "very happy" with the government's pension policies, and that she's supporting Fidesz because it "helps young people."

"When I was young ... I didn't get anything. Now young people have a lot of help," she said.

Yet such measures have not translated into youth support for Orbán. In several recent speeches, he has both scolded young people for their anti-government attitudes and pleaded with them to reconsider.

"Young people, wake up!" he said at a rally last week. "These are not times for taking risks, experimenting or trying new things. ... Believe me, today only Fidesz and my humble self can provide this country with security."

Szabó, the researcher, said while many young people view Orbán's family support policies positively, their "very strong sense of justice" is incompatible with "the authoritarian exercise of power, the corruption, the fact that they feel vulnerable and that there is insecurity in the country."

"Their lives essentially took place entirely within the Orbán regime, so they know nothing other than this kind of functioning of power," she said.

### Tisza's rise

Recent events in Hungary have turned large numbers of youth against the ruling party.

Hungary was rocked by scandal in February 2024 when it was revealed that the president, a close Orbán ally, had granted a pardon to an accomplice in a child sexual abuse case. The revelation shocked the country, and the president and justice minister resigned.

Days later, some of the country's best-known influencers led a protest demanding a political transformation. Drawing tens of thousands, it marked a turning point which "opened the door to politicization for a

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 24 of 52

lot of young people," Szabó said.

In the wake of the pardon scandal, Magyar broke with Fidesz and launched Tisza. Three months later, the party won 30% of the vote in European Parliament elections.

Magyar has built his campaign on promises to end Orbán's drift toward Russia and restore Hungary's Western orientation, and to revive the stagnating economy by recovering billions in EU funds that are blocked over rule-of-law and corruption concerns.

That economic message has resonated with youth. Végh, the Tisza volunteer, said it's easier than ever for his internet-savvy generation to access different forms of information, and to travel to nearby countries where governments are putting public money to good use.

"In Austria, you see a much calmer, more peaceful, more educated society with better roads and better health care," he said. "You cross the border and see that you have drifted into a developed European country."

Although Tisza leads in the polls, its victory is far from assured. Orbán has a lead among older voters and in much of the countryside.

At a recent rally in Budapest that drew upward of 100,000 people, Tisza supporter Dorina Csobán said the election battle had become "pretty divisive in my family for the older people, because we younger people are saying clearly that there must be change."

## China resumes direct flights to North Korea after 6 years

BEIJING (AP) — China's flag carrier resumed direct flights between Beijing and North Korea's capital of Pyongyang on Monday not long after the restoration of passenger train services between the capitals.

The Air China flight was welcomed by the Chinese ambassador to North Korea, Wang Yajun, and other diplomats, according to Chinese state media.

Passenger train service from China to North Korea had resumed March 12.

Flights and passenger trains to North Korea had been suspended since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

North Korean carrier Air Koryo resumed flights between the capitals in 2023.

North Korea banned all foreign tourists during the pandemic but has started easing the restrictions, with a Russian tour group entering the country in 2024.

Chinese tour groups had made up 90% of all visitors to North Korea prior to the ban, and the delay on resuming Chinese tours surprised observers.

China is Pyongyang's biggest trading partner and major ally, but Beijing has expressed disapproval over the years at North Korea's test-launches of missiles that could be used to target South Korea and the United States.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un traveled to Beijing in September to attend a massive military parade, marking the first time a North Korean leader had been present at a Chinese military parade in decades.

## The Final Four is set as UConn stuns Duke to join Illinois, Arizona and Michigan

By EDDIE PELLIS AP National Writer

All that talent at Arizona and Michigan. All that momentum and good vibes at UConn. And somebody has to play the part of the unheralded "little guy." At the Final Four next weekend, that role belongs, improbably, to Illinois.

In a sign of the times, the Illiniii — a Big Ten team with more wins in the conference over the last seven seasons than any other program — will pass for something resembling Cinderella when college basketball's biggest party kicks off in Indianapolis on Saturday.

The first challenge for coach Brad Underwood's team will be stopping a hard-charging UConn juggernaut that came from 19 points down and got a game-winner from the logo with 0.4 seconds left from an Indy

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 25 of 52

native — Braylon Mullins — to make its third Final Four in the last four years.

The last two times the Huskies reached this point, they won the championship.

"It's a UConn culture, a UConn heart," coach Dan Hurley said. "We believe we're supposed to win this time of year."

All these teams do.

Arizona, led by Brayden Burries, and Michigan, with Yaxel Lendeborg, have up to nine NBA prospects between them.

The Wildcats opened as slight favorites — at plus-165 to win the championship, according to BetMGM Sportsbook. That was a shade ahead of the Wolverines, who are plus-180 after their 95-62 romp over Tennessee on Sunday.

But, in one of a few strange twists on the odds chart, the Wildcats are 1 1/2-point underdogs to Michigan in Saturday night's marquee semifinal, a matchup of No. 1 seeds.

Illinois is a 1 1/2-point favorite over UConn and, in reality, it's the Huskies, at plus-550, who are the biggest long shot in Indy.

Even so, the fact that Illinois — the flagship university in the nation's sixth most populous state and a school with an enrollment of nearly 60,000 — feels most like this year's out-of-nowhere underdog speaks more about the current state of college hoops than the Illini themselves.

They are a No. 3 seed — the highest number at the Final Four in two years. (UConn is a 2. Last season, all four No. 1s made it.)

This year's meeting of 1 vs. 1 — Michigan vs. Arizona — is a heavyweight matchup of power teams from power conferences meeting with everything at stake.

It's a far cry from a mere three years ago, when mid-majors Florida Atlantic (coached by Dusty May, who now leads the Wolverines) and San Diego State crashed college basketball's biggest party.

Since then, NIL and the transfer portal have reshaped the contours of player movement, another spasm of realignment has made the big conferences bigger (Arizona, now in the Big 12, was in the Pac-12 in 2023), and the high-achieving underdogs who used to make March Madness what it is have gone into a slump.

Double-digit seeds won a total of five games in this tournament (not counting the play-in round). Two years ago, they won 11 and sent one team (N.C. State) to the Final Four.

Not surprisingly, Underwood — the coach who landed on the Illinois radar a decade ago by coaching double-digit seed Stephen F. Austin to a pair of upset wins in the tournament — views his program's trip to the Final Four more as destiny than a once-in-a-lifetime story.

It is, however, the first trip for Illinois since 2005, when it lost to North Carolina in the title game.

"I don't want to sound arrogant," said Underwood, whose teams have won 96 Big Ten games since 2019-20, two more than Purdue. "I've never doubted us getting to a Final Four would happen. I have thought we have had other teams capable. But I also know how doggone hard it is to do it."

The Big Ten knows all about this. Both Illinois and Michigan have a chance to deliver a title for the conference for the first time since Michigan State won it all in 2000.

Illinois vs. UConn

The Illini, led by the so-called "Balkan Bloc" — a cohort of players with roots in Eastern Europe — have a potential NBA lottery pick of their own in guard Keaton Wagler.

Even so, the best-known name on the Illini roster might be Andrej Stojakovic, whose father, Peja, was a three-time NBA All-Star. Illinois is the third school in three years for the younger Stojakovic, who spent one season at Stanford and another at Cal before joining Underwood's crew.

The task for Illinois: Figuring out who to key on across a roster that has five players who average double figures, led by Tarris Reed Jr.

Michigan vs. Arizona

The Wildcats-Wolverines game is a high-powered matchup of programs that have shown there's more than one way to amass talent in the era of the unlimited transfer portal and big-money name, image and likeness deals.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 26 of 52

Four of the five starters for Tommy Lloyd's Wildcats began their careers in Tucson; the fifth, Big 12 player of the year Jaden Bradley, moved over from Alabama and has been with the Wildcats for three years.

Meanwhile, the top four players in minutes played at Michigan — Lendeborg, Morez Johnson Jr., Aday Mara and Elliot Cadeau — all arrived from the transfer portal.

In a twist that makes perfect sense these days, both coaches parlayed roots in the mid-majors to a spot on the sport's biggest stage. Lloyd spent decades as a top assistant for Mark Few at Gonzaga before heading to Arizona to rebuild the program after the ouster of Sean Miller in 2021.

May led FAU to the Final Four before heading to the Michigan program that had thrived, then collapsed, under former Fab Five star Juwan Howard.

## **Mullins Madness! Freshman's 35-footer gives UConn a 73-72 win over Duke and a Final Four spot**

By NOAH TRISTER AP Sports Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — Braylon Mullins retrieved a loose ball near midcourt and suddenly, improbably, UConn had a chance to win.

As the frantic final seconds unfolded, Dan Hurley figured a timeout would do little good.

"It just felt like the window where you've just got to let March Madness take over," Hurley said. "March magic."

The Huskies have enjoyed plenty of that through the years, and this may have been their most astonishing win yet. Mullins sank a desperation 3-pointer with 0.4 seconds left to give UConn a 73-72 victory over top-seeded Duke on Sunday, earning the Huskies a spot in the Final Four after they rallied from a 19-point first-half deficit.

The Blue Devils (35-3) led by three before UConn's Silas Demary Jr. made one of two free throws with 10 seconds left. With Duke playing keep-away to prevent the Huskies from fouling, Cayden Boozer's pass near midcourt was deflected by Demary, and after UConn came up with the ball, Mullins swished a 3 from 35 feet away.

"We were trying to foul the worst free-throw shooter on the floor, and Silas ended up deflecting the pass," Mullins said. "I knew I had to put one up. Man, I'm just happy that was the one that went down tonight."

UConn (33-5) went just 5 of 23 from 3-point range. The fifth will be remembered in Connecticut for generations.

It's the second straight season to end in a huge collapse for Duke, which was the top overall seed in this year's tournament. The Blue Devils led by six with 1:14 remaining before falling to Houston in last year's national semifinals.

"I could not be more disappointed and feeling for our guys, at the same time of just trying to process what happened," Duke coach Jon Scheyer said. "I don't have the words. I don't have the words."

Hurley is trying to coach the Huskies to a national title for the third time in four seasons, a feat that hasn't been accomplished since UCLA in the 1970s. UConn now faces third-seeded Illinois in Saturday's semifinal in Indianapolis.

To get there, the Huskies needed one of the biggest comebacks in regional final history. Only Louisville, which came from 20 down to beat West Virginia in 2005, had a bigger one. Duke led 44-25 late in the first half and 44-29 at the break. That's now the largest halftime lead in tournament history blown by a No. 1 seed.

Cameron Boozer, who had 27 points for the Blue Devils, fought his way to a basket inside with 28.9 seconds to play, and the next UConn possession used precious time before Demary was fouled.

After he made one of two, the inbound came to Cameron Boozer, who passed out of a double team to Dame Sarr, who then found Cameron's twin brother, Cayden Boozer, in the middle of the court. Instead of waiting to be fouled, Cayden Boozer — who shoots about 81% from the line — tried for one more pass as Mullins and Demary closed in on him.

"I knew we were the back two guys, and we left whoever was behind us," Mullins said. "We were just

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 27 of 52

trying to make a play.”

There were two Duke players alone deep, but the ball never got there. Demary was able to deflect it and Mullins picked it up near midcourt. He passed to Alex Karaban, who gave it back to Mullins. The freshman was in rhythm, but about halfway between the 3-point arc and half court.

Nothing but net.

It'll go down alongside the great NCAA Tournament game-winning shots, next to Christian Laettner's for Duke in the 1992 Elite Eight against Kentucky and Kris Jenkins' to win the national title for Villanova in 2016. Or Laettner's shot in the 1990 regional final — which turned another Duke-UConn classic from a loss into a win for the Blue Devils.

“Just another chapter in the UConn-Duke NCAA Tournament dramatics,” Hurley said. “Obviously a really tough way for their season to end. I thought they played great. I thought they punched us in the mouth with incredible force.”

The Blue Devils smothered UConn defensively for most of the game, in part because the Huskies missed 17 of their first 18 attempts from beyond the arc. When told of that stat after the game, Hurley laughed and held his hands over his face.

“What the hell did you just say, 1 for 18?” Hurley said. “I knew it was bad. I kept asking the assistant coaches, and no one would tell me what it was.”

Tarris Reed Jr. led UConn with 26 points, and for a while he had little help offensively. The Huskies gradually cut into their deficit in the second half, though, and a 3 by Karaban pulled them within one with under a minute left.

UConn rolls in later rounds, sometimes at Duke's expense

UConn has now won 18 consecutive games in the Sweet 16 or subsequent rounds. The last loss for the Huskies in those stages of the tournament came against Michigan State in the 2009 Final Four.

For all the success Duke has had through the years, the Blue Devils have now had hearts broken by UConn three straight times in the Big Dance. The Huskies beat one of Duke's greatest teams in the 1999 title game and rallied late to beat the Blue Devils in the 2004 semifinals.

This one was a gut punch very much on par with those.

Up next

UConn: The Huskies have met Illinois in the NCAA Tournament once. UConn won 77-52 in the Elite Eight in 2024.

Duke: The Blue Devils are expected to lose Cameron Boozer to the NBA.

## **Pakistan says it will host US-Iran talks, while Iran warns US ground troops would be 'set on fire'**

By MUNIR AHMED, SAMY MAGDY and CARA ANNA Associated Press

ISLAMABAD (AP) — Pakistan announced Sunday that it would soon host talks between the U.S. and Iran, though there was no immediate word from Washington or Tehran, and it was unclear whether discussions on the monthlong war would be direct or indirect.

“Pakistan is very happy that both Iran and the U.S. have expressed their confidence in Pakistan to facilitate the talks. Pakistan will be honored to host and facilitate meaningful talks between the two sides in the coming days,” Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said after top diplomats from Turkey, Egypt and Saudi Arabia met in Islamabad.

Pakistan later said the diplomats had departed for their home countries. The talks were originally scheduled to continue Monday. Pakistan's foreign ministry did not answer questions, and Iran's mission to the United Nations declined to comment.

U.S. President Donald Trump didn't address the potential Pakistan talks but said Sunday night that Washington was in discussions with Iran and “we're doing extremely well in that negotiation.”

Trump was asked aboard Air Force One if Iran had responded to a 15-point ceasefire plan the U.S. has

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 28 of 52

proposed and he said they did, adding: "They gave us most of the points. Why wouldn't they?" He didn't elaborate.

Islamabad has emerged as a mediator, having relatively good ties with Washington and Tehran, after what Pakistani officials call weeks of quiet diplomacy.

Earlier, Iran's parliament speaker, Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf, dismissed the talks in Pakistan as a cover after some 2,500 U.S. Marines trained in amphibious landings arrived in the Middle East. He said Iranian forces were "waiting for the arrival of American troops on the ground to set them on fire and punish their regional partners forever," according to state media.

Iran also threatened to attack homes of U.S. and Israeli "commanders and political officials" in the region. A spokesperson for the Iranian military's joint command, Ebrahim Zolfaghari, cited the "targeting of residential homes of the Iranian people in various cities" and other "malicious actions," state media reported.

"We don't know at what moment our homes could be targeted," said Razzak Saghir al-Mousawi, 71, describing relentless airstrikes as Iranians crossing into Iraq urged the United States to end the war. "I am definitely afraid."

Meanwhile in Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the military will widen its invasion of Lebanon, expanding the "existing security strip" in that country's south while targeting the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group. No details were released.

Over 1 million Lebanese have been displaced in the war. One of them, Mohammad Doghman, called Israel "an expansionist state."

### Fleeing Iranians urge US to end war

The war has threatened global supplies of oil, natural gas and fertilizer and disrupted air travel. Iran's grip on the strategic Strait of Hormuz has shaken markets and prices. Now the Iranian-backed Houthi rebels' entry into the war could threaten shipping on another crucial waterway, the Bab el-Mandeb strait to the Red Sea.

While flying to Washington, Trump said Iran had agreed to allow 20 ships carrying oil through the strait starting Monday morning and continuing over the next few days "out of a sign of respect."

Israel's military said that its air force had intercepted two drones launched from Yemen very early on Monday morning.

Late on Sunday, Israel's military said that over the past 24 hours its fighter jets had dropped more than 120 munitions in Tehran, targeting sites used for weapons research, development and production. Around the same time, Iran's state television said power was back in areas of Tehran that had experienced outages after attacks on electricity facilities.

The Iranian-backed Houthi rebels claimed responsibility for launching their first attack in the current war -- a missile fired at Israel, which was also intercepted -- early on Saturday morning.

More than 3,000 people have been killed in the war that began with U.S. and Israeli strikes on Iran that triggered Iranian attacks against Israel and U.S. military assets and other sites in neighboring Gulf Arab states. The war continues on the digital front as well.

### Egypt says meetings aim for 'direct dialogue'

Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty said the meetings in Pakistan are aimed at opening a "direct dialogue" between the U.S. and Iran, which have largely communicated through mediators. The war began with U.S. and Israeli strikes during indirect talks. Pakistan said the foreign ministers met Sunday without U.S. or Israeli participation.

Iranian officials have rejected a U.S. 15-point "action list" as a framework for a possible peace deal and publicly dismissed the idea of negotiating under pressure. But Iran's state broadcaster has reported that Tehran drafted its own five-point proposal reportedly calling for a halt to killing Iranian officials, guarantees against future attacks, reparations and Iran's "exercise of sovereignty over the Strait of Hormuz."

Iran has eased some restrictions on commercial ships in the strait, agreeing late Saturday to allow 20 more Pakistani-flagged vessels to pass through. It "sends a clear signal that Iran remains open for business with the world, provided the United States abandons coercion," said Asif Durrani, Pakistan's former ambassador to Iran.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 29 of 52

An adviser to the United Arab Emirates, Anwar Gargash, called for any settlement to the war to include “clear guarantees” that Iranian attacks on neighbors will not be repeated. He said Iran’s government has become “the main threat” to Persian Gulf security, and called for compensation for attacks on civilian infrastructure.

Iran threatens strikes on Israeli and US universities

Iran warned of escalation after Israeli airstrikes hit several universities, including ones that Israel claimed were used for nuclear research and development. Concerns over Iran’s nuclear program are at the heart of tensions.

The paramilitary Revolutionary Guard said Iran would consider Israeli universities and branches of U.S. universities in the region “legitimate targets” unless offered safety assurances for Iranian universities, state media reported.

“If the U.S. government wants its universities in the region spared, it should condemn the bombardment” of Iranian universities by midday Monday, the Guard said.

U.S. colleges have campuses in Qatar and the UAE, including Georgetown, New York and Northwestern universities. The American University of Beirut and the Lebanese American University, also in Beirut, moved classes online and called it a precautionary measure.

Iran’s Foreign Ministry has said dozens of universities and research centers have been hit, including the Iran University of Science and Technology and Isfahan University of Technology.

Both sides in the war have threatened to attack civilian facilities, which critics have warned could be a war crime.

Death toll climbs

In Lebanon, officials said more than 1,200 people have been killed. There were fears of more deaths after Netanyahu, speaking on a visit to northern Israel, announced the expanded invasion. Hezbollah “still has residual capability to fire rockets at us,” he said.

Iranian authorities say more than 1,900 people have been killed in the Islamic Republic, while 19 have been reported dead in Israel.

In Iraq, where Iranian-supported militia groups have entered the conflict, 80 members of the security forces have died.

In Gulf states, 20 people have been killed. Four have been killed in the occupied West Bank.

Thirteen U.S. service members have been killed in the war.

## **TSA pay may be coming, but airport delays could persist and ICE agents may not leave soon**

By RIO YAMAT, JOHN RABY and MATT SEDENSKY Associated Press

Even after President Donald Trump ordered emergency pay for Transportation Security Administration agents to ease long security lines, major U.S. airports on Sunday were still urging travelers to arrive hours early — and federal immigration officers brought in to help may not be leaving anytime soon.

Trump’s executive order on Friday instructed the Department of Homeland Security to pay TSA officers immediately, though it’s unclear how quickly travelers will see an impact. The move comes during a busy travel stretch, with spring breaks underway and Passover and Easter approaching.

Tens of thousands of TSA employees have been working without pay since DHS funding lapsed on Valentine’s Day. The department’s shutdown reached 44 days on Sunday, eclipsing the record 43-day shutdown last fall that affected all of the federal government.

Trump deployed Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to some airports a week ago to help with security as TSA callouts rose nationwide — the same officers who may now remain in place if TSA staffing strains continue.

When will ICE’s deployment at airports end?

Making the rounds on Sunday morning news shows, White House border czar Tom Homan said it depends

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 30 of 52

on how many TSA employees would be returning to work after they start receiving their pay.

"ICE is there to help our brothers and sisters in TSA. We'll be there as long as they need us, until they get back to normal operations and feel like those airports are secure," he told CBS' "Face the Nation."

Speaking on CNN's "State of the Union," Homan said it also depends on how many TSA agents "have actually quit and have no plan on coming back to work." Nearly 500 TSA officers have left the agency since the shutdown started, according to DHS.

On Saturday night, Maryland Gov. Wes Moore said in a post on X that more ICE agents were being deployed to Baltimore-Washington International Airport to assist at TSA security checkpoints to "speed up the clearance process for passengers — not immigration enforcement."

When will TSA officers get paid?

Homan, in his CNN interview, said he hopes TSA officers will be paid by Monday or Tuesday.

"It's good news because these TSA officers are struggling," Homan said. "They can't feed their families or pay their rent."

Also on Sunday, Charlotte Douglas International Airport said in a post on X that backpay could arrive for TSA agents beginning Monday.

"While this action provides critical relief, CLT supports long-term solutions to ensure continued stability for this essential workforce," the airport said.

Johnny Jones, secretary-treasurer of the American Federation of Government Employees' TSA chapter, said Sunday that he has heard from workers worried they may not receive their full back pay because TSA management was given very short notice to begin processing payments. He also said TSA agents are concerned they could miss pay for time they were unable to work because they couldn't afford to report for duty.

"It is a disaster in progress," Jones said.

What's the current situation on the ground?

Some of the busiest U.S. airports continued to ask travelers to plan ahead in order to get through security lines.

Houston's main airport, George Bush Intercontinental, warned Sunday evening that TSA wait times could reach four hours or longer. Atlanta's Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport also told passengers to arrive at least four hours early for both domestic and international flights.

LaGuardia Airport posted an alert Sunday evening on its website that "TSA lines are currently longer than usual."

Baltimore-Washington International Airport said Sunday on X that "wait times have greatly subsided on this Spring Break Sunday," but it still asked passengers to show up several hours early. Louis Armstrong International Airport in New Orleans offered the same guidance.

Also on Sunday, passengers could once again see estimated security wait times at the three main airports serving the New York City area — LaGuardia, John F. Kennedy and Newark Liberty.

All three had removed that feature from their websites earlier in the week, citing "rapid" changes in passenger volumes and TSA staffing. For the same reason, they cautioned that the restored wait times may not always "reflect current conditions."

How soon will this help with airport delays?

It's hard to tell.

Caleb Harmon-Marshall, a former TSA officer who runs a travel newsletter called Gate Access, said the staffing crisis won't improve significantly until officers are confident that they won't be subjected to more skipped paychecks.

"It has to be an extended pay for them to come back or want to stay there," he said, estimating longer lines could linger for another week or two.

Jones, the TSA union leader, offered a more optimistic outlook on Sunday, saying he's hopeful that passengers could see wait times ease closer to typical levels once workers are able to afford basic expenses like gas to get to work.

TSA will also have to decide whether to reopen the checkpoints and security lanes they closed or con-

solidated at some airports due to inadequate staffing, which led to passengers standing in screening lines that clogged check-in areas or showing up far too early for their flights.

A handful of airports have experienced daily TSA officer call-out rates of 40% or higher in recent weeks.

## Israeli police prevent Catholic leaders from celebrating Palm Sunday Mass at Jerusalem church

By MELANIE LIDMAN and NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

TEL AVIV, Israel (AP) — Israeli police prevented Catholic leaders from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate a private Mass on the Christian holiday of Palm Sunday for the first time in centuries, setting off a wave of criticism from the United States and others.

Jerusalem's major holy sites, including the church, are closed because of the ongoing Iran war, as the city has come under frequent fire from Iranian missiles.

Early Monday morning, Israel's police said it had approved a "limited prayer framework" for the church, in consultation with the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

On Sunday, the Patriarchate had called the police decision to bar entry "a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure." It prevented two of the church's top religious leaders, including the Latin Patriarch, Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa, and the Custos of the Holy Land, from celebrating Palm Sunday at the place where Christians believe Jesus was crucified.

Palm Sunday commemorates Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem and launches the Holy Week commemorations for Christians which culminates in Easter.

Israeli police said they had notified church authorities on Saturday that no Mass could take place on Palm Sunday because of safety considerations, the lack of access for emergency vehicles in narrow alleys of the Old City and lack of adequate shelter.

In the Monday statement, police said the new framework would aim to "enable freedom of worship." It highlighted that restrictions at holy sites without standard protected spaces — like the cavernous church deep in a maze of tiny alleyways — are meant to "safeguard worshippers" from Iranian attacks.

Earlier this month, shrapnel from the interception of an Iranian missile fell on a rooftop just steps from the church.

However, the Latin Patriarchate said the Church of the Holy Sepulchre had been hosting Masses that aren't open to the public since the Iran war began on Feb. 28, and it was unclear why Sunday's Mass and access by the two priests was any different.

"It's a very, very sacred day for Christians and in our opinion there was no justification for such a decision or such an action," said Farid Jubran, the spokesperson for the Latin Patriarchate of Jerusalem.

Jubran said that the church had requested permission from police for a few religious leaders to enter the church for a private celebration on Sunday — not one that was open to the public. The Patriarchate said that the decision impeded freedom of worship and the status quo in Jerusalem.

The traditional Palm Sunday procession normally sees tens of thousands of Christians from around the world walk from the Mount of Olives down the narrow, hilly streets toward the Old City, waving palm fronds and singing.

The Patriarchate canceled the traditional processional last week because of safety concerns, and has held Masses limited to fewer than 50 worshippers in compliance with the Israeli military's guidelines for civilians.

Pizzaballa instead celebrated Mass in the nearby St. Savior's Monastery, a soaring marble church which is located next to an underground music school that the Israeli military has deemed a safe shelter space. Later on Sunday, Pizzaballa held a prayer for peace at the Dominus Flevit Shrine on the Mount of Olives, but kept his homily concentrated on Jesus and didn't mention the morning's incident.

Pope Leo XIV, at the end of Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square, prayed for all Christians in the Middle East who he said were living through an "atrocious" conflict. He said that "in many cases, they cannot live fully the rites of these holy days," though he didn't elaborate.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 32 of 52

The Vatican spokesman didn't immediately respond when asked to comment on the Jerusalem incident. US, France and Italy criticize decision

The closure sparked a wave of criticism that Israeli authorities had gone too far in restricting worship, including from Israel's top ally, the United States.

U.S. Ambassador Mike Huckabee, a devout evangelical Christian, said that the incident was "an unfortunate overreach."

He said in a statement that the proposed prayer with Pizzaballa and the others was well below the 50-person limit for gatherings. "For the Patriarch to be barred from entry to the Church on Palm Sunday for a private ceremony is difficult to understand or justify," he wrote.

French President Emmanuel Macron condemned the incident, which he said had added to the "concerning increase in violations of the status of the Holy Sites in Jerusalem." In a post on X, Macron wrote: "The free exercise of worship in Jerusalem must be guaranteed for all religions."

Italian authorities across the political spectrum condemned the move to restrict Pizzaballa, an Italian cardinal considered a leading papal contender in the 2025 conclave, to access the church.

The Italian government formally protested the incident to Israeli authorities and summoned Israel's ambassador to Rome for clarification.

Premier Giorgia Meloni said that the police action "constitutes an offense not only against believers but against every community that recognizes religious freedom."

Meloni's conservative government tried to keep a balanced position with Israel during the war in Gaza, supporting Israel's right to defense but condemning the toll on Palestinians. The Italian leader has also said that Italy won't participate in the Iran war, while affirming that the Islamic Republic can't be allowed to possess nuclear weapons.

Israel working to allow partial access

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said there was no "malicious intent" and that the cardinal was prevented from accessing the church because of safety concerns, but that Israel would try to partially open the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the coming days.

"Given the holiness of the week leading up to Easter for the world's Christians, Israel's security arms are putting together a plan to enable church leaders to worship at the holy site in the coming days," Netanyahu wrote on X.

In an interview with Italian Catholic broadcaster TG2000, Pizzaballa said there was difference of opinions with Israeli authorities over accessing the church, but that the dispute remained polite.

"We want to use this situation to try to clarify better what will be done in the coming days, respecting the security of all naturally but also in respect of the right to prayer," he said.

The Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray, is also mostly closed because of safety issues, but authorities are letting up to 50 people at a time pray in an enclosed area adjacent to the plaza.

Smaller churches, synagogues, and mosques are open in Jerusalem's Old City if they are located within a certain distance of a bomb shelter deemed acceptable by Israel's military and, if gatherings are kept under 50 people.

The same limitations apply to most of Israel, where schools have also been closed since the beginning of the Iran war and workplaces can function only where a shelter can be reached in the short time available after an alert.

## Yaxel Lendeborg and deep, unselfish

### Michigan roll into the Final Four, beating Tennessee 95-62

By JAY COHEN AP Sports Writer

CHICAGO (AP) — It was Yaxel Lendeborg, Elliot Cadeau and Aday Mara. Morez Johnson Jr., Trey McKenney and Nimari Burnett, too. The list goes on and on.

Michigan got it done together, just like it has all season long.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 33 of 52

"The biggest focus is playing team basketball," Lendeborg said. "We thrive off of that."

Lendeborg scored 27 points, Cadeau had 10 assists and the deep, unselfish Wolverines rolled into the Final Four, overwhelming Tennessee for a 95-62 victory in the NCAA Tournament on Sunday.

Johnson added 12 points for Michigan, which has 11 victories this season by at least 30 points. Mara had 11 points and blocked two shots in the Midwest Region final.

Making the most of its size and athleticism on both sides of the court, Michigan (35-3) advanced to its first Final Four since 2018 and ninth overall. Next up is a showdown with fellow No. 1 seed Arizona in Saturday's national semifinals.

"We always wanted to play against them, that team," Lendeborg said. "They're a really, really good team, so it's going to be a super fun matchup."

Under second-year coach Dusty May — who took Florida Atlantic to the Final Four in 2023 — the Wolverines became the first school to win at least four games in an NCAA tourney by double digits while scoring at least 90 points in each.

"Our guys have been up to the challenge, to deliver in the biggest moments all year, and nothing changed tonight," May said.

Ja'Kobi Gillespie scored 21 points on 8-of-22 shooting for Tennessee (25-12), which lost in the Elite Eight for the third straight year under Rick Barnes. The 71-year-old coach reached his only Final Four in 2003 with Texas.

Felix Okpara finished with 10 points and seven rebounds for the Volunteers, who shot just 32% (24 of 76) from the field. Each team had 42 rebounds — a major problem for a Tennessee team that usually enjoys an advantage on the glass.

"We certainly know what it takes to get here," Barnes said. "Now we've got to figure out getting through to the next level, and it's on this day, you've got to really be at your best."

Michigan grabbed control with a 21-0 run in the first half, going from a 16-14 deficit with 11:22 left to a 35-16 lead with 6:10 remaining.

"That's when our defense started clicking," Lendeborg said. "We started running out on the break and started doing what we do best, and once that happened, man, I think the game was pretty much called right there."

Once again, Lendeborg was the conductor of an offensive show for the Wolverines. The 6-foot-9 forward switched hands on a slick reverse layup, then made a no-look pass to Roddy Gayle Jr. for a 3-pointer on a fast break. Then he set up a 3 by Cadeau with 7:52 to go.

After Tennessee made a push to get back in the game, Lendeborg scored on a fast break and found McKenney for a 3 at the end of a 7-0 run that made it 48-26 at halftime.

"We didn't do a great job cutting off transition," Okpara said. "I think it was also the point of emphasis going into the game, just kind of taking on the transition game. But we didn't do a great job with that, so they took advantage of that and they converted."

It was more of the same in the second half. Mara, a 7-foot-3 center, stepped outside for one of the Wolverines' 10 3-pointers. The Michigan portion of the United Center crowd cheered wildly when seldom-used reserves Charlie May — the coach's son — and Oscar Goodman entered for the final few minutes.

Goodman scored with 2:32 left and May made a 3 with 1:02 remaining for Michigan's final basket.

"Just playing together and understanding that we all need each other to be successful," said Burnett, who finished with 10 points and seven rebounds. "So making that extra pass, that unselfish play that leads from a good shot to a great shot, I feel like we had a lot of that, especially in the first half that built that lead."

"We like where we are right now at the end of the game."

Lendeborg, who was named the region's Most Outstanding Player, was 10 for 19 from the field. He became the first Michigan player to score at least 23 points in three consecutive NCAA Tournament games since Juwan Howard did it in four straight in 1994.

"We all trust each other," Lendeborg said. "We play hard for each other. We make extra plays for each other. We're going to do whatever we want for each other. So just being able to make it this far and continuing to want to get more, it means a lot."

## Tudor era ends at Tottenham after just 7 matches ahead of fight for Premier League survival

By STEVE DOUGLAS AP Sports Writer

Tottenham chose to part ways with Igor Tudor on Sunday, just seven matches and 44 days into his spell as interim coach of a team that has plunged into a relegation fight in the Premier League.

A club statement on Sunday afternoon read: "We can confirm that it has been mutually agreed for head coach Igor Tudor to leave the club with immediate effect."

Tottenham thanked Tudor for his work and said "An update on a new head coach will be provided in due course."

Tudor's exit leaves Spurs without a head coach heading into the final seven games of the Premier League season, with the London club just one place and one point above the relegation zone.

The Croatian coach was hired on Feb. 14 until the end of the season, but his final match in charge proved to be a 3-0 home loss to Nottingham Forest in the league on March 22, ahead of the international break. That left Tottenham one point above the relegation zone with seven games left as one of England's biggest clubs battles to preserve its nearly 50-year top-flight status.

Tudor lost five of his seven games at Tottenham, including four straight at the start.

After the Forest game, it was announced that Tudor's father had died and the coach didn't undertake his post-match media duties.

Tottenham's statement on Sunday said "We also acknowledge the bereavement that Igor has recently suffered and send our support to him and his family at this difficult time."

Tudor oversaw Tottenham's round-of-16 exit in the Champions League at the hands of Atletico Madrid. That included a humiliating 5-2 loss in the first leg in Madrid, when Tudor substituted his controversially selected backup goalkeeper, Antonin Kinsky, in the 17th minute.

Who comes next?

Former Brighton boss Roberto De Zerbi, ex-Monaco coach Adi Hütter and former Burnley and Everton manager Sean Dyche are among the bookmakers' favorites to take over, or they could turn to Ryan Mason, a boyhood Spurs fan and player who has twice been caretaker before.

Former Spurs manager Harry Redknapp had also expressed interest before Sunday's announcement.

The 79-year-old Redknapp is only a year older than Roy Hodgson, the recently appointed interim head coach of second-tier Bristol City.

Tottenham Hotspur Supporters' Trust said it had been "a season of bad calls."

Its post on X read: "With thanks to Igor and his team for their efforts, and wishing him and his family time to come to terms with their loss.

"In a season of bad calls, let's hope we now see a wise choice for the remainder of the campaign.

"Someone who understands the club and is up to the task in front of them: retaining our Premier League status. Someone we can all be proud of and who can bring some much needed success and enjoyment to our long suffering fanbase."

After Ange

Tottenham started the season with a new manager in Thomas Frank, who replaced Ange Postecoglou in the offseason.

Frank lasted eight months but couldn't replicate his success at previous team Brentford. Tudor was brought in for his first job in English soccer, with a reputation for having an instant impact at clubs, but couldn't arrest Tottenham's slide.

His first match was a 4-1 home loss to Arsenal, Tottenham's fiercest rival and who Tudor described as "probably the best team in the world at this moment" — a comment that, while possibly true, hardly ingratiated him with Spurs fans.

Tottenham had its worst losing streak in its history

Under Tudor, Spurs completed a six-match losing streak — the worst run of results in the club's nearly 144-year history.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 35 of 52

They haven't won any of their last 13 games in the Premier League, dating back to the end of December. Tottenham has been an ever-present in the Premier League since the competition was founded in 1992, and last played in the second tier in the 1977-78 season.

Tudor's conduct toward Kinsky criticized

Tudor faced criticism for his professionalism and man-management for the way he treated Kinsky during the match against Atletico.

The Czech goalkeeper was selected for his first game since October and made two mistakes leading to goals in the opening 15 minutes, prompting Tudor to substitute him.

Tudor didn't acknowledge Kinsky as the young goalkeeper walked off the field and straight down the tunnel.

Former Manchester United goalkeeper Peter Schmeichel felt sorry for Kinsky, saying of Tudor: "What he's done there, for me, he's absolutely killed his career. That's going to take something to get over that."

## Midnight train from Georgia: A view of America from the tracks as airports struggle in the shutdown

By BILL BARROW Associated Press

ABOARD THE CRESCENT (AP) — There's something melodic about watching the sun rise over a rural stillness broken only by the rhythms of steel wheels on tracks. Or so we tell ourselves.

In this case, being aboard a train at all owed more to politics than poetry.

Congress and Donald Trump were mired in their latest budget stalemate, one rooted in the Republican president's immigration crackdown and the tactics of federal forces he has sent to U.S. cities. But this impasse has upended a foundational constant of American life today: easy air travel.

In Atlanta, my hometown airport, cheerfully marketed as the world's busiest, had descended into organized chaos. Unpaid federal employees called out from work, leaving a diminished security staff to screen travelers frustrated by hourslong waits in line. I wanted to get to Washington for the NCAA basketball tournament. So I eliminated the risk of a missed flight and booked the train overnight and into game day across a 650-mile route.

In this fraught moment in U.S. politics, I slowed down and thought about things we take for granted. Who ever ponders the conveniences of that 20th-century innovation, the airplane, that makes 21st-century hustle possible? We book and board. An unconscious, first-world flex of modernity. It's even rarer to grapple with the inconvenience.

My decision had taken me further back, to the 19th century and another defining innovation: the long-distance train.

A 14½-hour weekend train ride is time aplenty to appreciate how completely politics, economics, social strife and fights over identity and belonging have always affected the order of our lives, including how, when and where we move around in these United States. But Amtrak's Crescent also allowed me to see the expanse of our collective experience.

I traversed the urban, suburban and rural breadth of East Coast America. I learned how other travelers came aboard. And in that, I found the portrait of people, past and present, who refuse to be as paralyzed as some of their elected leaders.

Convenience on the railways

There is little glamour late night in a crowded Amtrak station. Children are up past bedtime and tended by frazzled parents. Older adults struggle with luggage and stairs.

Airports are not red-carpet affairs either, of course. But there is a certain cache to Delta's Atlanta-Washington flights. They typically take about two hours gate to gate. They often are slotted at a midpoint gate of the concourse nearest the main terminal. That is almost certainly a nod to members of Congress who use it — but who have lost some airline perks during this extended partial shutdown.

In normal circumstances I can get from my front porch to Capitol Hill or downtown in as little as 4½ hours. Security lines these days could at least double my overall air travel time.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 36 of 52

The train is still longer, and time is money, we are taught. But certainty has value, too, even if it means at 11:29 p.m. departure. And at the Amtrak station, there were no standstill lines, no Transportation Security Administration agents, no ICE agents as stand-ins.

Passengers who arrived mere minutes before departure made it on board and found seats quickly — assigned in boarding order, not predetermined zones that yield jammed aisles. There's no in-seat service or satellite TV. But even coach seats, the lowest Amtrak tier, are as spacious as airline first-class — and there is Wi-Fi, so it's not the 19th century or even 20th century after all.

On board, I heard one crew member joke, "I'm no TSA agent."

The pathways of history

As a boy in rural Alabama, I counted train cars and wondered where they were headed. I've since read diary entries and letters from my grandmother and her sisters recounting World War II-era weekend trips to Atlanta.

The South's largest city has a historical hook, too. Originally named "Terminus," Atlanta developed in the antebellum era as a critical intersection of north-south and east-west rail routes. That is what drew Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman for one of the Civil War's seminal campaigns that helped defeat the Confederacy.

A century after the Civil War, Delta chose Atlanta for its headquarters rather than Birmingham, Alabama, which was the larger city as of the 1960 census. The company's decision was tied up in tax breaks for the airline, named for its crop duster origins in the Mississippi Delta region. According to some interpretations, Delta's decision was made easier because of the more overt racism of Alabama's and Birmingham's leaders as they defended Jim Crow — a code that, among other acts, allowed states to segregate the passenger trains that predated Amtrak.

On this night, I heard many languages and accents, notable given the role that immigrant labor played in building the U.S. rail system and especially striking now with immigration — legal and illegal — at the forefront in Washington, my destination. I saw faces that reflected U.S. pluralism, a different mix from what my grandmother and aunts would have seen a lifetime ago.

The array of voices celebrated the freedom and ease of rail travel. So did Agatha Grimes and her friends after they boarded in Greensboro, North Carolina, as part of a long weekend trip to celebrate her 62nd birthday.

"I got stuck in the Atlanta airport last week," Grimes said, as her group laughed together in the dining car. "It's just nuts."

Beretta Nunnally, a self-described "train veteran" who organized their trip, said, "There's no worry about parking. No checking bags. You come to the station, you get where you going, and you come home."

An era for planes, trains and automobiles

Still, that is not as easy in the United States as it once was.

Just as politics, economics and subsidies helped grow U.S. railroads, those factors diminished the network as auto manufacturers, oil companies, roadbuilders and, finally, airline manufacturers and airlines commanded favor from politicians and attention from consumers.

Riding hours across rural areas, I noticed the junkyards where kudzu and chain-link fencing framed rows of rusted automobiles. I saw the farmland and equipment that helps feed cities and the rest of the nation. I awoke to see the night lights of office towers in Charlotte, North Carolina, and its NFL stadium. I saw vibrant county seats — and I thought of countless other towns like them that are not thriving as they sit disconnected from passenger rail and far from the Eisenhower-era interstate system that we crossed multiple times on our way.

In each setting, voters — conservatives, liberals, the extremes and between — have chosen their representatives, senators and a president who now set the nation's course.

When I arrived in Washington, I paused to enjoy Union Station's grand hall and its Beaux Arts appeal, and I lamented how much splendor has been lost because so many striking U.S. terminals have been razed. I stepped outside and looked up at the Capitol dome.

While I had slept, the Senate managed a bipartisan deal to fund all of the Department of Homeland Security except immigration enforcement. As I continued northward, House Republican leaders rejected

it. The stalemate continued.

I was a weary traveler but renewed citizen. I had a game to get to. And the train rolled on.

## **Dozens arrested for failing to disperse after 'No Kings' rally in Los Angeles**

By JOHN RABY Associated Press

Authorities in Los Angeles deployed tear gas near a federal detention center and made dozens of arrests following one of thousands of "No Kings" rallies held this weekend across the United States and in Europe to protest President Donald Trump's actions and the war in Iran.

Los Angeles police said Sunday that 74 people were arrested for failing to heed a dispersal order that was given after Saturday's rally ended. One other person was taken into custody on suspicion of possessing a weapon that police described as a dagger.

The arrests stood out from what otherwise were mostly peaceful protests. Organizers said there were more than 3,100 events registered in all 50 U.S. states.

As hundreds of protesters surrounded a federal complex in downtown Los Angeles, some threw rocks, bottles and broken concrete blocks at officers, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security said in a statement late Saturday night.

Two officers who were struck by concrete blocks sustained undetermined injuries and received medical attention, DHS said.

Andre Andrews Jr., a Navy veteran and independent journalist, had walked the entire route of the Los Angeles rally and captured video of the event. He said after authorities gave the dispersal order, they deployed tear-gas canisters when protesters didn't comply. Some protesters wearing shields and gas masks on the other side of a fence at the federal complex picked up the canisters and tossed them back at police. Andrews said some people also smashed concrete barriers into smaller pieces and threw them at authorities.

"Does it make L.A. look bad? No. They're bad actors causing problems, for sure," Andrews said. "The peaceful protest was good for the cause. You have the right to do that. But the other people, they were definitely causing problems."

Police said those arrested included eight juveniles. Also detained was a woman dressed as the Statue of Liberty, smiling as she chatted with an officer who led her away.

In Denver, the police department said on the social platform X that it declared an unlawful assembly and deployed smoke canisters after a small group of protesters blocked a road and did not leave as asked. At least eight people were arrested, as was a ninth person later who police said was throwing objects.

Nationwide, people rallied from New York City, with almost 8.5 million residents in a solidly blue state, to Driggs, a town of fewer than 2,000 people in eastern Idaho, a state Trump carried with 66% of the vote in 2024. In Minnesota, a flagship event on the Capitol lawn in St. Paul drew Bruce Springsteen as its headliner to celebrate resistance to Trump's aggressive immigration enforcement.

Demonstrations also were held in more than a dozen other countries, according to co-executive director Ezra Levin of Indivisible, which spearheaded the events.

U.S. organizers have estimated that the first two rounds of No Kings rallies drew more than 5 million people in June and 7 million in October. Levin estimated at least 8 million participants showed up Saturday.

"It was powerful. It was historic. It was joyful. It was boisterous," Levin said Sunday. "I'd say it went pretty well."

## North Korea conducts engine test for missile capable of targeting US mainland

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korean leader Kim Jong Un observed a test of an upgraded solid-fuel engine for weapons capable of reaching the U.S. mainland, and called it a significant development boosting his country's strategic military arsenal, state media reported Sunday.

While the test was in line with Kim's stated goal of acquiring more agile, hard-to-detect missiles targeting the U.S. and its allies, some experts speculate North Korea's claim may be an exaggeration. Missiles with built-in solid propellants are easier to move and conceal their launches than liquid-fuel weapons, which in general must be fueled before liftoffs and cannot last long.

The official Korean Central News Agency reported Kim watched the ground jet test of the engine using a composite carbon fiber material. It said the engine's maximum thrust is 2,500 kilonewtons, up from about 1,970 kilonewtons reported in a similar solid-fuel engine test in September.

KCNA reported the test was conducted as part of the country's five-year arms build-up meant to upgrade "strategic strike means," a term referring to nuclear-capable ballistic missiles and other weapons. Kim said the latest engine test had "great significance in putting the country's strategic military muscle on the highest level," according to KCNA. The agency did not say when or where the test occurred.

North Korea's report on the latest test could be "bluffing" as it didn't disclose some key information like the engine's total combustion time, said Lee Choon Geun, an honorary research fellow at South Korea's Science and Technology Policy Institute.

When North Korea reported about the previous engine test in September, it described it as the ninth and final ground test of a solid-fuel engine that it earlier said would be used for intercontinental ballistic missiles. Observers predicted at the time North Korea would soon test-launch an ICBM loaded with that engine, but it hasn't done so yet.

North Korea's solid-fuel engine program may be facing some delays or the country might have determined to develop a better engine, possibly with Russian assistance, Lee said. Cooperation between the countries has deepened in recent years, with the North sending troops and conventional weapons to support Russia's war against Ukraine.

In recent years, North Korea has test-fired a variety of ICBMs demonstrating the potential range to reach the U.S. mainland, including solid-fuel ones. But some of North Korea's past claims about major weapons tests drew outside skepticism. In 2024, North Korea claimed to have successfully test-launched a multiwarhead missile, but South Korea quickly dismissed it as deception to cover up a failed launch.

Some foreign experts say North Korea still faces technological hurdles before it has a functioning ICBM, such as ensuring its warheads survive the harsh conditions of atmospheric reentry. But others dispute that assessment given the number of years the country has spent on its nuclear and missile programs.

Possession of more powerful and efficient solid-fuel engines would allow North Korea to build smaller ICBMs that can be launched from submarines or land-based mobile launch trucks, Lee said. Other observers say a push to increase the engine power is likely associated with efforts to place multiple warheads on a single missile to increase chances of defeating U.S. defenses.

North Korea has pushed hard to expand its nuclear arsenal since Kim's high-stakes diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019. In a ruling Workers' Party congress in February, Kim left open the door for dialogue with Trump but urged Washington to drop demands for the North's nuclear disarmament as a precondition for talks.

## 'Project Hail Mary' flies to \$54.5 million second weekend, horror reaches a saturation point

By JAKE COYLE AP Film Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — "Project Hail Mary" stayed aloft in its second weekend, holding strongly with \$54.5 million, according to studio estimates Sunday, and adding to the long-term prospects of the year's biggest hit thus far.

The Phil Lord and Chris Miller sci-fi adventure, starring Ryan Gosling, dipped only 32% after notching the best non-franchise opening weekend since 2023's "Oppenheimer." Amazon MGM's yet, "Project Hail Mary" has grossed \$300.8 million worldwide in two weeks.

"Project Hail Mary," which cost nearly \$200 million to produce, didn't face any significant new competition and kept premium format screens largely to itself. Potentially the weekend's most watched movie, the KPop documentary "BTS: The Return," went straight to streaming on Netflix.

But "Project Hail Mary" is on an enviable trajectory. Its second weekend hold was even better than that of "Oppenheimer," which collected \$46.7 million in its follow-up frame.

Meanwhile, the weekend's top new release, "They Will Kill You," debuted with a disappointing \$5 million for Warner Bros. The gory R-rated horror film stars Zazie Beetz as a woman who applies to be a maid at an apartment complex where she's to become a sacrificial offering.

While the result was far from catastrophic for a movie with a modest \$20 million budget, it did suggest that theaters may have become oversaturated in horror. David A. Gross, who runs the movie consulting firm FranchiseRe, noted that there has been a new horror film released every weekend for the last 14 weekends.

That included last week's "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come" (\$16.3 million domestically so far) and a second horror-comedy that also debuted this weekend. IFC's "Forbidden Fruits," about a coven of witches who work at a Texas mall, debuted with \$1.2 million in sales.

Despite the glut, Gross is forecasting horror films will account for about \$2.1 billion in North American ticket revenue in 2026, down from \$2.75 billion last year. While horror remains popular with audiences and relatively cheap to produce, the genre may be approaching overkill.

Meanwhile, family movies continue to thrive. The Pixar original "Hoppers" remained in second place with \$12.2 million in its fourth weekend. The Walt Disney Co. release has accumulated \$297.6 million globally.

Next weekend, though, it will face stiff competition in Universal Pictures' "The Super Mario Galaxy Movie." It's expected to have the biggest opening of 2026.

Top 10 movies by domestic box office

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

1. "Project Hail Mary," \$54.5 million.
2. "Hoppers," \$12.2 million.
3. "They Will Kill You," \$5 million.
4. "Dhurandhar The Revenge," \$4.8 million.
5. "Reminders of Him," \$4.7 million.
6. "Ready or Not 2: Here I Come," \$4 million.
7. "Scream 7," \$2.6 million.
8. "GOAT," \$2.2 million.
9. "Undertone," \$1.7 million.
10. "Forbidden Fruits," \$1.2 million.

## Pope Leo XIV rejects claims that God justifies war in Palm Sunday Mass message

By NICOLE WINFIELD Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Pope Leo XIV said Sunday that God doesn't listen to the prayers of those who make war or cite God to justify their violence, as he prayed especially for Christians in the Middle East during a Palm Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square.

With the U.S.-Israeli war on Iran entering its second month and Russia's ongoing campaign in Ukraine, Leo dedicated his Palm Sunday homily to his insistence that God is the "king of peace" who rejects violence.

"Brothers and sisters, this is our God: Jesus, King of Peace, who rejects war, whom no one can use to justify war," Leo said. "He does not listen to the prayers of those who wage war, but rejects them, saying: 'Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen: your hands are full of blood.'"

Leaders on all sides of the Iran war have used religion to justify their actions. U.S. officials, especially Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth, have invoked their Christian faith to cast the war as a Christian nation trying to vanquish its foes with military might.

Russia's Orthodox Church, too, has justified Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a "holy war" against a Western world it considers has fallen into evil.

Palm Sunday marks Jesus' triumphant entrance into Jerusalem in the time leading up to his crucifixion, which Christians observe on Good Friday, and resurrection on Easter Sunday.

In a special blessing at the end of Mass, Leo said he was praying especially for Christians in the Middle East who are "suffering the consequences of an atrocious conflict. In many cases, they cannot live fully the rites of these holy days."

Earlier Sunday, Jerusalem police prevented the Catholic Church's top leadership from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate Palm Sunday Mass in private. It was the first time in centuries church leaders were prevented from celebrating Palm Sunday at the place where Christians believe Jesus was crucified, the Patriarchate said.

Israeli police said the request for access from Cardinal Pierbattista Pizzaballa and others had been denied, since all holy sites in the Old City of Jerusalem were closed to worshippers for security reasons. A police statement said freedom of worship would continue to be upheld "subject to necessary restrictions."

Following a torrent of criticism, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel would try to partially open the Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the coming days.

Leo said that during Holy Week, Christians cannot forget how many people around the world are suffering as Christ did. "Their trials appeal to the conscience of all. Let us raise our prayers to the Prince of Peace so that he may support people wounded by war and open concrete paths of reconciliation and peace," Leo said.

A Holy Week that recalls Pope Francis' suffering

For many people at the Vatican, the start of Holy Week this year brings back memories of the final suffering days of Pope Francis, who died on Easter Monday.

When Holy Week opened last year, Francis was still recovering at the Vatican after a five-week hospital stay for double pneumonia. He had delegated the liturgical celebrations to others, but rallied on Easter Sunday to greet the faithful from the loggia of St. Peter's Square. Most poignantly, he then made what became his final popemobile loop around the piazza.

Francis died the following morning after suffering a stroke. His nurse, Massimiliano Strappetti, later told Vatican Media that Francis had told him: "Thank you for bringing me back to the square" for the final salute.

Leo is due to preside over this week's liturgical appointments and is returning to tradition with the Holy Thursday foot-washing ceremony that commemorates Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples.

During his 12-year pontificate, Francis famously celebrated the Holy Thursday ritual by traveling to Rome-area prisons and refugee centers to wash the feet of people most on society's margins. His aim was to drive home the ritual's message of service and humility, and he would frequently muse during his Holy Thursday homilies "Why them and not me?"

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 41 of 52

Francis' gesture had been praised as a tangible evidence of his belief that the church must go to the peripheries to find those most in need of God's love and mercy. But some critics bristled at the annual outings, especially since Francis would also wash the feet of Muslims and people of other faiths.

Leo restores Holy Week foot-washing tradition

Leo, history's first U.S.-born pope, is returning the Holy Thursday foot-washing tradition to the basilica of St. John Lateran, where popes performed it for decades. The Vatican hasn't yet said who will participate, though Popes Benedict XVI and John Paul II normally washed the feet of 12 priests.

On Friday, Leo is due to preside over the Good Friday procession at Rome's Colosseum commemorating Christ's Passion and crucifixion. Saturday brings the late night Easter Vigil, during which Leo will baptize new Catholics, followed a few hours later by Easter Sunday when Christians commemorate the resurrection of Jesus.

Leo will celebrate Easter Sunday Mass in St. Peter's Square and then deliver his Easter blessing from the loggia of the basilica.

## Europe seeks to increase deportations as some warn of Trump-like tactics

By SAM McNEIL and GIADA ZAMPANO Associated Press

BRUSSELS (AP) — The European Union is expanding its powers to track, raid and deport migrants to "return hubs" in third countries in Africa and elsewhere, quietly adopting tactics of the Trump administration that have drawn public criticism across the 27-nation bloc.

The EU continues to tighten migration policies after right-wing parties took power in some countries in 2024. European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen, from the center-right European People's Party coalition, has said that the new measures will prevent a repeat of the 2015 crisis caused by Syria's civil war, when about 1 million people arrived to seek asylum.

"We have learnt the lessons of the past. And today, we are better equipped," von der Leyen has said. The new policies, known as the Pact on Migration and Asylum, go into effect on June 12.

Far-right parties in Europe have praised the deportation policies of U.S. President Donald Trump and called for the EU to adopt a similar approach. Human rights groups warn that authorities are already illegally pushing back migrants at EU borders and hollowing out their legal protections.

Italy provides a model

The EU already spends millions of dollars to deter migrants before they reach its shores, and has supported tens of thousands of Africans returning home, voluntarily or by force.

What's envisioned now is an expansion of what Italy has created under Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni and her "tough on migration" stance. It operates two migrant detention centers for rejected asylum-seekers in Albania. One currently holds at least 90 migrants, said lawmaker Rachele Scarpa, who said that she found people confused and scared during a recent visit.

In addition, Meloni's Cabinet has approved an anti-immigration package that would allow the navy to halt vessels in international waters for up to six months if they are deemed a threat to public order; return intercepted migrants to countries of origin or third countries; and speed up the deportation of foreign nationals convicted of crimes.

An "informal group" of EU nations including Germany, Austria, the Netherlands, Denmark and Greece are pursuing deportation center agreements, said Bernd Parusel, a researcher at the Swedish Institute for European Policy Studies.

Kenya is one country they are speaking with, said Tineke Strik, a Dutch member of the European Parliament. Whether consciously or not, the plan is similar to Trump's deals with nations like El Salvador to take in deported migrants, she said.

Other countries are exploring similar ideas. Sweden's migration minister has said the conservative ruling coalition approves setting up hubs outside Europe, especially for Afghan and Syrian asylum-seekers.

Some in Europe cheer Trump-style tactics

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 42 of 52

During the Winter Olympics in Italy, protests erupted over the deployment of U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agents to provide security to the U.S. delegation. But others in Europe have praised ICE's actions and called for setting up deportation-focused police units.

In 2024, Belgium passed a law allowing the EU border service Frontex operations inside the country, stoking fears among activists that Frontex could join in on raids.

But Frontex's mandate just covers borders, said spokesperson Chris Borowski, and the current role in voluntary or involuntary returns for the service includes "coordinating flights, helping with travel documents and making sure fundamental rights are respected throughout the process."

The European Commission has declined requests to take a position on U.S. federal immigration policies. In Britain, which left the EU several years ago, the center-left Labour Party government has made curbing unauthorized immigration a key focus.

In February, the Home Office said that almost 60,000 people had been deported since the government was elected in July 2024. It said 9,000 arrests were made of people working without permission in 2025, up by more than half from the year before.

Pushbacks, raids and surveillance increase

Under the principle of non-refoulement in EU and international law, a person can't be returned to a country where they would face persecution.

But European immigration enforcement tactics include so-called pushbacks, where people trying to cross into the EU are forced back across a border without access to asylum procedures.

Authorities in Europe carry out an average of 221 pushbacks a day, according to a February report by a group of humanitarian organizations. More than 80,000 pushbacks were recorded in 2025, the report said, mostly in Italy, Poland, Bulgaria and Latvia.

"Men, women and children — including individuals in critical medical condition — are routinely subjected to beatings, attacks by police dogs, forced stripping, forced river crossings and theft of personal belongings," according to the report.

European agents are brutalizing migrants just like in the U.S., said Flor Didden, migration policy expert at the Belgian human rights group 11.11.11. Some, like in Greece, even wear masks.

"The images are shocking and the outrage is justified," he said of the U.S. "But where is that same moral clarity when European border authorities abuse, rob and let people die?"

Europe still has more protections for migrants

The groups also have recorded an expansion of surveillance technology like drones, thermal cameras and satellites to monitor people on the move.

Other human rights groups warn of a weakening of legal protections.

The EU's new migration regulations allow for more police raids in private homes and public spaces and more use of surveillance and racial profiling, said a letter to EU institutions in February from 88 nonprofit groups including the Brussels-based Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants.

"We cannot be outraged by ICE in the United States while also supporting these practices in Europe," said the platform's director, Michele LeVoy.

Olivia Sundberg Diez, EU migration advocate for Amnesty International, said Europe retains more protections for vulnerable migrants than the United States but shares much of the political momentum toward harsher policies.

"There's a level of institutions' and courts' independence and human rights compliance in Europe that you can't disregard," she said. "But the fundamental political impulse is the same, and I worry that the human consequences will be the same."

## Extreme weather in Afghanistan leaves 17 people dead, authorities say

KABUL, Afghanistan (AP) — Severe flooding, a landslide and thunderstorms in parts of Afghanistan left 17 people dead and 26 injured over the last 24 hours, with more heavy rainfall predicted, authorities said Sunday, the latest casualties from extreme weather in the country this season.

The number of casualties could increase as crews from the country's National Disaster Management Authority survey the affected areas, the authority's spokesman, Yousuf Hammad, said in a statement. Thirteen of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, mostly in the western, central and northwestern parts of the country, were affected.

The severe weather also left 147 homes either completely or partially destroyed, wiped out 80 kilometers (about 50 miles) of roads and destroyed agricultural land and irrigation canals and businesses, Hammad said. In all, he said, 530 families were affected.

Heavy rainfall was also forecast to affect eastern and central parts of the country Monday, and Hammad warned flooding was also possible in those areas. The disaster management authority warned residents to avoid river banks and areas at risk of flooding in those regions, and ordered local officials to be on standby to provide assistance.

Earlier this year, heavy snowfall and flash floods left dozens of people dead across the country.

Afghanistan is highly vulnerable to extreme weather events, with snow and heavy rain that trigger flash floods, often killing dozens, or even hundreds, of people at a time. In 2024, more than 300 people died in springtime flash floods.

Decades of conflict, coupled with poor infrastructure, a struggling economy, deforestation and the intensifying effects of climate change have amplified the impact of such disasters, particularly in remote areas where many homes are built of mud and offer limited protection against sudden deluges or heavy snowfall.

## Jerusalem heads into a subdued Passover and Easter under the shadow of the Iran war

By MELANIE LIDMAN Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Jerusalem's major holy sites are shuttered and families are dejected and exhausted ahead of Passover and Easter as the Iran war enters its fifth week. The mood stands in stark contrast to a usual spring, when longer days herald a period of family gatherings and an influx of tourists for the major Jewish and Christian holidays.

Metal shutters are drawn on nearly all stores in the Old City, home to key holy sites, and only scattered footsteps echo on deserted stone alleyways. Vast plazas are missing the typical throngs of faithful and tourists.

Jerusalem has largely escaped past wars, with Israel's enemies appearing to be hesitant to launch missiles near the city's Muslim holy sites. But since Israel and the United States launched strikes on Iran on Feb. 28, Jerusalem has repeatedly come under fire.

Earlier this month, an intercepted Iranian missile sprayed shrapnel on the rooftop of the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate, just steps from the Church of the Holy Sepulcher, one of the most important sites in Christianity. The church, built on what is revered by many Christians as the site of Jesus' crucifixion, burial and resurrection, remains closed under Israeli military guidelines prohibiting gatherings of more than 50 people.

Missile debris also hit a road leading to the Western Wall, the holiest site where Jews can pray.

From his office overlooking the plaza at the Western Wall, now also closed to worshippers, Rabbi Shmuel Rabinowitz, lamented the empty plaza.

"The heart aches greatly, it bleeds, seeing the Western Wall as it looks now," he said.

The massive priestly blessing for Passover, which usually draws tens of thousands, will take place with just 50 worshippers, Rabinowitz said. That's the maximum allowed to pray together in the enclosed area by the Western Wall under wartime safety guidelines — reminiscent of the restrictions imposed during

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 44 of 52

the coronavirus pandemic.

Easter celebrations are canceled

The Latin Patriarchate canceled the Palm Sunday procession in Jerusalem, complying with Israeli military guidelines that limited gatherings to under 50 people.

Despite that, the Patriarchate said Jerusalem police prevented the Catholic Church's top leaders from entering the Church of the Holy Sepulchre to celebrate the Mass marking Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The church called it "a manifestly unreasonable and grossly disproportionate measure" and said it was "the first time in centuries" that its leaders were prevented from celebrating Palm Sunday at the place where Christians believe Jesus was crucified.

The Jerusalem police said the leaders were informed that they could not enter the church due to safety concerns, since it does not have adequate emergency access or shelters in case of a missile attack.

The traditional Palm Sunday procession normally sees tens of thousands of Christians from around the world walk from the Mount of Olives down the narrow, hilly streets toward the Old City, waving palm fronds and singing.

Rami Asakrieh, the parish priest for Jerusalem's Catholics, said the community will sorely miss the procession, a deeply emotional and spiritual part of the holiday. But the cancellation is also a reminder that faith comes internally from the heart, not from external actions, he added.

"We are celebrating resurrection, resurrection is from death and winning the pain and the war," he said. "It will not come by having fear, but by having faith."

A local Catholic high school, empty of students as classes have been canceled, was also recently hit by debris from an Iranian missile interception, Asakrieh said.

A Franciscan priest, Asakrieh is still celebrating Mass for up to 50 parishioners at the Saint Savoir monastery's cavernous marble hall, near the centuries-old complex's music school, the Magnificat Institute. The school was built in what was once the convent's basement, which has been approved by the Israeli military as a suitable shelter.

Jerusalem's smaller synagogues, mosques and churches are also open to groups of up to 50 people — if they are located close to a shelter or a safe space.

Closed for most of Ramadan

Next to the Western Wall is Al Aqsa Mosque compound, Islam's third-holiest site, which has also stood empty since the war started, canceling prayers during most of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which ended 10 days ago.

Fayez Dakkak, a third-generation Muslim storeowner in the Old City whose shop has catered to Christian pilgrims since 1942, said he was heartbroken over Al Aqsa's closure during the Islamic holy month.

"It's like there was no Ramadan for us," Dakkak said. He added that he prayed several times at a local mosque but that it can't compare to being able to pray at Al Aqsa.

Police orders have closed his shop, along with all non-food stores in the Old City — also part of the safety guidelines during the war.

Dakkak said that for years now, as the numbers of pilgrims and tourists plummeted, he's barely been able to make ends meet. Still, it would have been nice to open his shop for some semblance of routine and just chat with other storeowners.

Cleaning for Passover, running for the shelter

Israelis have also grown weary after nearly a month of daily sirens, 16 civilian deaths and dozens of people seriously injured.

For seder, Jewish families are planning smaller, stripped-down ceremonial Passover dinners that commemorate the Jewish exodus from Egypt — a far cry from times when large family gatherings often welcomed relatives from abroad. Israel's Ben Gurion airport has been operating on a severely limited basis throughout the war. Many point out the irony that ahead of Passover, Israelis are fleeing the country through the land border crossing with Egypt to the Sinai desert, while the holiday commemorates the story of ancient Israelites leaving Egypt via Sinai to Israel.

Observant Jewish families are frantically cleaning for Passover to remove traces of leavening, which requires "turning the house upside-down in between running for the shelter," said Jamie Geller, a cookbook author who works in Jerusalem's Old City.

From her office at Aish, a Jewish educational institute with headquarters next to the Western Wall plaza, Geller can see where shrapnel dented and smashed rooftops, roads and a parking lot in the area.

"It's shocking," she said. "The Old City has always been a bit off limits for international terror and war, but not this time."

## **A Houthi missile attack on Israel stokes fears of renewed Red Sea shipping strikes**

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — A missile attack on Israel by Iranian-backed Houthi rebels in Yemen on Saturday raises concern that Tehran's proxies may again try to block Red Sea shipping routes, as Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz keeps another key global trade passage virtually closed.

The Houthis said they fired a barrage of missiles at "sensitive Israeli military sites" in southern Israel, their first since the start of the war in the Middle East a month ago. The Israeli military said it intercepted a missile fired from Yemen.

When asked about the Houthis, Israeli military spokesperson Brig. Gen. Effie Defrin replied: "We are preparing for a multifront war."

The Houthis are a key Iranian ally

The Houthis are a crucial part of Iran's so-called "Axis of Resistance," which includes militant groups in Lebanon, Iraq and the Palestinian territories. They control the Yemeni capital of Sanaa and much of the country's north, and since 2014 have fought a civil war against the internationally recognized government that is backed by a Saudi-led coalition.

Unlike Lebanon's Hezbollah and militant groups in Iraq, the Houthis in Yemen had held back for a month since the U.S. and Israel launched attacks on Iran on Feb. 28.

Red Sea shipping attacks would further disrupt the global economy

Now that they have entered the war with a missile attack on Israel, there are growing concerns that they could start attacking shipping in the Red Sea. Such a move would further disrupt the maritime industry and the global economy since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz has shaken markets and energy prices. The rebels also have the capability of striking oil facilities in the Persian Gulf as they did previously during the Yemen civil war.

The Houthis said they won't allow the U.S. and Israel to use the Red Sea for attacks on Iran. "Our fingers are on the trigger," Brig. Gen. Yahya Saree, a military spokesman for the Houthis, said in a statement Friday.

The Houthi attacks on vessels would not only further push up oil prices but destabilize "all of maritime security," said Ahmed Nagi, a senior Yemen analyst at the International Crisis Group. "The impact would not be limited to the energy market."

Since the closure of the Strait of Hormuz, Saudi Arabia has been sending millions of barrels of crude oil a day through Bab el-Mandeb, at the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula.

The 32-kilometer (20-mile)-wide strait is one of the busiest for global oil trade. A fourth of global container trade also transits through the strait on its way to and from the Suez Canal. Disrupting transit through Bab al-Madab forces shipping firms to route their vessels around the Cape of Good Hope, as they did in 2024 and 2025, significantly increasing costs.

About 12% of the world's trade typically passes through Suez, including oil, natural gas, grain and everything from toys to electronics.

"It would be devastating for so many countries," Nagi said. "If we see more pressure on the Iranians, or there's any escalation, the Houthis will jump in harshly."

Red Sea is a critical corridor for Europe's natural gas

Such attacks will add more pressure on energy supplies for the 27-nation European Union, which relies

on imported natural gas to power factories, generate electricity and heat homes. Tankers carrying liquefied natural gas — which is supercooled to travel by ship instead of pipeline — routinely pass through the Red Sea.

The Houthis attacked over 100 merchant vessels with missiles and drones, sinking two vessels and killing four sailors, from November 2023 until January 2025, and also launched projectiles at Israel. They said their attacks were in support of Hamas during the war in Gaza.

The U.S. and Israel responded with a punishing air campaign across the Houthi-held areas in Yemen, which killed many people, including most of the Houthi-allied Cabinet in Sanaa. President Donald Trump halted U.S. strikes on the Houthis after a deal that saw the rebels stopping their attacks on ships in the Red Sea.

## **Swift and widespread, efforts to rebrand César Chavez Day are fueled by emotion and duty**

By SUSAN MONTOYA BRYAN Associated Press

From California to Minnesota, elected leaders and civil rights groups are scrambling to distance themselves from César Chavez's name in the wake of allegations that he sexually abused women and girls during the 1960s as he became the face of the farmworkers' movement.

Efforts have been swift and widespread to rebrand events ahead of what typically was a day to celebrate the life and legacy of the Latino rights advocate on his birthday, March 31.

In Tucson, Arizona, last weekend's celebration was instead billed as a community and labor fair. In Grand Junction, Colorado, it's now the Sí, Se Puede Celebration. El Paso, Texas, will mark Tuesday as Community and Labor Heritage Day.

Lawmakers in Minnesota voted this week to end the César Chavez holiday in their state, while California Gov. Gavin Newsom on Thursday signed a bill to rename César Chavez Day as Farmworkers Day. In Colorado, lawmakers were considering a bill to rename the voluntary state holiday there to Farm Workers Day.

Renaming efforts also are underway for dozens of schools, streets and other locations across the United States that are named for Chavez, including the national monument in Keene, California.

The resulting conversations have been anything but easy as supporters grapple with conflicted feelings while sorting out how best to honor what was a pivotal labor and civil rights effort in the United States.

A betrayal

Feelings of disappointment, disbelief and even anger have made for an emotional cocktail for those charting the path forward.

The New York Times recently reported that it found César Chavez groomed and sexually abused young girls who worked in the movement. The movement's co-founder, Dolores Huerta, also revealed that she was a victim of the abuse in her 30s.

"It was a personal hurt and a betrayal," said Jose Luis Chavez, founder and president of the committee that has organized the César Chavez Celebration for Mesa County, Colorado, for the past decade. The committee is made up of people who have worked in the agricultural industry and whose grandparents and parents cut grapes and picked peaches.

"I think that's what my committee was feeling, and I think when we look at our community here, that is what people are still feeling," said Jose Luis Chavez, who is not related to the famous civil rights leader. "They're feeling a lot of hurt and a lot anger."

Born from a desire to educate students about marginalized communities, the annual celebration in Grand Junction has evolved into a gathering with music, food, classic cars and high school students taking the stage to accept scholarships.

Canceling it simply wasn't an option, Jose Luis Chavez said.

The logo was adjusted to include the words "Sí, se puede" — the rallying cry coined by Huerta that translates as "Yes, it can be done." A flurry of social media posts let people know the event would go on under a new name.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 47 of 52

Finding a broader focus

The annual César Chavez and Dolores Huerta March and Rally in Tucson was scaled back and rebranded. There was no march or car show last weekend and it was billed instead as the Comunidad y Labor Unity Fair, focusing more broadly on labor rights without mentioning Chavez.

Organizers with the Arizona César E. Chávez + Dolores Huerta Holiday Coalition encouraged supporters of the movement to continue showing up for one another.

"Even when we thought about canceling, we chose to keep going, because this movement is bigger than a name or one person," the group said in a social media post. "No single individual defines it. ... We, the working people, do."

It's a chorus that has resonated loudly and consistently since the allegations became public. While there have been calls in Texas and elsewhere to remove the holiday altogether, the groups that are pushing ahead are driven by a sense of duty to the overall legacy of the movement.

Sehila Mota Casper, executive director of Latinos in Heritage Conservation, said the outcome will be different for every community.

"It's due process that's needed to help grapple with this," she said. "I think that's the best resolution that each community will have to decide for themselves, how it is that they land on a decision that best reflects their community and their values."

A time for listening

The annual march in Albuquerque was canceled long before the news broke and for unrelated reasons, but New Mexico's largest city is just beginning the process of sorting out name changes for roads and other public spaces.

It's a complex process that will take time and involve public outreach, said City Councilor Joaquín Baca, whose district includes roads named after both César Chavez and Huerta. Even Baca and his family still are contemplating the fate of a César Chavez and Dolores Huerta poster that hangs in their home.

The emails, phone calls and text messages that have poured in to city leaders include demands that everything related to César Chavez be torn down, as well as requests that a broader brush be used to recognize the rights of farmworkers and other laborers, Baca said.

"It's every side on every issue within the context of this," he said. "So for me, it has been a lot of listening at this point."

Mota Casper, who has built a career in heritage tourism and historic preservation, said it's a chance for elected leaders and policymakers to pause and consider expanding the narrative around Chavez's legacy. She said society has a responsibility to tell "that full story," understanding that humans are complex and fallible.

"So in commemorating or glorifying them, we have to be able to acknowledge the good and the bad and take that as it comes ... but also understand that we can't gloss over history," she said. "We can't simplify it just to make it easy. We have to be able to talk about it."

## Some familiar names to the Supreme Court in a death row case over racial bias in jury makeup

By MARK SHERMAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Certain names will be familiar to the Supreme Court in the latest case involving a Black death row inmate from Mississippi, with arguments set for Tuesday.

Doug Evans, a now-retired prosecutor with a history of dismissing Black jurors for discriminatory reasons, knocked all but one Black person off the jury that tried and convicted Terry Pitchford.

Judge Joseph Loper allowed it to happen. The state Supreme Court upheld the conviction.

Just seven years ago, in a case involving the same district attorney, trial judge and state high court, the Supreme Court overturned the death sentence and conviction of Curtis Flowers because of what Justice Brett Kavanaugh described as a "relentless, determined effort to rid the jury of Black individuals."

Seven of the current nine justices were on the court then.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 48 of 52

The Supreme Court has in recent years taken a dim view of defendants' claims in capital cases, especially in the last-minute efforts to stave off execution. Last week, the court turned away the appeal of Texas death row inmate Rodney Reed over the dissent of three liberal justices, who believe he should be allowed to test evidence that he has argued would exonerate him.

## Claim of racial discrimination

But the court in December agreed to hear Pitchford's appeal relating to a claim of racial discrimination that, in other cases, has gained traction even among some conservative justices.

Pitchford was sentenced to death for his role in the 2004 killing of Reuben Britt, the owner of the Crossroads Grocery, just outside Grenada in northern Mississippi. Pitchford, 40, was 18 when he and a friend went to the store to rob it. The friend shot Britt three times, fatally wounding him, but was ineligible for the death penalty because he was younger than 18. Pitchford was tried for capital murder and sentenced to death.

The case has been making its way through the court system for 20 years. In 2023, U.S. District Judge Michael P. Mills overturned Pitchford's conviction, holding that the trial judge did not give Pitchford's lawyers enough of a chance to argue that the prosecution was improperly dismissing Black jurors.

Mills wrote that his ruling was partially motivated by Evans' actions in prior cases. A unanimous panel of the 5th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the ruling.

In the course of selecting a jury, lawyers can excuse a juror merely because of a suspicion that a particular person would vote against their client.

The Supreme Court tried to stamp out discrimination in the composition of juries in *Batson v. Kentucky* in 1986. The court ruled then that jurors could not be excused from service because of their race and set up a system by which trial judges could evaluate claims of discrimination and the race-neutral explanations by prosecutors.

In Pitchford's case, the prosecution excused four of the five remaining Black people in the jury pool and defense lawyers objected. Loper, the judge, accepted all four explanations and moved on without analyzing whether race was the reason, Mills wrote.

## Issues in Pitchford's case

The Supreme Court case focuses on whether Pitchford's lawyers did enough to object to Loper's rulings and whether the state Supreme Court acted reasonably in ruling they had not.

Joseph Perkovich, who will argue Pitchford's case Tuesday, said the record in the case clearly favors his client. Loper "did not grasp he had to a constitutional duty to determine whether the reasons the district attorney gave for striking the Black citizens were credible and truthful," Perkovich wrote in an email. "The judge simply failed even to try to discharge that critical duty, despite the defense's efforts."

In the state's written filing, Mississippi Attorney General Lynn Fitch defended the state Supreme Court decision and said Evans did not inappropriately strike Black people from the jury.

Pitchford should be released or retried if he wins at the Supreme Court, his lawyers argued in written filings. Mississippi said the case should return to the state Supreme Court to review his arguments that the jury strikes were discriminatory.

Flowers was tried six times in the shooting deaths of four people. He was released from prison in 2019 and the state dropped the charges against him the following year, after Evans turned the case over to state officials. Evans stepped down from his job in 2023.

On its own, Mills wrote, the Flowers case does not prove anything. But he said that the Mississippi Supreme Court should have examined that history in considering Pitchford's appeal.

"The court merely believes that it should have been included in a 'totality of the circumstances' analysis of the issue," Mills wrote.

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 49 of 52

## **Apollo vs. Artemis: What to know about NASA's return to the moon**

By MARCIA DUNN AP Aerospace Writer

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (AP) — NASA's Apollo moonshots are a tough act to follow, even after all this time. As four astronauts get set to blast off on humanity's first trip to the moon in more than half a century, comparisons between Apollo and NASA's new Artemis program are inevitable.

The world's first lunar visitors orbited the moon on Apollo 8. The Artemis II crew will play it safe and zip around the moon in an out-and-back slingshot.

Another key difference: Artemis reflects more of society, with a woman, person of color and Canadian rocketing away.

While Artemis builds on Apollo and pays homage to it, "there is no way we could be that same mission or ever hope to even be," said NASA astronaut Christina Koch, part of the Artemis II crew.

Here's the lowdown on Apollo vs. Artemis, the twin sister of Apollo in Greek mythology, as NASA targets the first six days of April for liftoff.

### Run-up to the moon

It took NASA just eight years to go from putting its first astronaut in space to putting Apollo 11's Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin on the moon in 1969, beating President John Kennedy's end-of-decade deadline.

"The Apollo program still just absolutely blows me away," said Artemis II astronaut Jeremy Hansen of the Canadian Space Agency,

Artemis has progressed much more slowly, after decades of indecision and flip-flopping between the moon and Mars as the next grand destination. NASA's new moon rocket, the Space Launch System, or SLS, has soared only once in a test flight without anyone on board more than three years ago.

This plodding approach is why NASA's new administrator Jared Isaacman overhauled the Artemis program in February. Keen to emulate Apollo, he added a mission between the upcoming Artemis II mission and the moon landing that's now shifted to Artemis IV in 2028.

During next year's revamped Artemis III, astronauts will stick closer to home the same way Apollo 9 did in 1969. Instead of attempting a moon landing as originally envisioned, they will practice docking their Orion capsule in orbit around Earth with one or both lunar landers under development by Elon Musk's SpaceX and Jeff Bezos' Blue Origin. The rival companies are accelerating work on their landers in a bid to be first.

### Political rivalries

The Soviets were America's fierce rivals during Apollo, but their moon rockets kept exploding at liftoff and they eventually gave up. Now the Chinese are the competition.

China already has landed robotic spacecraft on the moon's far side — the only nation to achieve that — and is scrambling to land astronauts near the lunar south pole by 2030.

NASA is aiming for the same polar region, where shadowed craters are thought to hold vast amounts of ice that could provide drinking water and rocket fuel. Like his predecessor Bill Nelson, Isaacman is determined to beat China to the finish line and win this second space race.

### Moon rocket

Apollo's Saturn V rockets stood 363 feet (110 meters), with five first-stage engines. The Artemis SLS rocket comes in at 322 feet (98 meters) but packs more liftoff thrust with its four main engines and two strap-on boosters.

All but one Saturn V rocket soared from Kennedy Space Center's Launch Complex 39-A, now leased by SpaceX. NASA will use neighboring pad 39-B for all SLS flights. While the Saturn V launched twice before carrying astronauts, the SLS has flown only once. Hydrogen fuel leaks delayed the SLS debut in 2022 and struck again during a countdown test in February, stalling Artemis II. Then helium trouble reappeared, causing further delay. NASA is now targeting an April liftoff.

Launch Control remains at the same place. There was one woman in the packed firing room for the liftoff of Apollo 11. Now a woman leads it: Artemis launch director Charlie Blackwell-Thompson.

### First lunar crews

Apollo 8 still ranks as the gutsiest space mission of all time. Frank Borman, Jim Lovell and Bill Anders became the first humans to launch to the moon in 1968. Borman, the commander, insisted on as few

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 50 of 52

lunar orbits as possible given the risks. He and his bosses settled on 10 orbits as a warmup for 1969's moonwalk by Armstrong and Aldrin.

NASA decided long ago against orbiting the moon on Artemis' crew debut, judging it too dangerous. The main goal is to test the Orion capsule's life-support equipment, flying for the first time.

One big similarity between Apollo 8 and Artemis II is the troubled times surrounding them. "If we can contribute a little bit to hope for humanity," said Artemis II pilot Victor Glover of NASA, "that is a huge thing."

## Shades of Apollo 13

The Artemis astronauts will orbit Earth for a day to make certain everything is working properly before igniting the main engine and heading for the moon. It will take three to four days for the capsule to reach the moon and continue some 5,000 miles (8,000 kilometers) beyond, exceeding the distance record set by 1970's ill-fated Apollo 13.

Like Apollo 13, Artemis II will take advantage of the moon and Earth's gravity, making a figure eight after whipping around the moon to head home in what's known as a free-return trajectory requiring little if any fuel. It got Apollo 13's three astronauts safely back although they had to abandon their moon landing.

Artemis astronauts will parachute into the Pacific after their mission like the Apollo crews did.

## Suiting Up

For Apollo, the white, bulky spacesuits did double duty. What the astronauts wore for launch and return was the same for moonwalks since there wasn't enough storage space for different outfits.

The Orion capsules for Artemis are bigger, designed to hold four astronauts instead of three plus two sets of spacesuits. NASA created brand new spacesuits for use inside the capsule, while turning to private companies for the moonwalking attire.

Commander Reid Wiseman and his crew will wear the orange custom-fitted suits for launch and reentry. They'll also use them in case of a depressurization or some other emergency. They can survive up to six days in the suits, inserting a straw into the helmet to sip water or protein shakes and relying on undergarment bags and bladders as a built-in toilet.

Houston-based Axiom Space is designing the white moonwalking suits that will accompany future Artemis crews.

## Long-term goals

Apollo was all about beating the Russians to the moon and planting the U.S. flag. Astronauts landed six times from 1969 through 1972, with the longest surface stay lasting 75 hours. Five of the 24 Apollo astronauts who flew to the moon are still alive.

For the first Artemis moon landing, a pair of astronauts could spend nearly a week there. It's a complicated plan compared with Apollo.

Artemis moonwalkers will launch to the moon aboard Orion and, once in lunar orbit, transfer to SpaceX's Starship or Blue Origin's Blue Moon, whichever is ready first. They'll descend to the surface, and, after a few days, blast back into orbit to rendezvous with their Orion capsule. Orion will be the astronauts' ride home.

NASA is striving for sustained lunar living, with Mars to follow, although "day one of the moon base is not going to look like this glass-enclosed, domed city," Isaacman said. Last week, he unveiled a blueprint for the moon base showing habitats, rovers, drones, power stations and more. NASA plans to invest \$20 billion over the next seven years.

## Replacement officials, kickoffs and other rule changes will be discussed at NFL's annual meeting

By ROB MAADDI AP Pro Football Writer

Replacement officials, potential rule changes, artificial intelligence, health and safety issues, international growth and flag football will be among many topics discussed when NFL owners, executives and coaches gather for their annual meeting this week in Arizona.

One topic that dominated the conversation this time last year — the tush push — isn't on the agenda

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 51 of 52

because there is no proposal to eliminate the play even though it was nearly banned in a close vote in 2025. NFC coaches will speak to reporters on Monday, AFC coaches will do so on Tuesday and Commissioner Roger Goodell closes it out.

Here's a look at the several topics:

Replacement officials

The biggest proposal released by the NFL competition committee is a contingency if the league chooses to use replacement officials in case of a work stoppage as it did to start the 2012 season. The current collective bargaining agreement with the NFL and the NFL Referees Association expires on May 31.

The proposal would allow the replay center in New York to advise the on-field officials on any missed roughing the passer or intentional grounding penalty, as well as any act that would have led to an ejection had a penalty been called.

The NFL's use of replacement officials for the first three weeks of the 2012 season resulted in several mistakes and wrong calls, including the disputed TD catch known as the "Fail Mary."

"The negotiations with the officials have not gone as quickly as we would have wanted," NFL executive Jeff Miller said. "We've made a number of proposals. We're looking to improve the accountability and performance of the officials, and we just haven't gotten to where we need to go. So, we're going to play football this fall, and we're going to need officials to do it. So, this is part of the preparation, and we felt compelled to make these sorts of decisions in anticipation of playing football in a different environment."

Dynamic kickoff changes

There are several minor tweaks being proposed for the dynamic kickoff rule that is entering its third season.

"In 2024, we had 920 returns, and we had 25,000 return yards. In 2025, we had 2,076 returns, and we had 53,869 yards," said Rich McKay, Atlanta Falcons CEO and Competition Committee Chair. "So that's just a crazy change in the game, one that we've worked on for a long time. It's a credit to the special teams coaches who've gotten together and really helped influence where we are on that play. It's a credit to our head coaches for being able to be flexible enough to adopt and adapt, I should say, to the play. So, it's a really good story.

"But we won't just leave it alone. This year, we're going to propose that we allow the 5-4-2 alignment. ... That really was the original alignment the special teams coaches wanted, but we were just taking our time and kind of being a little conservative, if you will, in how we allowed the alignment change. So, that's kind of our process and how we got to where we are."

Technology and AI

The league has embraced advances in technology and artificial intelligence, including putting chips in footballs and using virtual measurements to determine first downs.

"The ability to use any modern technologies in media to advance the game on the field or with our fans, especially internationally, is coming at a really important time for the league's growth," Miller said.

International growth

The NFL is playing nine international games this season, including the first regular-season games in France and Australia. The goal is to eventually play 16 games abroad.

"It's an incredibly important area of our business and growth and takes up a good amount of time during these meetings," Miller said.

Concussions

There were 35 concussions on kickoffs in 2025 compared to eight in 2024 mainly because moving the touchback to the 35-yard line resulted in 1,157 more returns. The kick return rate jumped to 74% from 33% last season, and it was the highest return rate in 15 years. Still, the overall injury rate is lower than previous kickoffs, when the coverage team had a running start compared to the standing start of the new rule.

"The goal was to have a fewer, lower injury rate on that play, and to make it seem more like a play from scrimmage, which has been accomplished by and large," Miller said. "But we always knew that we were

# Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 30, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 298 ~ 52 of 52

going to revisit this play as soon as we had more data on it, and with an almost 75% return rate this year, we have a whole lot of plays that we've been working through and a lot of people and we've been working really diligently on this because we think the results are heading into a really good direction. But we do need to address the injuries that we saw to the returner and to the tackler this year."

## Today in History: March 30, Reagan shot in assassination attempt

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Monday, March 30, the 89th day of 2026. There are 276 days left in the year.

Today in history:

On March 30, 1981, President Ronald Reagan was shot and seriously wounded by John Hinckley Jr. outside a Washington, D.C., hotel. Also wounded were White House press secretary James Brady, Secret Service agent Timothy McCarthy and a District of Columbia police officer, Thomas Delahanty. (Hinckley would be found not guilty by reason of insanity and held at a psychiatric hospital until his supervised release in 2016. James Brady died in 2014 as a result of his injuries.)

Also on this date:

In 1822, Florida became a United States territory.

In 1867, U.S. Secretary of State William H. Seward reached agreement with Russia to purchase the territory of Alaska for \$7.2 million, a deal ridiculed by critics as "Seward's Folly" but later recognized as advantageous to the U.S.

In 1870, the 15th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution, which prohibited denying citizens the right to vote and hold office on the basis of race, was declared in effect by Secretary of State Hamilton Fish.

In 1923, the Cunard liner RMS Laconia became the first passenger ship to circle the globe as it arrived back in New York after a 130-day voyage.

In 1939, Detective Comics issue #27 was released, featuring the first appearance of the superhero character Batman.

In 1975, as the Vietnam War neared its end, Communist forces occupied the city of Da Nang.

In 2009, heavily armed militants stormed a police training academy near Lahore, Pakistan, taking hostages and killing cadets and others before being overpowered after several hours. Authorities reported at least 20 deaths, including several attackers.

In 2023, a Manhattan grand jury voted to indict Donald Trump on charges involving payments made during the 2016 presidential campaign to silence claims of an extramarital sexual encounter, the first ever criminal case against a former U.S. president.

Today's Birthdays: Actor John Astin is 96. Actor-director Warren Beatty is 89. Basketball Hall of Famer Jerry Lucas is 86. Musician Eric Clapton is 81. Actor Paul Reiser is 70. Rap artist MC Hammer is 64. Singer Tracy Chapman is 62. Actor Ian Ziering is 62. TV personality Piers Morgan is 61. Singer Celine Dion is 58. Actor Mark Consuelos is 55. Singer Norah Jones is 47. Country musician Justin Moore is 42. Country musician Thomas Rhett is 36. Actor Gideon Adlon is 29.