

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 1 of 59

[1- Upcoming Events](#)

[2- 1440 News Headlines](#)

[3- JVT Annual Meeting Ad](#)

[4- Decades of dedication: Zimney and McKiver continue Memorial Day tradition at Groton Union Cemetery](#)

[6- Groton Memorial Day Program Focuses on Sacrifice and Remembrance](#)

[8- Weber Landscaping Greenhouse Ad](#)

[9- Pool opens](#)

[9- City Hall shingling work being done](#)

[10- June Community Calendar](#)

[17- SD SearchLight: Year-round ethanol blend bill passed by US House faces uncertain Senate path](#)

[21- Weather Pages](#)

[25- Daily Devotional](#)

[26- Subscription Form](#)

[27- Lottery Numbers](#)

[28- News from the Associated Press](#)

## Tuesday, May 26

Senior Menu: Goulash, green peas, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

## Wednesday, May 27

Senior Menu: Teriyaki chicken, wild rice, oriental blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

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

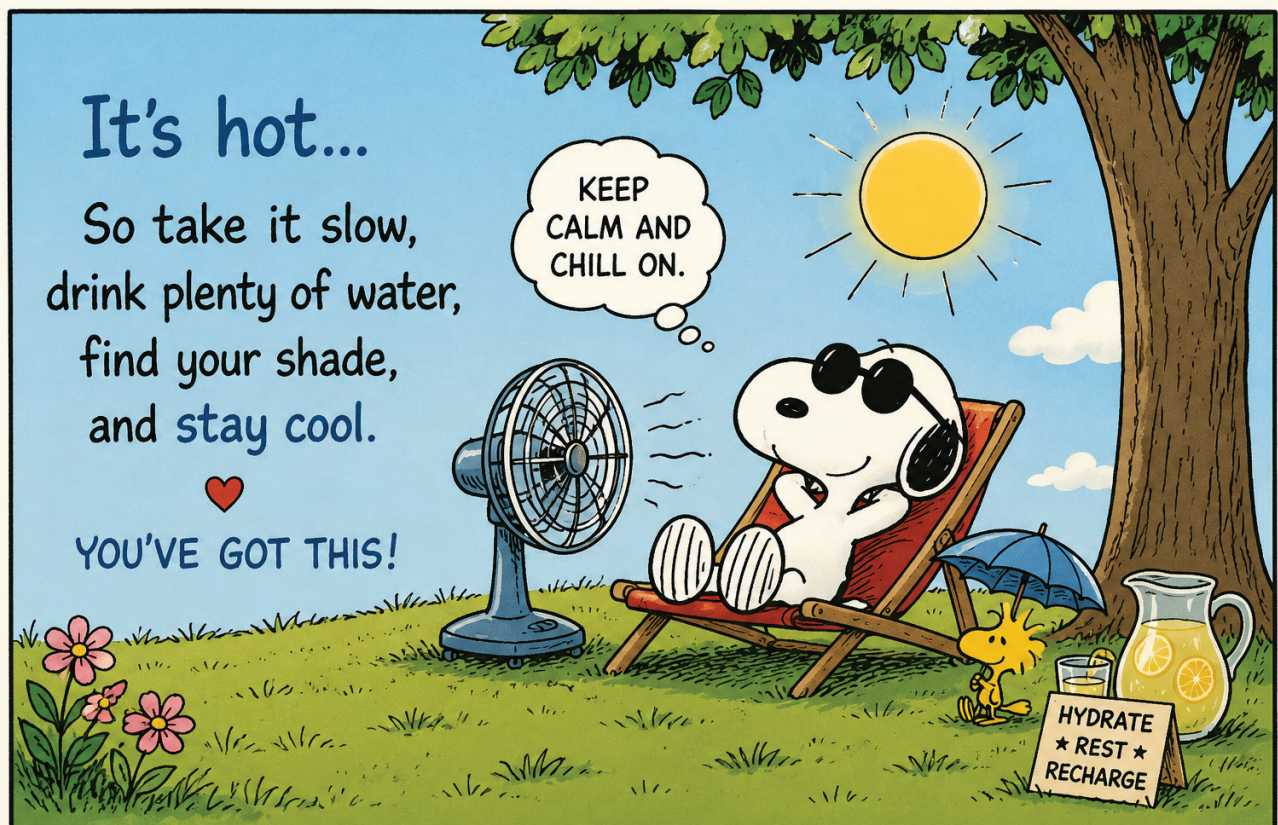
## Thursday, May 28

Senior Menu: Swedish meatballs, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

State Track Meet in Sioux Falls

James Valley Telecommunications Annual Meeting



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

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 2 of 59

# 1440

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

## 'Magnifica Humanitas'

Pope Leo XIV released a sweeping statement on artificial intelligence yesterday, warning the technology could deepen inequality, erode trust, and concentrate power without clearer guardrails. The 83-page encyclical—the US-born pope's first—is one of the most authoritative forms of guidance in Catholic doctrine.

The document, titled "Magnifica Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity), was presented at the Vatican alongside remarks from Anthropic cofounder Christopher Olah, who stressed the need for independent oversight and broader public participation in AI governance. Anthropic, valued at \$380B and in talks to raise funds at a nearly \$1T valuation, is separately fighting the US government in court over its refusal to allow the military unlimited access to its technology.

The current pontiff, formerly Robert Prevost, chose his papal name last year in part to honor Pope Leo XIII, whose 1891 encyclical "Rerum Novarum" (Of New Things) defended workers' rights during the Second Industrial Revolution.

## California Chemical Containment

Officials say they have eliminated the threat of a toxic explosion at a storage tank in Garden Grove, California. A crack discovered on the side of the tank helped alleviate internal pressure, while firefighters sprayed water to reduce the temperature.

The tank is located at GKN Aerospace, a British facility that manufactures aircraft parts. On Thursday, it began overheating while carrying 7,000 gallons of methyl methacrylate, a compound used to make plastics and resins. When active, the chemical can cause eye and skin irritation as well as respiratory and neurological problems. The discovery prompted officials to place roughly 50,000 people under evacuation orders in a zone measuring nine square miles.

Air quality monitoring suggests the tank has not leaked toxic levels of the chemical, and no one has been injured, as of this writing. Officials are continuing to monitor the area and contain the threat of leaks.

## The Brain Under Pressure

Acute stress may make it more difficult to connect past events with new information, according to a recent study. The finding could explain why people can appear forgetful under pressure and eventually lead to strategies for reducing the effects of stress.

Scientists asked 121 participants to memorize a series of paired images, consisting of an animal and either a face or a scene. The next day, half the participants endured a demanding mock job interview, while the other half completed more comfortable tasks. All participants then took a test requiring them to recall the image pairs and find associations with new images. Brain scans showed that people who underwent the mock interview had reduced activity in the hippocampus, a region essential for converting short-term memories into long-term memories.

If stress makes it difficult to recall past events, why do stressful situations leave such lasting impressions?

## Sports, Entertainment, & Culture

NASCAR legend Kyle Busch's cause of death found to be sepsis induced by severe pneumonia.  
Daniel Suárez wins Coca-Cola 600. Felix Rosenqvist wins closest-ever Indy 500 by 0.02 seconds.  
Cannes Palme d'Or awarded to Romanian Cristian Mungiu for English-language debut "Fjord"  
BTS wins artist of the year at American Music Awards, the largest fan-voted awards show.  
New York Knicks sweep the Cleveland Cavaliers, reaching NBA Finals for first time since 1999.  
San Antonio Spurs tie series with Oklahoma City, Game 5 tonight (8:30 pm ET, NBC).



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 3 of 59

## Science & Technology

SpaceX completes mostly successful test flight of Starship, the largest and most powerful rocket yet that may take astronauts to the moon's surface in 2028.

Chinese tech giant Huawei touts ability to make cutting-edge chips within five years despite US sanctions cutting it off from manufacturing equipment and design software.

Single infusion of gene-editing treatment lowers cholesterol levels by up to 62% in a small trial, showing promise as a one-time treatment for heart disease.

## Business & Markets

US stock markets enter post-holiday week after closing up Friday (S&P 500 +0.4%, Dow +0.6%, Nasdaq +0.2%), driven by signs of potential deal to reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Toshifumi Suzuki, founder of 7-Eleven Japan and considered the "God of Convenience Stores," died last week of heart failure at age 93, Seven & i Holdings announced yesterday.

Delivery Hero shares rise over 10% in European trading after reports Uber is weighing a bid to buy the German food deliverer in deal valued at over \$11B.

## Politics & World Affairs

Man shot and killed after opening fire outside the White House west security gate Saturday evening; one bystander wounded, shooter identified as 21-year-old Nasire Best.

Texas primary runoffs to be held today; state Attorney General Ken Paxton (R) leads incumbent Sen. John Cornyn (R) after nabbing endorsement from President Donald Trump.

Around 1.5 million international travelers journey to the Muslim holy city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia as the annual Hajj pilgrimage begins.

## JAMES VALLEY TELECOMMUNICATIONS 69<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING

Thursday, May 28th  
Groton Area High School Arena  
11:30am Registration & Lunch  
12:30pm Meeting

- Membership Gift
- Serving Ken's Roast Beef, Mashed Potatoes & Gravy, Sides & Dessert
- Many Door Prizes, Including a \$500 Credit

*Our Groton office will be closed 11am-2pm.*



 **NVC**  
Built by James Valley  
Telecommunications

## Decades of dedication: Zimney and McKiver continue Memorial Day tradition at Groton Union Cemetery

For many people, Memorial Day at the Groton Union Cemetery lasts only a short time — attending the annual program, hearing the roll call of veterans' names and seeing hundreds of American flags waving across the cemetery grounds.

But for Tami Zimney and Deb McKiver, Memorial Day preparation is a tradition that stretches back decades.

The two women have spent years helping place flags on veterans' graves at the cemetery, carrying on a tradition started long ago by Deb's father, Clifford Hopps.

"I've helped my dad since I was little," McKiver said. "I've been in the Legion Auxiliary 66 years."

McKiver said her father worked closely with the Legion for many years, repairing and reusing flags whenever possible.

"He fixed the flags if they were broken off," she said. "He would restaple them back on and glue the tops back on instead of buying new all the time."

When Hopps was no longer physically able to continue the work, Zimney stepped in around 2010 to take over organizing the project.

"When Cliff Hopps physically couldn't do it anymore, he wanted somebody to take it over," Zimney said. "Since Deb and I had already been helping, then I took it over from Cliff. But Deb's always been my right-hand man."

Today, the Groton American Legion furnishes flags not only for the Groton Union Cemetery, but also for veterans' graves at the Ferney, Verdon, James and Bates Scotland cemeteries. Altogether, approximately 365 flags are placed each Memorial Day season.

Over the years, the process has evolved significantly. What once relied on hand-drawn maps has become a much more organized system using cemetery maps provided by the City of Groton.

"I got a map from the city that had all of the graves," Zimney explained. "The maps were drawn to scale, so it made things a lot easier to find."

Today, the project involves volunteers dividing the cemetery into sections, each armed with a map and checklist of veterans' names.

"You just check off the veteran as you find them," Zimney said. "And if you've got a flag left over, you have to go back and find who you missed."

The organized system has helped ensure no veteran is overlooked.

"I have not had reports of anybody being missed recently," Zimney said.

This year, because of a weather-related schedule adjustment, six volunteers placed the flags in a little over three hours.

"We probably could get it done in two hours if we had enough people," McKiver added.

The work does not stop after Memorial Day. Later in the week, the volunteers return to carefully collect, sort and store the flags for the following year.

"Tammy and I will come back when they're dry, and we'll put them in sections and tape them together with what section they go in," McKiver said.



**Tami Zimney and Deb McKiver are an instrumental part of the Groton Memorial Day Program.**

(Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 5 of 59



**Deb McKiver and Tami Zimney have been reading the roll at the Groton Cemetery for nearly a decade.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

"We're both retired. We've got time," Zimney said. "It's fun getting different people to help."

For McKiver, the meaning behind the work has never faded.

"It doesn't get old," she said. "Because it's the reason for Memorial Day."

Both women also help with another important Memorial Day tradition — reading the roll call of veterans' names during the cemetery program.

The list includes all deceased veterans buried in the Groton Union Cemetery, whether or not they were members of the Groton American Legion.

"The list is a compilation of everybody who's buried in the Groton Cemetery," Zimney explained. "If they were a Legion member but buried somewhere else, their name is read at the cemetery where they're buried."

Over time, the tradition has become increasingly personal for both women.

"When we started, our parents were alive," McKiver reflected. "Now our dads are on that list. I have a husband on there. So it's different every year."

Despite the emotional weight of the work, both women say they still enjoy continuing the tradition.



**An overview of the Memorial Day Program at the Groton Cemetery as seen through the GDILIVE.COM video.**



## Groton Memorial Day Program Focuses on Sacrifice and Remembrance

Members of the community gathered Monday at the Groton Union Cemetery for Groton's annual Memorial Day program, honoring the men and women who gave their lives in service to the United States.

Following the ceremony, attendees were invited to a lunch at the American Legion Post home on the south end of Main Street.

Before introducing the featured speaker, Legion Commander Doug Hamilton shared the background of retired First Sergeant Aaron Walberg, recognizing his 25 years of military service in both the active-duty Army and National Guard. Hamilton noted Walberg's deployments overseas, including service with the 101st Airborne Division during the initial invasion of Iraq in 2003, as well as his decorated military career and later work serving veterans in Brown County.

Hamilton also highlighted the Walberg family's long history of military service, including Aaron's father, a Vietnam veteran, and his son, who served with the 82nd Airborne Division.

In his keynote address, Walberg reminded those gathered that Memorial Day is far more than the unofficial start of summer.

"Today we are gathered here not for celebration, but for remembrance," Walberg said. "We're here to honor the 1.1 million Americans who've lost their lives laid upon the altar of freedom over the course of our history."

He stressed that Memorial Day serves as a sacred day set aside to remember those who never returned home

from war.

"The cost of freedom has never been free," Walberg said. "Every generation of Americans has been called upon to defend our liberty, and every generation has answered that call with courage, sacrifice and devotion to something much greater than themselves."

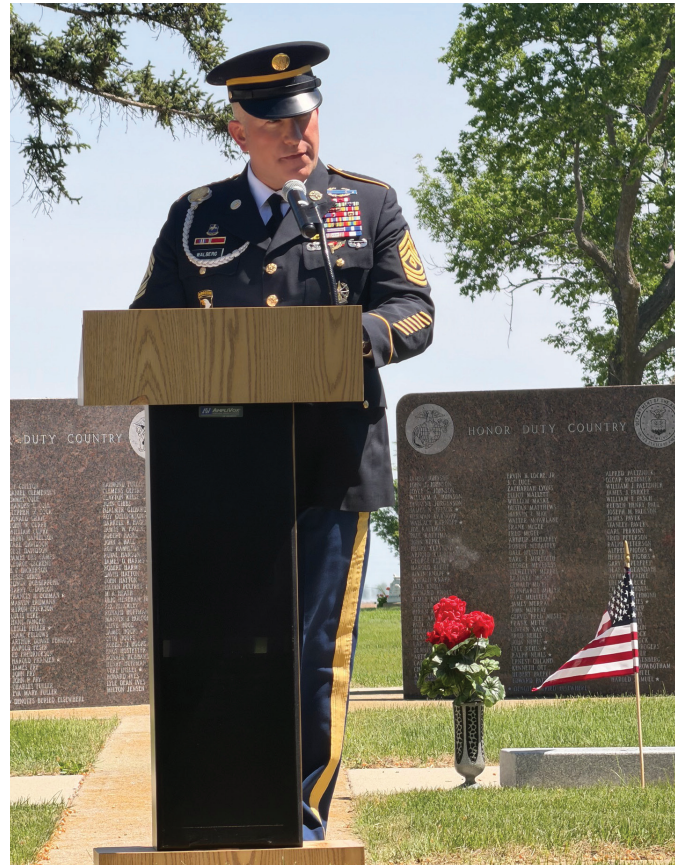
Walberg reflected on the personal losses carried by families and communities, speaking of the empty seats at family dinner tables and folded American flags handed to grieving spouses, parents and children.

"Here in South Dakota, we understand sacrifice deeply," he said.

Walberg noted that more than 3,073 South Dakotans have been killed in action since World War I. During World War II alone, more than 68,000 South Dakotans served, with more than 2,200 giving their lives, including 63 from Brown County.

"Thousands of South Dakotans — farmers, ranchers, teachers, mechanics, neighbors, small-town kids — left communities just like Groton, Aberdeen, Bath and Frederick and went into harm's way willingly because they believed that our freedom was worth defending," he said.

Drawing from his work with the South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs,



**First Sergeant (retired) Aaron Walberg was the guest speaker at the Groton Union Cemetery.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**Legion Commander Doug Hamilton gave the welcome and was the master of ceremonies.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 7 of 59



**Robert Wegner gave the prayer and presented the honoring of the deceased.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

Walberg spoke about the records maintained of Brown County war dead and shared the names of local servicemen lost in conflicts ranging from World War I through Vietnam.

"They're not just names on a page," Walberg said. "These are the sons of the prairie. Young men who played ball on local fields, worked on family farms, attended churches and schools in this very county."

He also remembered those still listed as missing in action, including Aberdeen native Frank Torrigan, who was captured during the Korean War and remains unaccounted for.

Walberg encouraged those in attendance to ensure future generations understand the sacrifices made by American servicemen and women.

"A nation that will forget its fallen will inevitably forget the cost of freedom itself," he said.

He pointed out that the average age of those killed or missing in World War II and Vietnam was just over 23 years old.

"These brave men and women gave their tomorrows so that we could

have our todays," Walberg said.

Throughout the speech, Walberg emphasized gratitude for the freedoms Americans continue to enjoy because of those sacrifices, including the ability to worship freely, vote and gather peacefully.

He also spoke about the importance of remembering veterans who returned home carrying emotional scars and memories of lost comrades.

"For many veterans, Memorial Day is a deeply personal day," he said. "It's remembrance of brothers and sisters that they served with and beside."

Walberg highlighted South Dakota's Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication program, which honors South Dakotans killed or missing in action through bridge dedications across the state.

"Remembrance should not only happen once a year," he said. "It should live in our communities every day."

As he concluded, Walberg urged those attending to honor the fallen not only through ceremonies, but through lives worthy of their sacrifice.

"The greatest tribute we can offer the fallen is not simply words," he said. "It's citizenship worthy of their sacrifice."

Walberg closed by encouraging families to continue sharing the stories and names of those who served and sacrificed.

"Every flag placed at a gravesite represents a story and a family," he said. "It represents a sacrifice — an American life given so that we may live in the freedoms that we enjoy."

"To all those who gave their lives for this nation, we remember you," Walberg said. "May God bless their memory, may God bless our veterans and their families, and may God bless the United States of America."



**Robert Wegner played taps with honor guards Robert Voss, Les Hinds, Roger Overacker, David McGannon and Dale Kurth.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 8 of 59



Coralee Wolter, Lori Giedt, Wendy Cooper and Deb McKiver were among some of the Groton Legion Auxiliary members helping to serve lunch after the Memorial Day Program. Getting her food is Tami Zimney. (Photo by Paul Kosel)

**GROW BEAUTIFUL. *Live Beautiful.***

# WEBER

LANDSCAPING

# GREENHOUSE

*Your Local Source for Quality Plants, Flowers & More!*

**FRESH PLANTS. VIBRANT COLORS. BEAUTIFUL SPACES. WE HAVE IT ALL!**

*Thank you for supporting your local business!*

 <b>ANNUALS &amp; PERENNIALS</b> Brighten every season!	 <b>VEGETABLES &amp; HERBS</b> Grow your own fresh & healthy!	 <b>HANGING BASKETS &amp; COMBOS</b> Instant color for your home!	 <b>SOILS, MULCHES &amp; SUPPLIES</b> Everything you need to grow!
--	--	--	---

**Open All Week!**

 <b>MONDAY</b> 10AM - 6PM	 <b>TUESDAY</b> 10AM - 6PM	 <b>WEDNESDAY</b> 10AM - 6PM	 <b>THURSDAY</b> 10AM - 6PM	 <b>FRIDAY</b> 10AM - 6PM	 <b>SATURDAY</b> 10AM - 4PM	 <b>SUNDAY</b> 12PM - 4PM
--	---	---	--	--	--	--

**LOCALLY OWNED & OPERATED**

 **620 WEST THIRD AVE  
GROTON, SD**

**Call or Text  
605.380.6587**

**FOLLOW US**  
for updates, new arrivals & specials!

**NEW SEASON. NEW GROWTH. NEW Beginnings!**



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 9 of 59



**The Groton Swimming Pool was officially open to swimmers Monday afternoon.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)



**The shingles on the overhangs at City Hall were removed on Monday in preparation for the new shingles.** (Photo by Paul Kosel)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 10 of 59

## June Community Calendar

### Monday, June 1

Senior Menu: BBQ Chicken breast, au gratin potatoes, coleslaw, fruited Jell-O, whole wheat bread.  
State Golf Meet in Sioux Falls  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
Jr. Legion hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball hosts Roslyn, DH, 5:30 p.m., Falk Field  
T-Ball Practice, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

### Tuesday, June 2

Senior Menu: Beef stroganoff with noodles, mixed vegetables, fruit, breadstick.  
City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.  
United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.  
2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena  
GBB Open Gym, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., GHS Gym  
State Golf Meet in Sioux Falls  
JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Arena  
U14 Legion at Britton, 5:30 p.m.  
Sr. Legion hosts Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.  
U10 Baseball hosts Columbia, DH, 5:30 p.m. (R&B)  
U8 Baseball host Columbia, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red)

### Wednesday, June 3

Senior Menu: Hot beef combo, mashed potatoes with gravy, carrots, fruit.  
Groton Chamber meeting, noon, City Hall  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Sarah Circle, 5 p.m.  
United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.  
JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Arena  
Jr. Legion at Northville, 4:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m., North Complex  
U10 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (B&W), North Complex  
U8 Baseball at Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Blue), North Complex  
U12 Softball hosts Aberdeen, DH, 6 p.m. (B&G)  
U10 Softball hosts Aberdeen, DH, 6 p.m. (B&G)  
U8 Softball Scrimmage, 6 p.m.

### Thursday, June 4

Senior Menu: Chicken cordon bleu casserole, broccoli, fruit, whole wheat bread.  
Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Nigeria Circle, 2 p.m.  
2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena  
GBB Open Gym, 7:30 a.m. to 9 a.m., GHS Gym  
BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena  
U14 Legion hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m.  
Sr. Legion at Lake Norden, 6 p.m.  
U10 Baseball hosts Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)  
T-Ball Practice, 6 p.m., Nelson Field





# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 11 of 59**

## **Friday, June 5**

Senior Menu: Stuffed pepper soup, ham salad sandwich, fruit, cookie.

U12 Baseball hosts Clark, 4:30 p.m., and Milbank, 7:30 p.m., Falk Field

U10 Baseball hosts Clark, 4:30 p.m., and Milbank, 7:30 p.m., Nelson Field (R&B)

## **Saturday, June 6**

605 American Legion Riders, 8:30 a.m., Legion

DAY OF PLAY

U14 Legion hosts Redfield

Sr. Legion hosts Redfield

Jr. Legion hosts Redfield

U12 Baseball hosts Britton, DH, 1 p.m., Falk Field

U10 Baseball hosts Britton, DH, 11 a.m., (All), Falk Field

U8 Baseball host Britton, 9 a.m. (Red)

U8 Baseball host Britton, 10 a.m. (Blue)

U14/U18 Softball Mix Scrimmage in Groton, 3:30 p.m.

U12 Softball hosts Britton, DH, noon, (All)

U10 Softball hosts Britton, DH, 10 a.m., (All)

U8 Softball hosts Britton, 9 a.m.

"WINE on 9" at Olive Grove is Cancelled.

## **Sunday, June 7**

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship with communion at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m.; at Zion, 11 a.m.; Sunday School, 9:45 a.m.

U12 Baseball at Sisseton Tournament

## **Monday, June 8**

Senior Menu: Turkey wraps, lettuce/tomato/cheese, potato salad, fruit.

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena

Groton VB GMS Camp, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

U14 Legion hosts Watertown, 5:30 p.m.

Jr. Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m.

U8 Baseball host Clark, DH, 5:30 p.m., Falk and Nelson Field, (Red and Blue)

U12 Softball at Mobridge, DH, 5:30 p.m. (B&G)

U8 Softball at Webster, DH, 6 p.m. (B&G)

T-Ball at Warner, 6 p.m., Football Field



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 12 of 59**

## **Tuesday, June 9**

Senior Menu: Chicken alfredo, broccoli, fruit, breadstick.

Emmanuel Lutheran: Council, 6 p.m.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Groton VB GMS Camp, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

U14 Legion at Aberdeen Smitty's, 5:30 p.m.

Sr. Legion at Webster, 5:30 p.m.

Jr. Legion at Selby, 6 p.m.

U12 Baseball hosts Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m.

U8 Baseball host Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red)

U14 Softball at Hub City, 6 p.m.

## **Wednesday, June 10**

Senior Menu: French dip sandwich, vegetable pasta salad, fruit.

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

Groton VB GMS Camp, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Arena

U8 Baseball at Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red and Blue)

U12 Softball hosts Britton, DH, 6:30 p.m., (G&W)

U10 Softball hosts Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m., (G&W)

U8 Softball hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m., (G&W)

## **Thursday, June 11**

Senior Menu: Oven fried chicken, sweet potatoes, green beans, glorified rice, whole wheat bread.

Groton VB GMS Camp, 7 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena

JVT Practice, 6-7:30 p.m., Arena

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.

Transit Fundraiser, 5 p.m., Groton Community Center

Groton Lions Club Meeting, 6 p.m., 104 N Main

U12 Baseball at Warner, 7:15 p.m., City Field

U10 Baseball at Warner, 5:30 p.m. (B&W), City Field

U8 Baseball at Warner, 5:30 p.m. (Blue), School Field

U18 Softball at Redfield, 5:30 p.m.

## **Friday, June 12**

Senior Menu: Tuna salad sandwich, California blend, fruit.

Jr. Legion at Clark Tournament

T-Ball hosts Warner, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

## **Saturday, June 13**

U14 Legion at Platte Tournament

Jr. Legion at Clark Tournament

U12 Baseball at Milbank Tournament

U8 Baseball at Milbank Tournament





# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 13 of 59**

## **Sunday, June 14**

FLAG DAY

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship with communion, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

U14 Legion at Platte Tournament

Jr. Legion at Clark Tournament

U10 Baseball at Milbank Tournament (ALL)

## **Monday, June 15**

Senior Menu: Taco salad with chips, Mexican rice with beans, fruit, biscuit.

Groton Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center, 1 p.m.

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

BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena

Sr. Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m.

Jr. Legion hosts Selby, 5:30 p.m.

U8 Baseball host Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red and Blue)

U12 Softball at Claremont, DH, 6:30 p.m. (W&G)

## **Tuesday, June 16**

Senior Menu: Hot turkey combination, mashed potatoes with gravy, corn, fruit.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena

City Council Meeting, 7 p.m.

U14 Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Baseball at Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.

U10 Baseball at Webster, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)

U8 Baseball host Britton, DH, 6 p.m. (Blue)

U14 Softball hosts Redfield, 5:30 p.m.

T-Ball Scrimmage, 5 p.m., Falk Field

## **Wednesday, June 17**

Senior Menu: Kielbasa with mac and cheese, California blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Community Coffee Hour, 9:30 a.m.; Groton Ad Council, 7 p.m.

JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Gym/Arena

U12 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m., North Complex

U10 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m., North Complex, (R&B)

U8 Baseball at Aberdeen, 5:30 p.m. (Red), North Complex

U14 Softball at Mobridge, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Softball hosts Redfield 2, DH, 5:30 p.m., (B&W)

U10 Softball hosts Redfield 2, DH, 5:30 p.m., (B&W)

U8 Softball hosts Redfield 2, 5:30 p.m., (W&B)



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 14 of 59**

## **Thursday, June 18**

Senior Menu: Meatloaf, baked potato, green beans, fruit, whole wheat bread.

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.

2026 Tiger Skills Workouts, 7:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., Arena

U14 Legion hosts Britton, 5:30 p.m.

Sr. Legion at Heritage Tournament, Milbank

U10 Baseball at Sisseton, DH, 5:30 p.m. (B&W)

U8 Baseball at Clark, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Blue)

U8 Baseball host Britton, DH, 6 p.m. (Red), Falk Field

U18 Softball hosts Hub city, 6 p.m.

U12 Softball at Sisseton, DH, 6 p.m. (W&G)

U10 Softball at Sisseton, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)

T-Ball hosts Columbia, 5 p.m., Falk Field

## **Friday, June 19**

JUNETEENTH

SDSU Alumni & Friends Golf Tourney and Dinner at the Olive Grove Golf Course, 11 a.m.

Sr. Legion at Heritage Tournament, Milbank

Jr. Legion at Volga, 6 p.m.

## **Saturday, June 20**

Groton Triathlon

Sr. Legion at Heritage Tournament, Milbank

U10 Baseball - Groton Tournament (ALL)

U12 Softball at Mobridge Tournament (ALL)

U10 Softball at Mobridge Tournament

## **Sunday, June 21**

FATHER'S DAY

FIRST DAY OF SUMMER

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.

United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.

St. John's Lutheran: Worship with communion at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.

Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.

First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.

Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.

Sr. Legion at Heritage Tournament, Milbank

U12 Baseball - Groton Tournament

## **Monday, June 22**

Senior Menu: Spanish rice with hamburger, corn, fruit, whole wheat bread, sherbet.

Senior Citizens meet at the Groton Community Center with potluck at noon

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

Rumble in the Jungle Boys Basketball Team Camp, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

Jr. Legion at Sisseton, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Softball hosts Clark, DH, 6 p.m., (B&G)

U10 Softball hosts Clark, DH, 6 p.m., (W&G)

T-Ball girls at Brentford, 6 p.m.

T-Ball boys at Brentford, 7 p.m.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 15 of 59**

## **Tuesday, June 23**

Senior Menu: Baked pork chop, au gratin potatoes, capri blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

United Methodist: Bible Study, 10 a.m.

Rumble in the Jungle Boys Basketball Team Camp, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Arena/Gym

U14 Legion at Watertown, 5 p.m.

Sr. Legion hosts Milbank, 5:30 p.m.

Jr. Legion at Britton, 5:30 p.m.

U12 Baseball hosts Warner, 7 p.m., Nelson Field

U10 Baseball hosts Warner, 5:30 p.m., Falk Field (W&R)

U8 Baseball host Warner, 5:30 p.m. (Red), Falk Field

U14 Softball at Warner, 5:30 p.m.

## **Wednesday, June 24**

Senior Menu: Chicken fried steak, mashed potatoes with gravy, Catalina blend, fruit, whole wheat bread.

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

JVT Practice, 6-9 p.m., Gym

Sr. Legion hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m.

Jr. Legion hosts Clark, 7 p.m.

U12 Baseball at Roslyn, DH, 5:30 p.m.

U10 Baseball at Britton, DH, 5:30 p.m. (R&B)

U10 Softball hosts Sisseton (Split), 6 p.m.

U10 Softball at Claremont (Split), 6:30 p.m.

U8 Softball at Claremont, 5:30 p.m. (W&G)

## **Thursday, June 25**

Senior Menu: Spaghetti with meat sauce, green beans, fruit, garlic bread.

Story Time at Wage Memorial Library, 10 a.m.

JVT Practice, 6-7:30 p.m., Gym

U10 Baseball hosts Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (B&W)

U8 Baseball host Aberdeen, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Blue)

U8 Baseball at Columbia, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red)

U18 Softball at Redfield, 6 p.m.

## **Friday, June 26**

Senior Menu: Breaded chicken on bun, oven roasted potatoes, California blend, fruit.

U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen

Sr. Legion at The ROCK Tournament, Madison

T-Ball Scrimmage, 6 p.m., Nelson Field

## **Saturday, June 27**

U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen

Sr. Legion at The ROCK Tournament, Madison

U8 Baseball - Groton Tournament (Red & Blue)

	New Construction Remodeling Hoop Barns Shops	13379 Sperry Ln, Bath
	Perry Blocker	605/216-2677 prblocker@hotmail.com



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 16 of 59

## Sunday, June 28

Emmanuel Lutheran: Worship, 9 a.m.  
United Methodist: Worship at Conde, 8:15 a.m.; at Groton, 9:30 a.m.; at Britton, 11:15 a.m.; Coffee Hour, 10:30 a.m.  
St. John's Lutheran: Worship at St. John's, 9 a.m., at Zion, 11 a.m.  
Catholic: SEAS Confession, 7:45-8:15 a.m.; SEAS Mass, 8:30 a.m.; Turton Confession, 10:30-10:45 a.m.; Turton Mass, 11 a.m.  
First Presbyterian Church: Bible Study, 9:30 a.m.; Worship, 11 a.m.  
Groton CM&A: Sunday School, 9:15 a.m.; worship, 10:30 a.m.  
U14 Legion at Vern Jark Tournament, Aberdeen  
Sr. Legion at The ROCK Touranment, Madison  
U12 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m., (B&W)  
U10 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m., (G&W)  
U8 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 2 p.m. (B&W)  
U14 Softball hosts Mobridge, DH, 4 p.m.

## Monday, June 29

Senior Menu: Spanishh rice with hamburger, broccoli, Mandrain oranges with vanilla pudding, whole wheat bread.  
Emmanuel Lutheran: Bible Study, 6:30 a.m.  
BBB Open Gym, 6-8 p.m., Arena  
Jr. Legion hosts WIN, 5:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball at Clark, DH, 5:30 p.m.  
U10 Baseball hosts Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (W&R)  
U8 Baseball at Webster, DH, 5:30 p.m. (Red & Blue)  
U18 Softball at Hub City, 6 p.m.  
U12 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)  
U10 Softball at Hub City, DH, 6 p.m. (B&W)

## Tuesday, June 30

Senior Menu: Bratwurst on bun, tri tater, sauerkraut, fruit.  
U14 Legion at Milbank, 5:30 p.m.  
Sr. Legion hosts Webster, 5:30 p.m.  
U12 Baseball hosts Sisseton, DH, 6 p.m., Falk Field  
U14 Softball hosts Clark, 5:30 p.m.  
T-Ball Scrimmage, 5 p.m., Falk Field





## SOUTH DAKOTA SEARCHLIGHT

<https://southdakotasearchlight.com>

### Year-round ethanol blend bill passed by US House faces uncertain Senate path

BY: DAVID LIGHTMAN



**Fuel options at a Sioux Falls, South Dakota, gas station on Aug. 22, 2025. The nationwide average price of a gallon of gas was \$4.55 May 22, 2026, up from \$3.20 a year ago. The steep increase has turned some lawmakers' attention alternative fuels like ethanol.** (Photo by John Hult/South Dakota Searchlight)

Proponents of ethanol, including lawmakers from corn-growing states, say year-round sales of a gasoline blend containing 15% of the biofuel would give consumers a less expensive alternative to fill their gas tanks, boost energy supplies and benefit agricultural interests.

So why hasn't Congress allowed it?

There's credible skepticism about those claims — and opposition from the strange bedfellows of environmental advocates and lawmakers from states where oil production and refining are major industries. As a result, expanding the availability of E15, as the blend is called, has become a congressional

brawling with no predictable result.

The outcome of this debate, which will continue in June when Congress returns from its Memorial Day recess, largely depends on whether the push for year-round E15 use can get 60 U.S. Senate votes after the U.S. House this month passed legislation allowing it and the White House has signaled its support.

"I don't know if it can get 60, to be honest with you," Senate Environment and Public Works Committee Chair Shelley Moore Capito, a Republican from West Virginia, said in an interview.

Senate Majority Leader John Thune offered some hope.

"We're looking at ways to move it," he told reporters. "We have people here who represent states that

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 18 of 59**

also have refineries, and that's a factor in this conversation."

## **Iran war boosts support**

Federal regulations have restricted E15 from being sold from June 1 to Sept. 15 because of its effects on air quality.

But the turmoil triggered by the war in Iran has been an important boost to Congress' efforts to pass year-round E15 legislation.

AAA reported that the national average for a gallon of regular gasoline cost \$4.55 a gallon Friday, up from \$3.20 a year earlier.

The Environmental Protection Agency issued waivers this year to allow extended sales of the blend. E15, often sold at gas stations as Unleaded 88, will be widely available this summer as "the result of ongoing issues in the Middle East, among other events," EPA said in a statement.

## **'Unique agreement'**

One's view of the issue "depends on which study you look at," Senate Agriculture Chairman John Boozman, an Arkansas Republican, said in an interview.

On one side is a historically influential coalition of agricultural, retail and petroleum interests.

"This legislation reflects a unique area of agreement across the fuel and agriculture supply chain," organizations representing those industries said in a May 11 letter.

"While our industries do not always see eye to eye, we are united in the belief that these policy reforms provide needed certainty, preserve consumer choice, and support agriculture and energy economies alike," they said.

The Renewable Fuels Association says E15 has been "fully approved for use in cars, pickups, vans and other light-duty vehicles" made after 2000.

Consumers can save 10 to 30 cents a gallon compared to 87-octane regular gasoline, industry members say. In Pennsylvania last weekend, Unleaded 88 was in some cases selling for 50 cents a gallon less.

## **The E15 critics**

Many environmental groups maintain production of ethanol costs more than regular gasoline, and those costs are passed on to consumers not only at the pump, but in various agricultural products.

"Expanding ethanol sales is a shortsighted approach that ignores the environmental costs of industrial agriculture," said Patrick Drupp, Sierra Club's director of climate policy.

He said much of the corn used to produce E15 is grown in Midwestern states "already facing severe aquifer depletion and water shortages, and expanding ethanol production would only intensify the strain on their water supplies, farmland, and ecosystems."

Eight environmental groups wrote an open letter May 8, concerned that "We should not commit additional land, resources, or taxpayer dollars to policies that undermine our climate goals, strain our natural systems, and increase costs for American families."

The groups, which include the World Resources Institute and the Sierra Club, countered the notion that consumers would benefit.

"Production expenses for corn ethanol typically exceed those of gasoline, except during periods of unusually high oil prices—and even then, ethanol prices tend to rise in tandem with global energy markets," they said.

That would mean even higher prices not only for fuel but for food, the organizations wrote.

One analysis that takes neither side is the nonpartisan Congressional Budget Office, which said in a May 12 analysis that because E15 needs separate or specialized tanks and pumps, "retailers wanting to sell E15 would confront the additional expense of installing new equipment."

And, it said, "some refiners will incur additional costs as they adjust their refinery processes to produce the appropriate gasoline to be blended into E15."



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 19 of 59

## What will Congress do?

The congressional coalitions for and against year-round E15 are as unusual as the outside groups supporting and opposing it.

The House's 218-203 vote on May 13 saw 122 Republicans, 95 Democrats and one independent voting yes, while 113 Republicans and 90 Democrats voted no.

The yes coalition largely united rural lawmakers with more urban members who see the change as helping consumers.

"This debate is about much more than fuel," Rep. Mariannette Miller-Meeks, an Iowa Republican, said. "Agriculture is hurting right now,"

Joining her was New Jersey's Rep. Frank Pallone, the top Democrat on the House Energy and Commerce Committee.

The bill "lowers prices for American drivers, supports farmers, and fosters investment in cleaner transportation fuel," he said.

On the other side was Rep. Chip Roy, R-Texas.

"If we need to do something to support farmers, let's have a direct conversation about it. Expanding E15 is just the wrong direction to go," he said.

The same sort of party split looms in the Senate.

After the House vote, Sen. Deb Fischer, R-Neb., who's fought for the change for years, hailed the approval as "a major step toward securing stability and certainty for American producers and consumers – without any government mandates."

Thune, of South Dakota, has been sympathetic to year-round E15.

At a news conference this week he called E15 "a way of creating additional demand for agricultural commodities in this country and creating additional supply when it comes to fuels.

"And when that happens, at least in my part of the country, that means that when you buy ethanol at the pump, it's significantly lower in price," he said.

He faces a powerful skeptic in the Senate: Majority Whip John Barrasso of Wyoming, the Senate's second-ranking Republican..

"Congress is currently discussing new mandates – mandates that would force more and more ethanol into our fuels," he said in a Senate floor speech the day after the House vote.

"I oppose the year-round E15 mandate," he said. "I oppose it because it hurts small oil refineries and all of the people who work at them."

## Small refineries

There are about 30 small refineries across the country, usually in inland areas, and about half could face problems under the House bill.

Small refineries are those that produce less than 75,000 barrels of oil per day, compared to 300,000 barrels or more at larger facilities.

The small refineries can petition for an EPA exemption from the annual renewable fuel obligations based on "disproportionate economic hardship."

For 2025, there were 33 exemption petitions filed. Approximately 17 of those facilities would be ineligible under the proposed legislation because they are owned by companies with more than one refinery. Instead of focusing on the single facility, the bill requires aggregation of all facilities together.

The House bill would allow a 75% exemption instead of the current full exemption. It could also reduce the number of small refineries currently eligible for an exemption by half.

Most small refineries would find themselves operationally constrained without the ability to receive exemptions, as they would have to use much of their cash flow to comply with the annual mandates, said Peter Whitfield, partner at Sidley Austin, a law firm that represents the Small Refineries of America, in an interview

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 20 of 59**

Many senators want assurances small refineries won't be hurt.

"I'm interested in the small refinery piece," Capito said.

That concern is yet another reason, at the moment, Capito said she is doubtful the House bill could get the 60 votes needed in the Senate.

*David Lightman has been a reporter or editor for more than 50 years. He's worked for the Hagerstown (Md.) Morning Herald, Riverside (Calif.) Press Enterprise, and then 10 years at the Baltimore Evening Sun, covering local news and, for six years, state government and the legislature. He spent 23 years as the Hartford Courant's Washington Bureau Chief, and 18 years at McClatchy's Washington bureau, where he covered the White House and Congress. He also served as regional editor, supervising the bureau's seven regional reporters. He was president of Washington's Gridiron Club in 2018 and won the David Lynch award for regional reporting in 2007.*

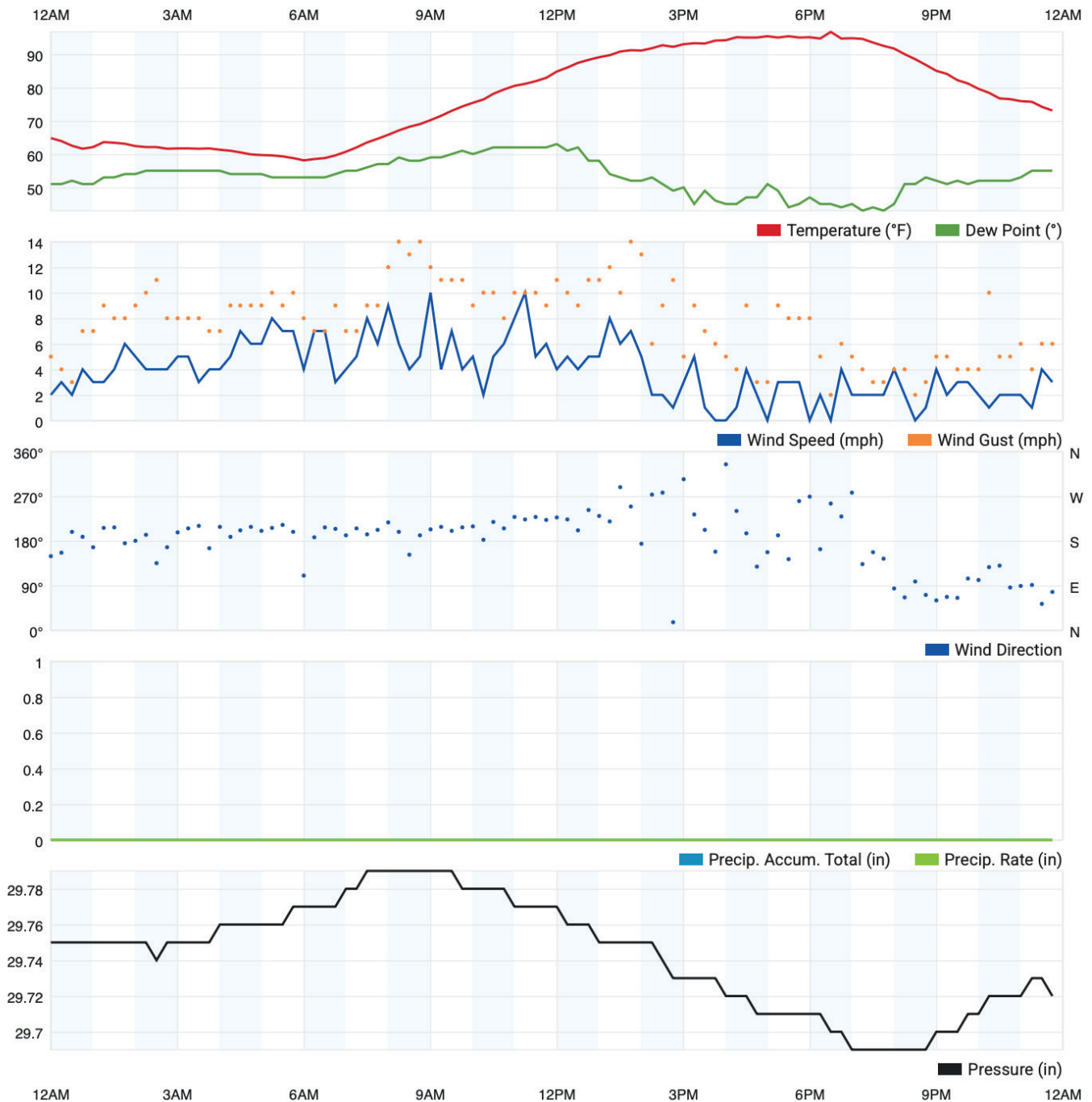


# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 21 of 59

## Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs

May 25, 2026



# Broton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 22 of 59

Today



High: 93 °F

Hot

Tonight



Low: 58 °F

Slight Chance  
T-storms then  
Mostly Clear

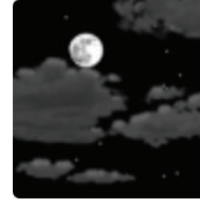
Wednesday



High: 92 °F

Hot

Wednesday  
Night



Low: 58 °F

Partly Cloudy

Thursday



High: 91 °F

Hot

## THREAT ASSESSMENT

### HIGHEST LOCAL RISK

1

WHAT THIS MEANS:  
Isolated Severe Storms  
Possible

**This Afternoon &  
Evening**

### PRIMARY THREAT

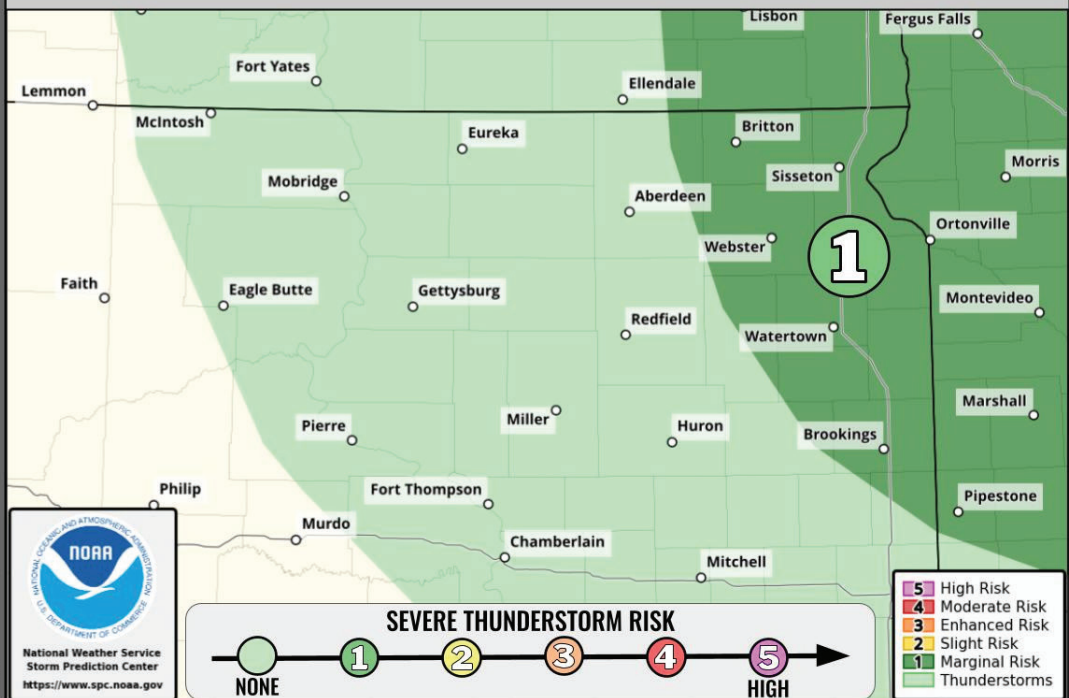


DAMAGING  
WIND GUSTS  
of 60 mph

NWS  
Aberdeen, SD



## Marginal Risk For Severe Storms Today



Isolated/widely scattered coverage of showers and thunderstorms are expected this afternoon across portions of northeast SD into west central MN. A few storms could be on the stronger side, with wind gusts from 50 to perhaps 60 mph being the main threat.



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 23 of 59

## Yesterday's Groton Weather

**High Temp: 97 °F at 6:26 PM**

**Low Temp: 58 °F at 6:01 AM**

**Wind: 15 mph at 8:44 AM**

**Precip: : 0.00**

## Today's Info

Record High: 97 in 2018

Record Low: 30 in 1992

Average High: 74

Average Low: 49

Average Precip in May.: 2.79

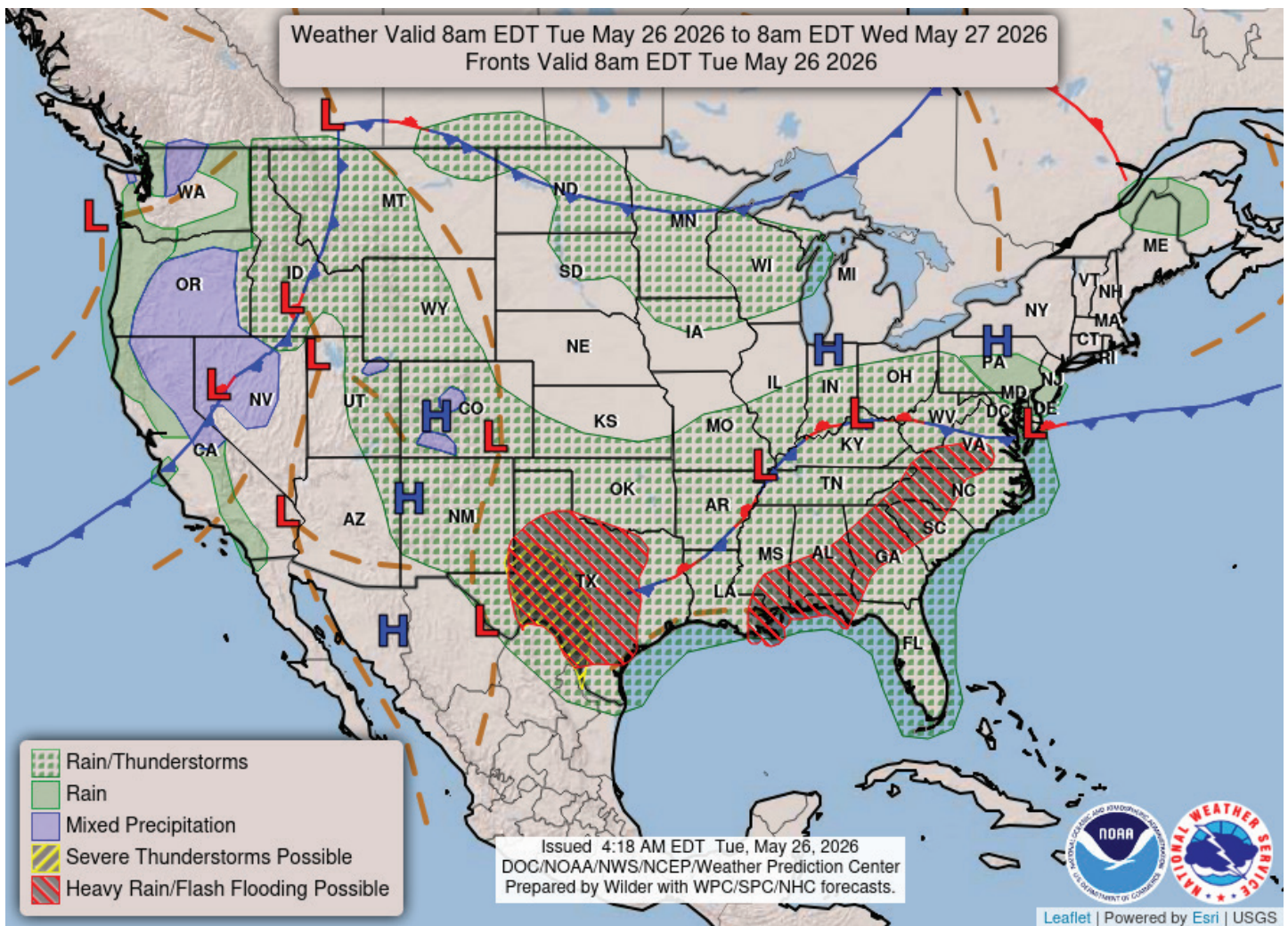
Precip to date in May.: 1.73

Average Precip to date: 6.76

Precip Year to Date: 4.85

Sunset Tonight: 9:07 pm

Sunrise Tomorrow: 5:50 am



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 24 of 59**

## **Today in Weather History**

May 26th, 1983: Up to 5 inches of unofficial rainfall caused widespread flooding of basements and streets in and near Aberdeen. Only 1.72 inches of rain was reported at the Aberdeen airport.

May 26th, 1985: Hail of unknown diameter was five inches deep, 1 mile north of Rosholt. Some hail remained on the ground until the following morning.

May 26th, 1992: A widespread frost and hard freeze hit most of South Dakota except portions of the southeast, causing up to \$14 million in potential crop losses to corn, soybeans, wheat, and other crops. Some low temperatures include 23 degrees 12 miles SSW of Harrold; 26 at one mile west of Highmore and 23 north of Highmore; 27 in Kennebec; and 28 degrees 1 NW of Faulkton and Redfield.

1771 — A famous Virginia flood occurred as heavy rains in the mountains brought all rivers in the state to record high levels. (Sandra and TI Richard Sanders - 1987)

1917 — A tornado touched down near Louisiana MO about noon and remained on the ground for a distance of 293 miles, finally lifting seven hours and twenty minutes later in eastern Jennings County, IN. The twister cut a swath of destruction two and a half miles wide through Mattoon, IL. There were 101 persons killed in the tornado, including 53 at Mattoon, and 38 at Charleston IL. Damage from the storm totalled 2.5 million dollars. (David Ludlum)

1984 — Thunderstorms during the late evening and early morning hours produced 6 to 13 inches of rain at Tulsa OK in six hours (8.63 inches at the airport). Flooding claimed fourteen lives and caused 90 million dollars property damage. 4600 cars, 743 houses, and 387 apartments were destroyed or severely damage in the flood. (Storm Data) (The Weather Channel)

1987 — Thunderstorms in southwest Iowa spawned five tornadoes and produced up to ten inches of rain. Seven inches of rain at Red Oak forced evacuation of nearly 100 persons from the town. Record flooding took place in southwest Iowa the last twelve days of May as up to 17 inches of rain drenched the area. Total damage to crops and property was estimated at 16 million dollars. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 — There was "frost on the roses" in the Upper Ohio Valley and the Central Appalachian Mountain Region. Thirteen cities reported record low temperatures for the date, including Youngstown OH with a reading of 30 degrees. Evening thunderstorms in North Dakota produced wind gusts to 75 mph at Jamestown. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1989 — Thunderstorms in produced large hail in eastern Oklahoma during the pre-dawn hours, and again during the evening and night. Hail two inches in diameter was reported near Prague, and thunderstorm winds gusted to 70 mph near Kenefic. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

1990 — Thunderstorms produced severe weather from eastern Colorado to western Arkansas and north-eastern Texas. Severe thunderstorms spawned three tornadoes, and there were eighty-eight reports of large hail or damaging winnds. Evening thunderstorms over central Oklahoma spawned strong tornadoes east of Hinton and east of Binger, produced hail three inches in diameter at Minco, and produced wind gusts to 85 mph at Blanchard. (Storm Data) (The National Weather Summary)

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 25 of 59



Daily Devotion

## The Exalted Lord

**One day you'll see Christ exalted in glory, and you will  
join all heaven in worshipping the Lamb of God.**

Revelation 1:9-18: 9 I, John, your brother and fellow partaker in the tribulation and kingdom and perseverance which are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos because of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like the sound of a trumpet, 11 saying, "Write in a book what you see, and send it to the seven churches: to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea."

12 Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking with me. And having turned I saw seven golden lampstands;

13 and in the middle of the lampstands I saw one like a son of man, clothed in a robe reaching to the feet, and girded across His chest with a golden sash.

14 His head and His hair were white like white wool, like snow; and His eyes were like a flame of fire.

15 His feet were like burnished bronze, when it has been made to glow in a furnace, and His voice was like the sound of many waters.

16 In His right hand He held seven stars, and out of His mouth came a sharp two-edged sword; and His face was like the sun shining in its strength.

17 When I saw Him, I fell at His feet like a dead man. And He placed His right hand on me, saying, "Do not be afraid; I am the first and the last,

18 and the living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and of Hades.

The book of Revelation contains some of the richest descriptions of our Lord that Scripture offers. We love imagining Him as the baby in the manger and recognize the importance of His death and resurrection, but the story doesn't end there.

John was given a dramatic vision of the exalted Lord as He is now, in heaven. The apostle had shared intimate friendship with Christ on earth, but the sight of his Lord in this glorified state overwhelmed him—he fell at Jesus' feet as though dead (Rev. 1:17).

Jesus is portrayed as the Lord of His church, which is represented by the seven lampstands surrounding Him. He protectively watches over them and calls them to faithfulness.

A few chapters later, Jesus is revealed as the Lamb of God. He is the One who sacrificed Himself on our behalf, His blood purchasing redemption for people from every tribe and nation, making them citizens of His kingdom. All heaven erupts into praise and worship (Revelation 5:6-13).

If you believe in Christ, these chapters describe your future. Picture yourself standing before Jesus, the exalted Lord of His church, and then joining all heaven in worshipping Him as the Lamb of God.

*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

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 26 of 59

## The Groton Independent

Printed & Mailed Weekly Edition

### Subscription Form

All prices listed include 6.2% Sales Tax

- ☐ Black & White.....\$52.00/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$80.00/year
- ☐ Colored .....\$49.00/6 months
- ☐ E-Weekly\* .....\$35.00/year

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

Mail Completed Form to:

Groton Independent

P.O. Box 34

Groton, SD 57445-0034

or scan and email to [paperpaul@grotonsd.net](mailto:paperpaul@grotonsd.net)

## Groton Daily Independent

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

### Subscription Form

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

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State, Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number \_\_\_\_\_

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

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Password \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

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

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 27 of 59



## WINNING NUMBERS

### MILLIONAIRE FOR LIFE

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.25.26

7 23 29 38 51 3

TOP PRIZE:

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

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 52 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### MEGA MILLIONS

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.22.26

3 22 34 54 61 8

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$311,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 17 Hrs 37 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### LOTTO AMERICA

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.25.26

16 23 27 36 41 1

All Star Bonus: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$27,820,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 16 Hrs 52 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### DAKOTA CASH

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.23.26

2 5 7 10 16

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$104,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 7 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

DOUBLE PLAY

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.25.26

2 20 31 33 38 18

TOP PRIZE:

**\$10,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 36 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

### POWERBALL

WINNING NUMBERS:

05.25.26

17 32 48 60 64 10

Power Play: 2x

NEXT ESTIMATED JACKPOT:

**\$154,000,000**

NEXT DRAW: 1 Days 17 Hrs 36 Mins 27 Secs

[PREVIOUS RESULTS](#)

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

### **Israeli strike on village in eastern Lebanon kills 12, as Israel calls up more troops there**

By KAREEM CHEHAYEB Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — An Israeli airstrike on a village in eastern Lebanon killed 12 people, state media said Tuesday, as an Israeli official said the military had called up more troops to Lebanon.

The strike hit the village of Mashghara in the Bekaa Valley late Monday, according to Lebanon's state-run National News Agency.

It came after Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said that he had authorized more intensive strikes targeting the Hezbollah militant group across Lebanon. The Israeli military did not comment on this particular strike, but said Monday that it was targeting Hezbollah infrastructure in eastern Lebanon.

An Israeli security official said the military had called up an additional battalion to Lebanon. The official spoke on condition of anonymity in line with regulations.

Rescue workers say that a dozen bodies were pulled out of the rubble following an intense wave of overnight strikes targeting swaths of southern and eastern Lebanon.

The intensified attacks come three days before Lebanese and Israeli military delegations are set to meet in Washington for direct talks.

Hezbollah is attacking Israeli troops in southern Lebanon and northern Israeli towns, and has vowed to continue fighting until Israel stops its daily airstrikes and withdraws its troops from the country.

In recent weeks, Hezbollah has boasted that it is using new fiber-optic drones that Israeli troops have struggled to intercept, hitting both Israeli troops and northern border villages.

Israel has updated its defensive guidelines in line with the recent developments in its northern areas, telling people not to gather in large numbers.

"What this requires of us now is to increase the blows, to increase the intensity. We will smite them hip and thigh," Netanyahu said in a video posted on social media Monday ahead of the strikes.

The Lebanese government hopes that the direct talks with Israel, opposed by Hezbollah, will lead to a ceasefire.

Over a million people in Lebanon have been displaced in the war, which was sparked by Hezbollah firing rockets into northern Israel on March 2 in solidarity with Iran.

3,185 people in Lebanon have been killed in Israeli strikes since the start of the war, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Over 9,600 others have been wounded.

The intensified strikes have brought fear in Lebanon of a renewed full-scale war, leaving the capital exposed to possible strikes again.

"By just saying a few words on TV he (Netanyahu) causes everyone to panic and flee their homes," said Tony Aboud, in Beirut's bustling Hamra district. "I don't know what's going to happen and how long we can live like this."

### **World stocks and oil prices are mixed after the US launches strikes in southern Iran**

By ELAINE KURTENBACH AP Business Writer

Shares were mixed Tuesday in Europe and Asia after the U.S. military said it carried out what it called "self-defense" strikes in southern Iran, including on missile launch sites and boats placing mines.

The attacks came even as President Donald Trump said on social media that negotiations on ending the war were "proceeding nicely."

In early European trading, Germany's DAX lost 0.7% to 25,214.08, while the CAC 40 in Paris shed 0.9% to 8,187.07. In Britain, the FTSE 100 gained 0.7% to 10,540.40.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 29 of 59**

The futures for the S&P 500 and the Dow Jones Industrial Average were up 0.5%.

Oil prices were mixed, with Brent crude rising but still trading below \$100 a barrel while U.S. benchmark crude oil fell.

The U.S. military said the strikes Monday were done "to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces." It said it used restraint due to the ceasefire with Iran, which gave no official response. Further details were not immediately available, including more specifics on threats from Iran and what this means for negotiations.

With the status of peace talks with Iran unclear, markets have been swayed by various developments and comments by Trump.

"Markets are behaving as though a full Iran breakthrough already exists, even though the hardest parts of the negotiation remain unresolved," Stephen Innes of SPI Asset Management wrote in a commentary. "Washington continues to signal optimism, while Tehran insists no agreement is imminent."

During Asian trading, Tokyo's Nikkei 225 lost 0.3% to 64,996.09, falling back from an all-time high close over 65,000 on Monday.

In Hong Kong, the Hang Seng index was nearly unchanged at 25,599.45, while the Shanghai Composite index shed 0.2% to 4,145.37.

South Korea's Kospi jumped 2.6% to 8,047.51, catching up after markets were closed Monday for a holiday.

The S&P/ASX 200 in Australia lost 0.4% to 8,657.80.

Benchmark U.S. crude oil declined \$3.67 to \$92.97 a barrel. Brent crude, the international standard, gained \$3.03 to \$96.45 a barrel after falling nearly \$5 on Monday.

U.S. markets were closed on Monday for the Memorial Day holiday. On Friday, the S&P 500 added 0.4% and the Dow industrials climbed 0.6%. The Nasdaq composite gained 0.2%.

Global markets advanced Monday after regional officials in the Middle East said the United States was close to reaching an agreement with Iran to end the war, reopen the Strait of Hormuz and see Iran give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium. But it's not clear when or how the deal might be finalized and when its various parts will take effect.

An end to the war would ease concerns throughout a region that saw Gulf havens and travel hubs like the United Arab Emirates struck by Iranian missiles and drones.

It would allow for global shipping, including an estimated 20% of the world's oil, to resume flowing through the Strait of Hormuz. It also would allow the rebuilding of energy and other infrastructure in the region.

In other dealings early Tuesday, the U.S. dollar rose to 159.09 Japanese yen from 158.91 yen. The euro cost \$1.1636, down from \$1.1645.

## **North Korea launches ballistic missile and other weapons over the sea in latest show of force**

By HYUNG-JIN KIM and KIM TONG-HYUNG Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea launched a close-range ballistic missile and other weapons toward the sea on Tuesday, South Korea's military said, days after the leaders of Russia and China voiced their opposition to Western pressures on North Korea.

The missile fired from Jongju, a city near the North's west coast, flew about 80 kilometers (50 miles), South Korea's Joint Chiefs of Staff said. North Korea launched other kinds of projectiles, it said, but didn't elaborate.

South Korean media, citing the military, reported the other weapons systems mobilized included multiple rocket launch systems. The reports said that the simultaneous launches of different kinds of weapons were likely meant to test an ability to evade South Korean and U.S. defenses.

South Korea's military said that it closely monitors activities in North Korea. It said that South Korea, with a solid alliance with the U.S., maintains a readiness to repel any provocations by North Korea.

It was North Korea's first weapons launch event since April 19, when the country fired multiple short-range missiles in what state-media described as a demonstration of cluster bomb warheads.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 30 of 59**

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has focused on modernizing his nuclear and missile arsenals since his nuclear diplomacy with U.S. President Donald Trump collapsed in 2019. In recent years, Kim has expanded ties with Russia by sending troops and conventional arms to support its war efforts against Ukraine. Kim has also pushed to cement cooperation with China, North Korea's economic pipeline.

In their summit in Beijing last week, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Chinese President Xi Jinping expressed their opposition to "foreign policy isolation, economic sanctions, military pressure and other methods of creating threats to the security" of North Korea, according to a statement from the the Kremlin.

Russia and China, both veto-wielding members of the U.N. Security Council, have previously frustrated the U.S. and others' efforts to toughen international sanctions on North Korea, despite its banned weapons tests.

Trump has repeatedly expressed his desire to resume talks with Kim, but Pyongyang has responded that Washington must first drop demands for the North's nuclear disarmament as a precondition for talks.

Kim has taken an increasingly hard-line stance toward South Korea, calling it his country's most hostile enemy and taking steps to terminate all ties with its neighbor. In a meeting with military commanders last week, Kim discussed efforts to strengthen military units along the border with South Korea in line with a state objective to turn the border line into "an impregnable fortress," according to state media.

On Tuesday, South Korean President Lee Jae Myung called for stronger efforts to advance the country's military. In televised remarks during a regular Cabinet meeting, he emphasized artificial intelligence and drone capabilities, and the potential acquisition of a nuclear-powered submarine, an issue that has been part of his diplomacy with Washington.

Lee, a liberal who espouses improved ties with North Korea, didn't specifically comment on the threats posed by the North. But he stressed the importance of South Korea demonstrating the "resolve to take responsibility for and protect our own security ourselves," saying such a posture would also strengthen the country's alliance with the United States.

## **Search continues for 7 villagers trapped in a flooded Laos cave**

By JINTAMAS SAKSORNCHAI Associated Press

BANGKOK (AP) — A search operation for seven villagers trapped inside a flooded cave in central Laos entered its seventh day on Tuesday, as rescuers encountered difficult terrain and weather as they are trying to reach the group whose condition remains unknown.

The villagers entered the cave in Xaisomboun province on May 19, but heavy rain triggered flash flooding that blocked the exit, according to Lao and Thai rescue teams involved in the operation.

The Lao organization Rescue Volunteer for People, which is working closely with the local authorities, posted on its Facebook page that Tuesday's operation plan includes exploring air shafts above the cave in hopes of identifying possible access points. and locating the trapped people.

Rescuers from neighboring Thailand also arrived at the site over the weekend to assist the operation.

Challenging conditions hamper rescue efforts

According to rescuers, divers have navigated about 100 meters into the flooded, narrow cave. They believe the villagers may be trapped about 30 meters beyond the furthest point currently accessible. They are working to pump water out of the cave to aid the search efforts.

The site is in a remote area in Xaisomboun province's Longcheng district, which is about 120 kilometers (75 miles) north of the capital, Vientiane. Rescuers at the scene have detailed on social media the challenging mountainous terrain and heavy rain that is hampering the operation.

Videos shared online by Thai rescuers showed that reaching the cave's entrance requires a steep hike on foot of roughly 4 kilometers (2.5 miles). The entrance is also steep and rocky, and barely wide enough for a single person to climb through at a time.

Inside, rescuers must go through muddy passageways, flooded sections and narrow tunnels that forced them to crawl forward.

Villagers were reportedly mining

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 31 of 59**

There has been no official confirmation on why the villagers went into the cave, although the rescuers involved said that they went in to look for gold deposits.

Bounkham Luanglath of the Lao rescue group has told The Associated Press that the cave was frequented by local residents looking for gold, although authorities had repeatedly warned them against entering the cave out of safety concerns.

The average per capita income in Laos of about \$2,000-2,500 is among the lowest in Southeast Asia, and it is less still in underdeveloped rural areas.

Laos is not known as a major gold producer, but its mining industry is sizable considering the country's developing economy. The mining sector is fueled by foreign direct investment, largely from neighboring Thailand and China. Copper is a major export, and mining for rare earth elements, needed for most modern technologies, has become more common in Laos recently.

The Laos Foreign Ministry on Tuesday said it has no official information to share with the media. The Southeast Asian nation is a one-party communist state with no organized opposition and the government keeps a tight lid on information.

**Cave rescues are risky business**

The news quickly drew headlines in Thailand because of its resemblance to the dramatic 2018 cave rescue in northern Thailand, where 12 boys and their soccer coach were trapped for more than two weeks before being safely rescued in an operation that became a global sensation. A former Thai navy SEAL diver was killed during the search and rescue effort.

A new tragedy occurred earlier this month, with five Italian divers found dead after they went missing while diving into a cave in the Maldives. A Maldivian military diver who was part of the recovery team was killed during the high-risk operation to retrieve their bodies.

A major health risk of being trapped in a cave is cold conditions quickly leading to hypothermia. The body can cope for weeks without food, but clean water is necessary to prevent dehydration. A contaminated water supply could cause diarrhea, hastening dehydration.

Declining oxygen levels cause symptoms similar to altitude sickness and in the long run can damage the lungs and other organs, while carbon dioxide buildup causes exhaustion and eventual unconsciousness.

Constant darkness disrupts time perception and the body's circadian rhythms. It also causes extreme sensitivity when the eyes have to adjust again to light.

## **Attacks from suspicious residents complicate the fight against a rare type of Ebola**

By JUSTIN KABUMBA and OPE ADETAYO Associated Press

BUNIA, Congo (AP) — Every time Vanny Birungi, a volunteer with the Red Cross in eastern Congo, goes out to raise awareness about the latest Ebola outbreak as suspected cases near 1,000, she faces a double threat.

One is the rare Bundibugyo type of Ebola, with no vaccine or treatment. The other is the anger and suspicion of residents who have pelted her with stones and verbal abuse in Bunia, a city at the heart of the outbreak.

"We continue to tell them that the disease is out there. Some accept, and others don't," Birungi told The Associated Press on Monday as she and colleagues spoke with groups of people in a working-class neighborhood under the scorching sun.

Aid workers are especially at risk in this volatile region where residents, like Birungi, have long been under threat of armed groups that have killed thousands of people and displaced many more in recent years.

Trust is hard to find among the traumatized population that is wary of outsiders, even those trying desperately to contain the rapidly spreading outbreak that experts say was discovered weeks late. Surveillance for such diseases has been weakened by U.S. and other aid cuts.

The World Health Organization says that a family of fruit bats is believed to be the natural hosts of the viruses that cause Ebola. But some people don't believe the virus exists, or are skeptical about its origins.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 32 of 59**

"These people should stop bothering us. They just want to get rich. Let's not forget that Ebola is a white man's invention," declared Pierre Basola, a 56-year-old resident of Bunia, who added: "Stop talking to me anyway."

Cases are nearing 1,000 but health centers are burned

Three times in the past week, healthcare facilities have been attacked. On Sunday, angry young men stormed a hospital treating Ebola patients, forcing medical staff to evacuate them as gunfire rang out.

On Saturday, a group of residents set fire to a tent for suspected and confirmed Ebola cases run by Doctors Without Borders in Mongbwalu, and more than a dozen people suspected to have the virus fled. On Thursday, a center in Rwampara was burned after relatives were barred from retrieving the body of a man suspected to have Ebola.

Anger is amplified as virus prevention practices keep loved ones from handling bodies in final rites following an illness some have described as sudden and dramatic, with vomiting and bleeding.

The Ebola virus is spread through close contact with sick or deceased patients' bodily fluids, such as sweat, blood, feces or vomit. Experts say healthcare workers and family members caring for patients face the highest risk.

"Trust is almost as important as the health response, because if you get this massive distrust in the communities, they're not going to go to the health centers," said Heather Kerr, country director for the International Rescue Committee in Congo.

Armed conflict in the region poses another challenge. To travel from Bunia, the capital of Ituri province, to Mongbwalu, aid groups risk potential attacks in a region more than 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Congo's capital, Kinshasa.

Meanwhile, the outbreak now has more than 900 suspected cases and more than 220 suspected deaths, WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said Monday.

"We are now playing catch-up with a very fast-moving epidemic," he said.

'We leave everything to God'

Mado Nditamba, a 70-year-old Bunia resident, said that she has seen students running away from aid workers.

"The last time Ebola came, it was not on the scale that we see today," Nditamba said. "But this epidemic today is worse. We go to the doctors in the hospitals, but they also die. That's what worries us. We don't know what to do and we leave everything to God."

Congo has had 17 Ebola outbreaks, and WHO says the country is equipped to respond. But early tests in this outbreak were conducted for a more common type of Ebola, losing valuable time. Experts are still trying to determine when this outbreak began.

There are few places to test for this Bundibugyo type in a region where clinics can run on generators, and a major airport serving as a humanitarian hub has been in the hands of rebels for more than a year.

Health workers on the ground have told the AP that they are underprepared and underprotected. An unknown number of responders have been infected, and some have died.

A Congolese doctor was reported dead on Sunday in Rwampara, Rubens Dhedgia, coordinator of the Ebola response in the region, told the AP. In neighboring Uganda, where a far smaller number of cases has begun to spread after Congolese traveled there, at least three health workers have been infected.

And perhaps most worryingly, the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies says three volunteers died in Mongbwalu, after it believes they handled bodies on March 27 during work unrelated to Ebola.

If confirmed, that would significantly push back the timeline of the outbreak from the first confirmed death in late April in Bunia.

Some residents still believe Ebola is a myth

Even as at least one funeral home manager dusted off coffins for sale alongside a road in Bunia, experts reported a lack of trust among some residents of the region who don't believe the virus exists.

Action Aid, another of the international humanitarian groups responding, said that a high level of skepti-

cism and lack of understanding remains, citing residents it questioned in mid-May in Ituri province just after the outbreak was announced.

"The only way to go, as far as this particular virus is concerned, is community engagement," said Yakubu Mohammed Saani, country director for Action Aid in Congo.

How that will be improved, and quickly, is still not clear. Meanwhile, both WHO and Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention believe the outbreak is larger than the cases reported so far.

## **Democrats feud over stock trading as they sharpen anti-corruption case against Trump**

By MATT BROWN Associated Press

DALLAS (AP) — After three terms in the U.S. House and two unsuccessful campaigns for the U.S. Senate, Colin Allred said he's heard plenty about voters' suspicions that politicians are just trying to make a buck in Washington.

"What about the stock trading in Congress? What about people getting rich in Congress?" Allred said they ask him regularly. "And I have to say to them, you're absolutely right about that, too. We need to be better."

He's challenging Rep. Julie Johnson in the Democratic runoff for a Dallas-area House seat on Tuesday, and he's one of several candidates trying to harness populist anger over congressional stock trading. Allred has denounced Johnson for trades involving companies like Palantir, a data analytics firm with ties to President Donald Trump's administration.

Johnson said her trades were handled by a financial manager, and she accused Allred of being "only out for himself." She pointed to financial disclosures that showed Allred's wealth nearly doubling during his own time in Congress, although Allred said his assets were in a blind trust and the money came from his wife's income as a partner at a law firm.

"To be clear, the sum total I made on that trade was only \$90," Johnson said of her Palantir stock. "My opponent is trying to make it seem like it was hundreds or thousands."

The bitter campaign is emblematic of broader debates within the Democratic Party over the role of money in politics. Long a refrain of strident progressives and good-government reformers, accusations that political rivals are self-dealing or bought by special interests have become a mainstay of Democratic primaries. The heightened criticism of lawmakers' personal wealth comes as the party looks to sharpen its anti-corruption message against Trump and to develop a platform for overhauling Washington if Democrats take power in the midterms.

Some are tracking congressional stock trading

Trump campaigned on a promise to "drain the swamp," capitalizing on Americans' disdain for the Washington establishment. Now that his family is profiting while he's back in the White House, Democrats are eager to regain the upper hand on an issue that could prove potent with voters.

"The difficulty is that right now, no party has the mantle on anti-corruption," said Daniel Lobo-Lewis, a political consultant in Washington. "Many voters outside of the beltway see both parties as corrupt, because they see all politicians as bought by the donors or by their own self-interest."

Lobo-Lewis and Nico Agosta founded the Political Integrity Project last year to track stock trading and corporate donations involving members of Congress.

The organization asks candidates to sign an "integrity pledge" to refrain from trading stocks or accepting corporate donations while in Congress and vow not to work as a lobbyist after they leave office. So far, about 90 challengers and seven sitting lawmakers have taken the pledge.

"If we want to, in any way, start rebuilding trust in our political institutions, it starts with no-brainer changes like this that have an approval rating above and beyond any other issue you could imagine," Lobo-Lewis said.

Congress has yet to enact a stock trading ban for its members, though insider trading is already illegal for members just like it is for anyone else. There are multiple proposals on Capitol Hill, but none have

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 34 of 59**

gained traction.

A bipartisan bill to ban congressional stock trading stalled this year despite receiving Trump's blessing during his State of the Union. And Democrats remain divided over the number of alleged loopholes in their competing proposals.

Anti-corruption messages spread in Democratic primaries

A crowded race in a Democratic-leaning Utah congressional seat has featured attacks over candidates' personal wealth. State Sen. Nate Blouin criticized his main rival, former Rep. Ben McAdams, for having equity in a Utah data center firm, and excoriated others in the race for past investments and jobs.

McAdams said the equity of several thousand dollars was payment for a past contract completed by his government consulting firm while he was a private citizen. His campaign defended the data center project by saying it would use no water and run on clean energy.

A spokesperson for McAdams also claimed Blouin "is currently hiding his corporate donations" by removing them from campaign disclosure reports, which McAdams' campaign claims "is not only deceitful, it breaks campaign finance law."

In an interview, Blouin rejected the claim that he broke the law, and said that he removed the donations because he returned the money to each donor.

"It was actually quite uncomfortable to return some of those," said Blouin, because some of the firms included local firms and clean energy companies. "But there is a perception that campaign contributions from lobbyists and companies influence votes, and I think there is some truth to that."

In a New York City congressional district that includes both Wall Street and the Democratic Socialists of America's headquarters, the city's former comptroller, Brad Lander, has accused Rep. Dan Goldman of trying to buy another term by using his own wealth to match campaign contributions. Goldman, an heir to the Levi Strauss family fortune, says he entered all of his assets into a blind trust after taking office in 2023.

A spokesperson for Goldman said Lander is "running a deceitful campaign based on absurd lies that Dan is beholden to special interests" and that Goldman has raised more campaign funds than Lander "without taking a dime of corporate PAC money." Goldman has spent his own money on the race, the spokesperson said: "To ensure that the NY-10 voters can be sure that he is beholden only to them and his principles."

Lander said Goldman's spending is "not illegal, but it is certainly anti-democratic when a quarter-billionaire like Dan Goldman not only dumps millions of his own inherited wealth into his elections but also solicits money from the same forces who are rigging the economy and worsening the affordability crisis."

More candidates are fighting over stocks in California

Even representatives who support a ban on congressional stock trading are feeling the heat.

Democratic Rep. Brad Sherman of California is facing multiple primary challengers who have criticized the congressman for holding stocks while serving in Congress. Sherman does not trade individual stocks and supports a ban on stock trading.

"I only own three individual stocks, which I inherited from my mother when she passed away, which were originally acquired by my grandmother," Sherman said. "I have never sold them because I made a promise to my constituents that I would not buy and sell individual stocks."

One of Sherman's primary challengers is Jake Levine, a former climate adviser to President Joe Biden, who signed the pledge from the Political Integrity Project. But Sherman said Levine "refuses to disclose key elements of his \$18 million stock portfolio, and actively bought and sold stocks while serving on the National Security Council."

Levine said in a statement shortly after midnight on Tuesday that Sherman "knows he's losing because voters are sick of politics as usual and ready for a new generation of leadership."

He added: "He's chosen to close his campaign with desperate, unfounded attacks against me rather than make a real argument of why he deserves to be reelected. We look forward to the results next week."

In the race to succeed former House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, California State Sen. Scott Wiener has critiqued his progressive opponent, Saikat Chakrabarti, over his personal wealth. Chakrabarti is a former software engineer who earned millions as an early employee at the tech firm Stripe. He later served as



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 35 of 59**

the first chief of staff to Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y.

Wiener said that Chakrabarti "has enormous investments" and "is trying to buy this seat" while "spreading bogus conspiracy theories" with his own wealth. He criticized Chakrabarti for not disclosing the last decade of his stock trades.

"If you're making a ban on stock trades a central part of your campaign — as Saikat is doing, running around saying that everyone under the sun is corrupt — how about you tell the voters about your own stock trading history," Wiener said.

Chakrabarti retorted that his wealth as a private citizen is not relevant to his future time in office and that he would place all of his assets into a blind trust should he be elected. He critiqued Wiener for being supported by super PACs funded by the AI firm Anthropic and other major corporations.

"This is all part of a larger problem, which is just the whole idea of corruption in our politics," Chakrabarti said. "If you're in Congress, you sit on committees that oversee a lot of these industries, and it's unethical to be using that insider information, that knowledge to make stock trades. But that doesn't apply to a private citizen."

## **Cornyn tries to hold on to Texas Senate seat in runoff with Paxton, the latest test of Trump's power**

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

PLANO, Texas (AP) — Texans are choosing a Republican nominee for U.S. Senate in Tuesday's runoff election, bringing to a close the extended, bitter and expensive primary where President Donald Trump weighed in late to tip the race in another effort to rid the GOP of leaders less devoted to him.

Trump's endorsement of state Attorney General Ken Paxton over four-term Sen. John Cornyn gives the challenger a late boost and puts Cornyn at risk of becoming the first Republican senator in Texas history to seek the party's nod and lose.

That's despite Cornyn's campaign and allied groups spending roughly \$90 million in advertising since last year, the vast majority of it attacking Paxton.

It's the latest GOP contest where Trump has sought to punish a Republican he sees as insufficiently loyal. This month, he has successfully backed challengers to incumbents in Louisiana, Kentucky and Indiana, a sign of his enduring influence among primary voters.

Paxton's campaign and a pro-Paxton super PAC began airing ads promoting the endorsement within 24 hours of Trump's announcement. Cornyn acknowledged Trump's move would have an impact but said he wasn't giving up.

"I know who gets to choose our senators, and it's the people of Texas," he said hours after the endorsement.

The winner will run in November against Democratic state Rep. James Talarico.

Tuesday's runoffs also will decide Democratic U.S. House nominees for districts in Dallas and Houston that overwhelmingly support Democrats, and a San Antonio-area seat the party hopes to flip.

The primary has been long, bitter and costly

Cornyn led Paxton in the March primary but failed to win a majority in the three-way contest that also included U.S. Rep. Wesley Hunt, who finished in a distant third.

That was after Cornyn's campaign and allied groups waged a monthslong ad campaign, mostly attacking Paxton for ethical and personal questions. The two-term attorney general was acquitted in a 2023 impeachment trial when allegations of extramarital affairs surfaced. Last year, Paxton's wife filed for divorce, citing "biblical grounds."

The alliance of pro-Cornyn groups have continued its attack, outspending Paxton's campaign and two allied super PACs \$16.5 million to \$5.9 million since March 3, according to the ad-tracking firm AdImpact.

Trump promised to endorse immediately after the primary, asking the unchosen candidate to withdraw. But he didn't act until after early voting began on May 18.

"Ken Paxton has gone through a lot, in many cases, very unfairly, but he is a Fighter, and knows how to

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 36 of 59**

win," Trump wrote in a social media post endorsing him. "Our Country needs Fighters, and also Loyalty to the Cause of Greatness."

Pro-Cornyn groups lately have been airing ads criticizing the attorney general office's handling of a Waco sex abuse case. Pro-Paxton groups had seized on Cornyn's awkward relationship with Trump.

Trump snubs Cornyn amid retribution campaign

The negative tenor could diminish turnout in an election already complicated by coming a day after Memorial Day, Texas Republican strategist Tyler Norris said. About 2 million of Texas' 18.7 million voters participated in the GOP primary.

The dynamic could favor Paxton, whose support draws from more of the most loyal Trump base in Texas, said Norris, who isn't affiliated with either campaign.

"The defining battle lines are based around hyper-negative messaging, which dampens turnout to begin with," he said. "So who is going to show up is the hardest of the hard core."

Trump in his endorsement also poked at Cornyn, as he has done with other Republicans who are not in lockstep with the president.

He blasted Republican Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy as "a Disloyal Disaster" on May 16, before Cassidy lost a GOP primary for the office he has held since 2015. The two-term senator had voted to convict Trump after his 2021 impeachment trial over the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the U.S. Capitol. Trump backed U.S. Rep. Julia Letlow, who advanced to a runoff with John Fleming, the state treasurer. Cassidy finished well behind them.

Last week, Trump celebrated as Kentucky Rep. Thomas Massie, a critic of the Trump administration's handling of the Jeffrey Epstein files, lost his primary to Ed Gallrein. Trump called Massie "the worst congressman in the history of our country."

In endorsing Paxton, Trump said Cornyn "was not supportive of me when times were tough" and that "John was very late in backing me."

Cornyn suggested in 2023 that Trump could not win the presidency again in 2024 and that his "time has passed him by." He also was an early critic of Trump's plan for a border wall between the U.S. and Mexico — a project he now supports.

Senate GOP leaders backed Cornyn, saying he would be stronger in the general election. Some GOP strategists have argued a Paxton nomination would cost millions of dollars more to promote in the fall, when money could be spent defending Republican seats in more competitive states. Democrats need to gain a net of four seats to take the majority.

Democrats also will choose US House nominees

Newly elected Rep. Christian Menefee and veteran Rep. Al Green are vying for the party nod in Texas' 18th District, which the Republican-led Texas Legislature redrew last year to help the GOP. The new map led to a contest between incumbents and marks the end of a dizzying series of elections in the Houston area. Menefee was elected in a special runoff in January to the seat that had been held by the late Rep. Sylvester Turner, who died in March 2025.

Menefee finished narrowly ahead of Green in the March 3 primary but didn't win a majority to avoid the runoff.

Former Rep. Colin Allred and U.S. Rep. Julie Johnson are competing in the Dallas-area 33rd District. Johnson was elected to the seat in 2024, the year Allred lost his U.S. Senate challenge to Republican Sen. Ted Cruz. Allred was running for Senate again this cycle but dropped his bid and instead is looking to return to the House.

Near San Antonio, Democratic leaders are trying to prevent Maureen Galindo, who has expressed anti-semitic views, from winning the party's runoff with Johnny Garcia. While Texas lawmakers redrew the 35th District to help Republicans, Democrats view it as within reach and don't want Galindo's past comments to impede them.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 37 of 59

## Q&A: Anna Gomez is the sole Democrat on the FCC. She has a warning for big media companies

By STEVEN SLOAN Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Anna Gomez wakes up every morning and checks her phone to see if President Donald Trump has fired her yet.

For now, she remains the sole Democrat on the Federal Communications Commission, where she's on an increasingly urgent mission to press media companies to more forcefully combat an administration she says is cracking down on free speech.

Her immediate focus is Disney, the parent of ABC. It is the subject of investigations launched by the FCC under Chairman Brendan Carr, a Trump ally.

In an extraordinary four-page letter earlier this month to Disney CEO Josh D'Amaro, Gomez outlined what she described as the FCC's "sustained, coordinated campaign of censorship and control" against the company. She noted probes touching on everything from diversity practices to ABC's moderation of a 2024 presidential debate and the guests booked on "The View" along with the administration's calls for late-night host Jimmy Kimmel to be fired.

She's particularly worried that the FCC's move for early reviews of ABC's broadcast licenses in the markets where it owns local stations is an effort to intimidate the network. She called it "the most egregious assault on the First Amendment this FCC has taken to date."

Her message was simple: Fight back. She argued that Disney's controversial decision to pay a \$15 million defamation settlement shortly before Trump returned to office did the company little good and set a bad precedent for the rest of the industry.

"That settlement did not buy you peace," she wrote in the letter, which she also posted to social media. "It only bought you time."

D'Amaro hasn't publicly responded to Gomez. But he has signaled a new approach in a filing this month, accusing the FCC of taking actions that could "chill critical protected speech."

In an interview from her Washington office, Gomez said she was heartened by Disney's response and encouraged other broadcasters to prepare for similar fights. She's an exceedingly rare figure in the nation's capital, one of just a few Democrats who have held onto their seats at federal agencies after Trump fired most of them in a bid to bend the bureaucracy to his will.

The Supreme Court is considering the constitutionality of Trump's moves and could issue a decision in the coming weeks.

While that plays out, Gomez's term is slated to end June 30. But unless Trump fires her, she's likely to remain at the agency, where her presence allows for a quorum that gives Carr the opportunity to keep enacting his agenda. Given the Senate's narrow divide and dwindling calendar ahead of the midterms, it would be hard for Trump to muscle through a replacement.

Here are highlights of the interview, edited for length and clarity.

A letter to Disney ... and a warning

AP: What prompted you to write the letter to Disney?

GOMEZ: At the beginning of this administration, I was growing increasingly alarmed by what I saw as this administration's campaign to control and censor speech. And so I embarked on a tour across the country where I was talking to journalists, local broadcasters, legal scholars, press freedom advocates. And what I came back with was more of a conviction that we really needed to do something.

Then I started watching the capitulation. We saw CBS settle its lawsuit with the president and then agree to terms that basically require an ombudsperson to oversee the content of the network in order to get its transaction approved by the FCC. We saw ABC, of course, settle its lawsuit and I grew more and more and more concerned about the fact that this capitulation breeds capitulation.

And so I wrote the letter and the letter had two goals in mind. One was to basically put on the record and call out everything that this FCC has done to try to bring Disney to heel but also to encourage it and other broadcasters to stiffen their spine. We know, based on the record of this administration, every time



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 38 of 59

it gets taken to court for these violations of the First Amendment and against the freedom of the press, it loses.

AP: Is your ultimate goal to get a court to rule against the FCC?

GOMEZ: In the end, what I want is for companies to push back because if this gets to court, any entity that challenges what this FCC is doing is going to win.

Regulation in a changing media environment

AP: The media landscape has changed so dramatically from when the FCC was founded. What is the government's role in this space now?

GOMEZ: Traditionally, the FCC has licensed the local broadcast stations, and what we license is actually their spectrum, their airwaves over which they broadcast their television, their radio. And it has done so with three basic principles in mind. Competition, because competition's always good for consumers and for viewers and for the market. Localism, which really means serving your local market, whether that means actually airing 24 hours a day the content, but truly local content. And finally, viewpoint diversity. We want to encourage more voices, not fewer.

And that is, I think, the right role for the FCC. Being a censor is not the right role for the FCC.

Life as the FCC's sole Democrat

AP: You've been in and out of the FCC for decades. You're a lawyer, some might even say a technocrat. When you look back at your career, did you think you would take such a vocal stand against the actions of the agency and ultimately an administration?

GOMEZ: No, never in my entire career did I think that I would be having to speak up this strongly for the First Amendment in our Constitution and our democracy.

As you said, I'm a bit of a technocrat. I'm used to talking about the airwaves and I'm used to talking about broadband and how important it is for everyone to have access to broadband. I'm used to talking about really boring things like how to attach to light poles. But media wasn't something that I particularly thought I would have to really delve into. But, like I said, this administration has just been alarming me so much and so I've had to pivot.

AP: You and Chairman Carr have a cordial relationship even though you disagree quite intensely. Is there a secret you want to share with the rest of Washington on how to do that?

GOMEZ: You know, we do have a collegial relationship and we do work well together. He has been in my position and he understands my need to speak out and I do so freely, knowing that some day I may face the consequences for it. But we do work at maintaining a cordial relationship.

AP: You're talking about the potential of being fired by the president?

GOMEZ: Yes, especially when I saw last year when the administration was firing all the Democratic members of different independent commissions and bodies. I just checked my email every day. Literally every day I pick up my phone and I say, "Am I going to work today?" And so far, so good.

AP: Your term lasts through June 30 and you're needed for a quorum. Absent an email that you wake up to in the morning, what are your plans?

GOMEZ: I can continue serving for another year and a half-ish after my term expires as long as no one else is nominated and confirmed for my particular slot. So I intend to continue working and to continue speaking out as long as I can.

## US military says it carried out 'self-defense' strikes in Iran, including on missile launch sites

By KONSTANTIN TOROPIN, LINDSAY WHITEHURST and MUNIR AHMED Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. military said Monday that it carried out "self-defense" strikes in southern Iran, including on missile launch sites and boats placing mines, even as President Donald Trump said on social media that negotiations with Tehran were "proceeding nicely."

The strikes were done "to protect our troops from threats posed by Iranian forces," but the military was

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 39 of 59**

"using restraint during the ongoing ceasefire," Capt. Tim Hawkins, the spokesman for the U.S. military's Central Command, said in a statement.

Further details were not immediately available, including more specifics on the threats from Iran and what this means for negotiations. There was no official response from Iran, which had sent its parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf to Qatar for negotiations over the possible deal with the U.S.

Qatar, which faced intense attacks from Iran during the war, holds billions of dollars in frozen Iranian funds.

In Iran, the news website Tabnak, believed to be close to former Revolutionary Guard chief Mohsen Rezaei, identified four dead Guard troops it said had been killed in American strikes on boats. Iranian state television separately reported blasts around Bandar Abbas, a city on the Strait of Hormuz home to a military port and a dual-use airport.

The strikes were the latest attacks to shake the weekslong ceasefire in the war. The Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of all crude oil and natural gas traded once passed, remains effectively in Iran's chokehold, disrupting global energy markets.

Trump brings up recognition of Israel

Earlier, Trump said any agreement to end the Iran war should include a requirement for several additional countries, including Saudi Arabia and Pakistan, to join the Abraham Accords, the U.S.-brokered agreements from Trump's first term aimed at normalizing relations with Israel.

The proposal came as the emerging Iran deal faced criticism from fellow Republicans who favor a harder line on Iran, and it could add new diplomatic complications to the negotiations.

Trump pointed to Saudi Arabia and Qatar as countries that should "immediately" sign on. Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates became the first countries to join in 2020, diplomatically recognizing Israel.

He wrote that "after all the work done by the United States to try and pull this very complex puzzle together, it should be mandatory that all of these Countries, at a minimum, simultaneously, sign onto the Abraham Accords."

Trump has long hoped Saudi Arabia would join. Saudi Arabia in particular has for decades called on Israel to return to its 1967 borders and allow the formation of a Palestinian nation with east Jerusalem as its capital. Israel's conduct in the war against Hamas in the Gaza Strip also has alienated Gulf Arab states and the wider Muslim world as well.

Pakistan remains key mediator

Recognition of a Palestinian state also remains key for Pakistan, which is among the countries that do not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Islamabad-based analyst Syed Mohammad Ali said Pakistan's position on Israel remains unchanged despite Trump's latest proposal.

The president said he brought up the Abraham Accords plan with leaders during negotiations on Saturday. He said he would accept "one or two" countries declining to sign, but said most should be willing. Egypt and Jordan already formally recognize Israel and have long-standing peace treaties. Turkey first recognized Israel in 1949.

Masood Khan, Pakistan's former ambassador to the United States, said it remains to be seen how workable the proposal might be for the countries on Trump's list.

"The invocation of the Abraham Accords at this stage gives an altogether new dimension to the diplomatic and mediatory processes because this issue was not on the agenda," he said, pointing to the domestic pressure Trump is facing to strike a favorable deal.

Still, Khan said, "the diplomatic track is still working, and I believe Pakistan is very much at the center of it, supported by regional countries."

It remains unclear when or how any deal with Iran might be completed. Trump suggested even Iran could eventually sign on to the accords, if an agreement is reached.

The accords are a series of diplomatic, economic and security agreements created with U.S. influence during Trump's first term, which also saw Sudan, Morocco, and, more recently, Kazakhstan, join.

## Officials lift evacuation orders for some California residents living near a damaged chemical tank

By LEAH WILLINGHAM and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

Emergency officials lifted an evacuation order Monday for some of the people who live near a damaged tank containing a hazardous chemical in Southern California after temperatures inside the tank fell enough to eliminate the risk of a catastrophic explosion.

While there's no longer a risk of a major explosion at the GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems plant in Garden Grove, there's still a chance for a smaller blast or a fire, Orange County Fire Authority division chief Craig Covey said during a news conference.

An overnight evaluation of the tank containing 6,000 to 7,000 gallons (22,700 to 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate, which is highly flammable, showed a reduction of pressure inside the tank thanks to a crack that was discovered Sunday. About two-thirds — roughly 34,000 — of the evacuated residents can go home as a result, Covey said.

"It's not over yet. We still have work to do," Covey said. "We still have to mitigate a fire and very small explosion concern, and also a spill potential."

Officials began ordering residents of Garden Grove, near Los Angeles, to evacuate their homes on Thursday after the tank overheated, and by the weekend about 50,000 residents had been told to leave.

Officials said they needed to cool the tank to prevent a toxic leak or explosion. The tank's interior had cooled to 93 degrees F (33.9 degrees C), Covey said Monday, down from 100 degrees (37.7 degrees C) a day earlier.

Orange County Health Director Regina Chinsio-Kwong said she wanted to reassure everyone who is returning home that they can feel safe. Exposure to methyl methacrylate can cause serious respiratory problems, neurological problems and irritation to the skin, eyes and throat, according to the federal Environmental Protection Agency.

"There was no contamination. There were no fumes. There were not vapors that came from this incident," she said at the news conference. "There was not a leak. So it should be, you should feel comfortable going home even if you're across the street from that new zone line."

Environmental risks remain

The tank might eventually cool enough for crews to safely stabilize and drain the remaining material without triggering a spark or ignition, said Andrew Whelton, a Purdue University engineering professor who has studied environmental contamination.

Whelton cautioned there is still some risk of an explosion while the chemical inside the tank remains hot and reactive. He said temperatures need to fall closer to ambient levels — roughly 60 to 70 degrees Fahrenheit (15.6 to 21.1 degrees C) — before conditions are considered significantly safer.

As the interior temperature of the tank increased, methyl methacrylate — which is used to make plastics — converted from liquid to gas, ramping up the pressure and risk of explosion, Whelton said.

Some of the methyl methacrylate may already have hardened into a stable plastic similar to plexiglass, reducing the risk inside the tank, he said.

Orange County Supervisor Janet Nguyen said the South Coast Air Quality Management District will be monitoring the air for several months and the EPA will be checking the sewer and storm drains.

County health officials have said the chemical is easy to smell and people may notice it over a large area without being harmed.

Relief among residents after hearing the latest update

Authorities have not defined what a catastrophic explosion might mean, but said Monday the worst-case scenario is off the table.

Kim Yen, a retiree who had to evacuate her Garden Grove home, said she has been closely following the news and is relieved to learn that the worst has passed.

"I am happy and many of us are happy but, still, we are still on our evacuation," she said.

Yen, who lives two blocks from the plant, said she's ready to return home but first wants to be sure it's



# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 41 of 59

safe. And, she said, she's been worried about the emergency crews.

"They are really our heroes," Yen said.

The parking lot was full Monday at a large park in Fountain Valley, just southwest of Garden Grove, as people sought refuge in an ad hoc shelter there or pitched tents outside. Other people gathered in the park to enjoy Memorial Day.

GKN is a British company that supplies aircraft manufacturers

GKN Aerospace Transparency Systems, which owns the plant, is a British company that makes cockpit windows, canopies and windshields for military and commercial aircraft.

GKN Aerospace technical specialists and the Orange County Fire Authority removed external insulation material from the tank to help cool its contents, according to a GKN Aerospace statement released Monday.

"We apologize for the ongoing disruption this incident is causing and our priority remains its safe resolution, so that residents can return to their homes as quickly as possible," the statement said.

GKN Aerospace says on its website that it employs about 16,000 people across 32 manufacturing sites in 12 countries and supplies technologies and components used by major commercial and military aircraft manufacturers worldwide.

It remained unknown when the operation would reopen.

GKN Aerospace agreed in 2025 to pay state regulators more than \$900,000 to settle violations involving recordkeeping, permitting issues and nitrogen oxide emissions, according to a report on the South Coast Air Quality Management District website.

Aircraft manufacturing vulnerable to supply chain disruptions

Disruptions at facilities producing specialized aircraft components can be difficult for the global aerospace industry to absorb because supply chains are highly concentrated and already strained, said Richard Aboulafia, managing director of the aerospace consulting firm AeroDynamic Advisory.

Aboulafia said aerospace manufacturing differs from many other industries because aircraft production rates are relatively low, leaving only a small number of suppliers for many specialized parts and systems.

"There's just not a lot of margin in the system," he said.

## UAE accused of training Colombian mercenaries for Sudan's war

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The United Arab Emirates trained Colombian mercenaries before sending them to fight alongside a notorious paramilitary group in Sudan's devastating war, Human Rights Watch said Tuesday.

Its new report is the latest by an international rights group accusing the wealthy Gulf monarchy of financially and militarily aiding the Rapid Support Forces that have been widely accused of committing atrocities amounting to war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide.

The United Arab Emirates denied the latest accusations in response to questions from The Associated Press.

Report adds to a 'growing body of evidence'

"The recruitment of Colombian private military contractors adds to a growing body of evidence that the UAE provides military support to the Rapid Support Forces, which have repeatedly carried out heinous atrocities in Sudan," said Mausi Segun, executive director of HRW's Africa Division.

Sudan's war broke out on April 15, 2023, when a power struggle between the military and RSF exploded into fighting in the capital, Khartoum, and elsewhere in the sprawling northeastern African country.

The RSF was born out of feared Arab Janjaweed militias that were notorious for atrocities in the early 2000s against people identifying as East or Central African in Sudan's western region of Darfur.

In the new report, Human Rights Watch said hundreds of Colombian mercenaries were trained by Emirati nationals at a military base in Al Dhafra region, about 250 kilometers (155 miles) west of the UAE capital of Abu Dhabi, and at another facility in Abu Dhabi, before being deployed to Sudan to fight alongside the RSF.

The rights group quoted an unnamed Colombian mercenary as saying he trained RSF recruits at camps around Nyala, the provincial capital of South Darfur, in April last year.

# Groton Daily Independent

Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 42 of 59

Many recruits were "young children," the mercenary was quoted as saying. The rights group said it interviewed another Colombian mercenary and other sources, including former Colombian military officers.

A United Nations panel of experts in a report to the U.N. Security Council in September said Colombian mercenaries fought in multiple areas across Sudan, including in Khartoum, its sister city of Omdurman and the regions of Darfur and Kordofan, among other areas. The experts said the mercenaries' combat roles included the operation of RSF drones, artillery and armored vehicles, as well as participation in direct attacks.

RSF commander Gen. Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo acknowledged in video comments in February that Colombian mercenaries have aided his group to operate drones.

Report urges countries to press the UAE to end RSF support

The mercenaries were hired by Abu Dhabi-based Global Security Services Group, a private security firm, Human Rights Watch said. According to the U.N. experts, the firm was chaired by Mohammed Hamdan Al-Zaabi, an Emirati national.

Human Rights Watch said Emirati authorities and the firm didn't respond to its requests for comment. The UAE's Foreign Ministry, however, denied the allegations in an email to the AP.

"The UAE does not permit its territory to be used for the recruitment, training, financing or transit of foreign fighters to any conflict, including Sudan," the ministry said.

It said any private individual or entity, Emirati or foreign, that provides support to non-state armed groups "would be doing so without state authorization, in violation of Emirati law, and would be subject to criminal investigation and prosecution."

Human Rights Watch said it verified videos showing mercenaries, apparently Colombian, fighting alongside the RSF when it captured the Darfur city of el-Fasher in October in an offensive the U.N.-commissioned experts said bore "the hallmarks of genocide." At least 6,000 people were killed in three days, according to the U.N.

The rights group called for the international community, including the European Union, to press the UAE to end its support to the RSF though suspending military cooperation and arms sales.

"Other countries need to stop accepting the UAE's blanket denials of support to the RSF which fly in the face of the facts, and should put an end to its impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity," Segun said.

The U.S. has imposed sanctions on many people and firms based in Colombia's capital, Bogota, over allegedly recruiting and deploying Colombian mercenaries to fight with the RSF. But it hasn't addressed reports of the UAE's alleged support to RSF which it accused of repeatedly carrying out "summary executions, ethnically motivated attacks, sexual and gender-based violence, and torture throughout areas under its control" during the war.

At least 59,000 people have been killed over the three years, according to the Armed Conflict Location and Event Data Project, known as ACLED. The U.S.-based tracking group, however, said its toll was almost certainly an underestimate given the difficulty in reporting.

## There's no longer a risk of a catastrophic explosion at a California plant. Here's what to know

By DYLAN LOVAN and JAMIE STENGLE Associated Press

Authorities scrambling to find a safe resolution after a tank containing a hazardous chemical was damaged at a Southern California aerospace plant believe the risk of a catastrophic explosion has been eliminated and have lifted evacuation orders for about two-thirds of the 50,000 who were forced to leave their homes.

The storage tank at GKN Aerospace containing about 6,000 to 7,000 gallons (23,000 to 26,500 liters) of methyl methacrylate overheated last week in Garden Grove, a city in Orange County.

Officials have said the tank vented vapors as pressure and temperatures rose, but that monitoring has not detected hazardous chemical levels in the atmosphere. No injuries have been reported.

While officials said Monday that an overnight inspection confirmed a crack in the tank relieved pressure

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 43 of 59**

and cooled the chemical, they said some risk to public safety remained including a possible fire, spill or small explosion.

What is the latest update?

After the tank overheated Thursday, firefighters repeatedly sprayed it with water in an attempt to cool the chemical inside. Officials said Sunday that a crack that developed in the tank lowered the risk of an explosion.

Orange County Fire Authority division chief Craig Covey said a team that evaluated the tank overnight concluded that the temperature inside had dropped and pressure had been released. He called this "incredibly positive news."

The tank's interior reached 100 degrees (37.7 Celsius) Sunday, an increase of 10 degrees Fahrenheit (5.5 Celsius) since Saturday, according to Democratic state Sen. Tom Umberg. On Monday, Covey said the temperature fell to 93 degrees F (33.9 degrees C).

Covey announced Monday night that the evacuation area had been greatly reduced and that many of the evacuees could return home.

Why is this chemical dangerous?

Methyl methacrylate is a flammable, colorless liquid used in the production of resins, plastics and plastic dentures and is regulated by the federal government.

It can irritate the lungs, eyes and skin and in high doses can cause reduced lung function, along with dizziness and memory problems, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

In prolonged cases, exposure to methyl methacrylate can cause serious respiratory problems or render a person unconscious.

Tests have found that air pollution in the evacuation zone is within normal limits.

What is the problem with the tank?

Officials have said the valves on the tank are broken or "gummed up," which prevented crews from removing the chemical or relieving the pressure on the tank.

The facility specializes in the production of aircraft transparency systems, including cockpit windows, canopies and windshields. British company GKN Aerospace says on its website that its products are used by major commercial and military aircraft manufacturers worldwide.

The company apologized Monday for the "ongoing disruption this incident is causing," saying in a statement that its specialists and the Orange County Fire Authority had removed external insulation material from the tank to help cool its contents.

What was the risk of an explosion?

If the temperature inside the tank climbed high enough, it would have caused pressure to build as the methyl methacrylate converted from a liquid to a gas, increasing the risk of explosion and possibly igniting other tanks.

A blast would release the chemical to a wider area and could create vapors that would be hazardous to inhale, according to Orange County's top health officer, Dr. Regina Chinsio-Kwong.

Several evacuation shelters opened over the Memorial Day weekend to house the evacuees.

The evacuation zone was west of Anaheim, home to Disneyland's two theme parks, which were not under evacuation orders. Chinsio-Kwong said people outside the evacuation zone don't need to worry about health impacts.

## **Cornyn and Paxton flood Texas airwaves in final day of GOP Senate runoff**

By THOMAS BEAUMONT and JESSE BEDAYN Associated Press

SAN ANTONIO (AP) — Voters in Texas saw little of the Republican candidates for U.S. Senate on Monday — provided they stayed away from screens.

Sen. John Cornyn and state Attorney General Ken Paxton had no public campaign events scheduled for the final day of their more-than-yearlong quest for the GOP nomination. Instead, their fight for Tuesday's



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 44 of 59**

runoff continued as it has for months — intense and unabated — through advertising that has topped \$109 million, heavily from Cornyn's side.

Cornyn hosted an annual, non-campaign event in San Antonio to recognize high school graduates attending the nation's service academies. The senator seeking a fifth term held his last public campaign event in Corpus Christi on Friday, ahead of Tuesday's voting.

Paxton headlined his last events Thursday in the Austin area and in San Antonio, content to let his campaign and a super PAC carry his primary message: that President Donald Trump endorsed him on May 19.

Trump's announcement and accompanying dismissal of Cornyn, who has had an awkward public relationship with the president, came on the second day of early voting, which ended Friday.

Though the candidates' campaigns were quiet over the weekend, Trump reaffirmed his support for Paxton on Sunday, and disparaged Cornyn as insufficiently loyal to him.

Paxton, Trump posted on social media, "was also very loyal to your favorite President, ME," while calling Cornyn "VERY disloyal to me." It was Trump's strongest rebuke of Cornyn, who had dismissed his 2024 comeback chances, and echoed the president's reproach of Louisiana Sen. Bill Cassidy before he lost in the May 15 GOP Senate primary.

After Trump's jabs, Cornyn still leaned into his support for the president just before Monday's event. The senator said that 99.3% of his votes aligned with Trump, that he "wants him to be successful" and then he referenced Trump's previous comments "where he called me a good man and a friend."

As for endorsing his opponent, "obviously the president is entitled to make his pick," he said, but "Texans are a pretty independent breed and people will be making their own choices."

Following Trump's call for retribution, Republican voters in Indiana and Kentucky have also chosen GOP primary challengers over incumbent GOP officeholders who have crossed the president or opposed his agenda.

For a contest that is expected to draw a fraction of Texas' 18.7 million voters, the two candidates' campaigns and supporting groups were continuing to bombard all Texans with advertising, though more by Cornyn's backers than Paxton's.

"It's just a slug fest, with the campaigns and third-party groups slugging it out," said Wayne Hamilton, a former executive director of the Texas Republican Party.

The combination of Cornyn's campaign and supporting super PACs has far outspent pro-Paxton groups over the past year, by almost nine-to-one. But the gap has shrunk as the runoff has approached. In the final week of the campaign, the combination of pro-Cornyn ad spending was less than twice that of Paxton's group.

Cornyn's network continued to air spots attacking Paxton over ethical and personal questions that have shadowed him with little effect throughout the campaign. The senator's consequent argument to voters is that Paxton would struggle in the general election and threaten to flip the seat blue.

"Paxton's flaws and the baggage he brings to the general election is going to be exploited to the fullest by James Talarico," he told reporters, before heading into Monday's ceremony and giving a speech devoid of campaign politics to the assembled graduates.

Cornyn's campaign also had reprised an ad noting his tendency to vote in the Senate for Trump's priorities.

Paxton's campaign and groups supporting him transitioned midweek to all ads noting Trump's endorsement, though Paxton's primary super PAC, Lone Star Liberty Fund, began airing one over the weekend aimed at raising questions about state Rep. James Talarico, the Texas Democratic Senate nominee.

## **Pope calls for robust regulation of AI in manifesto that ponders the future of humanity**

By NICOLE WINFIELD, KAITLYN HUAMANI and PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV called Monday for robust regulation of artificial intelligence and for its developers to work for the common good rather than profit, issuing a sweeping manifesto on safeguarding humankind as the technology impacts everything from work to war.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 45 of 59**

"Magnifica Humanitas" (Magnificent Humanity), Leo's first encyclical, has been eagerly awaited ever since history's first U.S.-born pope announced days after his election that he considered AI to be the biggest challenge facing humanity today.

In the text, Leo denounced the "culture of power" driving the AI race, especially in developing ever more sophisticated methods of remote warfare. He declared that it was "not permissible" to entrust irreversible, lethal decisions to AI systems, setting up another flash point between the American pope and the Trump administration, which has worked aggressively to deregulate AI development.

"Artificial Intelligence now demands to be disarmed, freed from logics that turn it into an instrument of domination, exclusion and death," the pope told a special Vatican presentation of the encyclical, one of the most authoritative types of teaching documents a pope can issue.

Experts in the tech industry, academia and Catholic morality said the document will likely become a benchmark in the debate over AI, a point of reference for policymakers, researchers and ordinary folk alike. It comes as the near-daily developments in the technology trigger concerns over AI replacing human jobs and even human intelligence.

Taylor Black, a Microsoft AI executive and director of Catholic University of America's AI institute, said the document would prompt people "at the forefront of these tools" to ask questions such as "What does it mean to be human?"

Pope calls out AI companies even as he hosts Anthropic

The Vatican launch also included remarks by the co-founder of Anthropic, which is currently locked in a legal battle with the Trump administration over access to its AI technology. The Vatican decided to involve Anthropic as part of its decade-long effort to engage Silicon Valley in dialogue over the human cost of AI.

And yet in his text, Leo repeatedly blasted the concentration of power and data in the hands of so few people in the private sector as a danger, especially to children and the most vulnerable, and called for external regulation of their work.

"It is not enough to invoke ethics in the abstract; robust legal frameworks, independent oversight, informed users and a political system that does not abdicate its responsibility are required," he wrote. "A more moral AI is not enough if that morality is determined by a few."

Leo appealed to AI developers and political leaders responsible for regulating them to slow down and reflect on what they are doing. He urged them to use ethical and spiritual guidelines to make the choice to work not for their own profit or power, but the betterment of humanity.

AI competitors OpenAI and Anthropic are the second- and third-most valuable U.S. private companies, each valued at hundreds of billions of dollars, more than the GDP of many nations. Both companies are heading toward near-trillion dollar IPOs.

Anthropic co-founder Christopher Olah welcomed Leo's criticism and concern. He said such external checks were fundamental to the technology "going well" for humankind since there is so much at stake — "a real possibility that AI will displace human labor at a very large scale."

"We need more of the world — religious communities, civil society, scholars, governments — to do what His Holiness has done here: to take this seriously, to look closely, and to push events in a better direction," Olah said. "We need moral voices that the incentives cannot bend."

Experts say the text will become a benchmark

In a methodical text, the math major pope traced the history of the Catholic Church's social teaching and applied its core concepts — justice, solidarity, the dignity of work and the universal destination of resources — to the digital revolution.

"I am convinced that this will prove to be a defining document for our era, a profound and prophetic document," said Paolo Carozza, law professor at Notre Dame Law School and chair of the Meta Oversight Board.

"Pope Leo is offering a clear, comprehensive, and coherent voice urging us to take responsibility for constructing a world in which technology will serve humans rather than degrade them," he said.

In its strongest chapters, Leo denounced how AI had helped accelerate the "normalization of war" by desensitizing people to its cost. He didn't name specific conflicts, but cited "opposing imperialisms, between

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 46 of 59**

powers that wish to preserve their supremacy, and those that aspire to seize that supremacy.”

He demanded transparency and accountability by AI developers so that the chain of decision-making command in ordering strikes with AI weaponry is always known. He declared that the Catholic Church’s “just war” theory, which provides specific criteria for when force can be justified, was now “outdated” given the technological advances of warfare.

A text in the church’s social justice tradition

Leo signed the text May 15, the 135th anniversary of the publication of “Rerum Novarum” (Of New Things), the most important teaching document of Leo’s hero and namesake, Pope Leo XIII. That document addressed workers’ rights, the limits of capitalism, and the obligations that states and employers owed workers as the Industrial Revolution was underway.

It became the foundation of modern Catholic social thought, and the current pope cited it at the start of his pontificate in relation to the AI revolution, which he believes poses the same existential questions that the Industrial Revolution posed over a century ago. “Magnifica Humanitas” thus becomes the latest chapter in a century-long history of popes adapting “Rerum Novarum” to the social questions of their times, often dwelling on the dignity of work for human flourishing.

AI is evoking both existential fears and utopian vision amid an intensifying debate on whether it will become a catalyst that enriches humanity or a technological toxin that dulls human intelligence while wiping out millions of high-paying jobs.

“The pursuit of greater profits cannot justify choices that systematically sacrifice jobs, because the human person is an end, not a means, and the economic order must remain subordinate to human dignity and the common good,” Leo wrote.

Leo extended his concern for upholding human dignity in labor to issue the first-ever papal apology for the Holy See’s own role in legitimizing slavery by giving European sovereigns explicit authority to subjugate and enslave “infidels.”

A decade-long dialogue with Silicon Valley

Vatican officials declined to say who contributed to Leo’s encyclical. But Vatican and church officials have been engaged in a dialogue with Silicon Valley tech firms for a decade.

The decision to include Anthropic at the Vatican launch was criticized by some who considered it a papal stamp of approval of the AI firm, which is currently suing the Trump administration after it ordered all U.S. agencies to stop using Anthropic’s technology for its refusal to allow the U.S. military unrestricted use of it.

Brian Boyd, U.S. faith liaison for the nonprofit Future of Life Institute, read the inclusion of Anthropic’s co-founder Olah as a recognition of its prominence in the field and as similar to a papal audience with a head of state: not an endorsement.

Anthropic is an “enormous corporation that is taking onto itself an enormous risk and responsibility,” Boyd said, adding that the company has “demonstrated genuine goodwill and integrity and interest in dialogue.”

## **Jodar shaping up as tennis’ Next Big Thing and makes quite a debut at the French Open**

By ANDREW DAMPF AP Sports Writer

PARIS (AP) — Two-time reigning champion Carlos Alcaraz is out injured. Promising 21-year-old French player Arthur Fils also pulled out with a physical issue. Jack Draper has been bothered for months by a right knee problem.

The list of candidates capable of challenging top-ranked Jannik Sinner, who enters the French Open on a three-month-long 29-match winning streak, has been dwindling.

Enter Rafael Jodar, the 19-year-old Spaniard who has been making waves on the ATP Tour.

Jodar continued to impress in his Roland Garros debut, dropping just five games in a 6-1, 6-0, 6-4 rout of American opponent Aleksandar Kovacevic on Monday despite boiling heat at the clay-court Grand Slam. The last man to concede fewer games in a French Open debut was Novak Djokovic, who allowed three to Robby Ginepri in 2005.



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 47 of 59**

"I did the things very well from the start," Jodar said. "It's just my first year (on tour) and I'm experiencing a lot of things in these past few months."

Mostly, Jodar has been experiencing victories: He's won 16 of his last 19 matches, raised a trophy on clay in Morocco, reached the semifinals in Barcelona and had a run to the quarterfinals in Madrid ended by Sinner.

A year ago, Jodar was ranked No. 707 and playing challengers — tennis' minor leagues — in the U.S. after he competed at the University of Virginia. Now he's No. 29 and is seeded 27th in Paris.

"It was obviously another chapter of my life but I think that chapter also helped me to develop a lot and to be a better player now," Jodar said.

Going to college also helped.

"Living there alone, it was great to develop and to do things by myself," Jodar said. "It was a new chapter, new culture for me, actually a new life."

Jodar appears destined to become a top-10 player and a serious contender for the biggest trophies.

And Jodar is in the bottom half of the draw in Paris — meaning he could meet Sinner only in the final.

Swiatek making no assumptions

Four-time champion Iga Swiatek eliminated 136th-ranked debutant Emerson Jones 6-1, 6-2 in her opener.

The only real issue for the third-ranked Swiatek came when she needed a trainer to re-tape the middle finger on her tennis-playing right hand for an apparent blister after the first set.

Swiatek has not won a title on clay this season and recently made a coaching change. She hired Francisco Roig, who previously worked with 14-time French Open champion Rafael Nadal.

"Nothing comes easy," Swiatek said. "With more titles it's even a bit harder because everyone expects you to be ready always and play perfectly. So you need to stay humble and not take anything for granted and work your way from the beginning of the tournament."

She improved to 28-1 in first-round matches at Grand Slams.

Also advancing were Australian Open champion Elena Rybakina, who beat Veronika Erjavec 6-2, 6-2; and recent Italian Open winner Elina Svitolina, who rallied past Anna Bondar 3-6, 6-1, 7-6 (3).

In men's action, 2015 champion Stan Wawrinka was beaten by Dutch qualifier Jesper de Jong 6-3, 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 to end his 21st and last French Open.

Gael Monfils also bowed out for the last time after losing to fellow Frenchman Hugo Gaston 6-2, 6-3, 3-6, 2-6, 6-0 just before midnight.

Eighth-seeded Alex De Minaur defeated Toby Samuel 6-4, 6-4, 6-2 and No. 15 Casper Ruud — a two-time French Open runner-up — won against Roman Safiullin 6-2, 7-6 (5), 5-7, 0-6, 6-2.

## **Scripps National Spelling Bee guide: How to watch, who the notable spellers are, rules and prizes**

By BEN NUCKOLS Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The best young spellers in the English language are competing at the Scripps National Spelling Bee this week, continuing a more than century-old tradition. The three-day competition begins Tuesday and concludes Thursday night.

The first bee was held in 1925, when the Louisville Courier-Journal invited other newspapers to host spelling bees and send their champions to Washington. After a long run at a convention center in suburban Maryland, the bee returns to the nation's capital this year at Constitution Hall, a few blocks from the White House.

Another change for this year: ESPN NFL analyst and recent "Celebrity Jeopardy!" champion Mina Kimes has joined the bee as its television host.

This is the 98th bee; it was canceled from 1943 to 1945 because of World War II and again in 2020 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This year's champion will be the 111th, because the bee ended in a two-way tie several times and an eight-way tie in 2019.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 48 of 59**

Thirty of the past 36 champions have been of Indian heritage, including last year's winner, Faizan Zaki. How can I watch the Scripps National Spelling Bee?

The bee is broadcast and streamed on channels and platforms owned by Scripps, a Cincinnati-based media company.

On Tuesday, preliminary rounds will stream on Scripps Sports Network and spellingbee.com from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. EDT.

Wednesday's quarterfinals will stream on Scripps Sports Network and spellingbee.com from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. and semifinals can be watched on those platforms from 2:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Tape-delayed semifinals broadcast on ION from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m.

Finals will broadcast Thursday on ION from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. The semifinals and finals will also air or be streamed on these Scripps-owned channels or services: ION Plus, Bounce, Grit, Laff, The Spot, Bounce XL, Grit Xtra, Laff More, Scripps News and Scripps Sports Network.

What are the rules of the Scripps National Spelling Bee?

Spellers qualify by advancing through regional bees hosted by sponsors around the country. In order to compete, spellers must not have advanced beyond the eighth grade or be older than 15.

Contestants must get through two preliminary rounds, where they are quizzed on words from a list provided in advance. There is one spelling round and one multiple-choice vocabulary round.

Those who make it through the preliminaries sit for a written spelling and vocabulary test, with the top 100 or so finishers advancing to the quarterfinals. The words for the test, and for all subsequent rounds, are taken from the Merriam-Webster Unabridged dictionary.

Throughout the quarterfinals and semifinals, spellers are eliminated at the microphone through oral spelling or vocabulary questions.

About a dozen spellers advance to the finals. When only two remain, Scripps has the option to use a lightning-round tiebreaker known as a "spell-off" to determine the champion.

Who is competing in the Scripps National Spelling Bee?

This year's bee has 247 spellers representing all 50 states, the District of Columbia, three U.S. territories and five other countries: The Bahamas, Canada, Ghana, Nigeria and the United Arab Emirates.

The top returning finisher from 2025 is Sarv Dharavane of Dunwoody, Georgia, who finished third last year as an 11-year-old fifth-grader. Even if he falls short this year, he has two years of eligibility left.

Other possible contenders:

— Shrey Parikh, a 14-year-old eighth-grader from Rancho Cucamonga, California, who finished third in 2024. He has dominated the bee circuit in the past year, winning the South Asian Spelling Bee, the Spell-Pundit National Spelling Bee and the Words of Wisdom Spelling Bee.

— Oliver Halkett, a 14-year-old eighth-grader from Los Angeles who finished in a tie for seventh last year.

— Esha Marupudi, a 14-year-old eighth-grader from Chandler, Arizona, who also tied for seventh last year.

What are the prizes for the Scripps National Spelling Bee champion?

The winner receives a custom trophy and more than \$50,000 in cash and prizes. Here are the prize payouts:

— First place: \$52,500 in cash, reference works from Encyclopedia Britannica and Merriam-Webster, a custom trophy and commemorative medal, and \$1,000 in flight credits from Delta Air Lines.

— Second place: \$25,000.

— Third place: \$15,000.

— Fourth place: \$10,000.

— Fifth place: \$5,000.

— Sixth place: \$2,500.

— All other finalists: \$2,000.

## Israel's military says it's striking Hezbollah sites as Netanyahu vows to 'increase the blows'

By BASSEM MROUE and MATTHEW LEE Associated Press

BEIRUT (AP) — Israel's air force targeted sites belonging to Hezbollah in Lebanon, including in the country's eastern Bekaa Valley, late on Monday as Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to intensify attacks on the Lebanese militant group.

Netanyahu's warning came as Hezbollah has been firing fiber optic drones — a weapon used widely in the war in Ukraine — at Israeli forces in southern Lebanon and northern Israel in recent weeks.

"We will hit them. It's true that they are shooting drones at us, fiber optic drones. We have a special team working on that and we will solve that too," Netanyahu said in a video posted on social media. "What this requires of us now is to increase the blows, to increase the intensity. We will smite them hip and thigh."

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency said that after Netanyahu's post, some residents started leaving Beirut's southern suburbs where Hezbollah has large presence. The agency also said several airstrikes hit the eastern town of Mashghara in the Bekaa region on Monday night.

Meanwhile, Hezbollah said that it carried out eight attacks earlier in the day, including a drone attack on Israeli troops in Misgav Am in northern Israel.

The daily attacks between Israel and Hezbollah have been ongoing despite a U.S.-brokered ceasefire in place since April 17.

A U.S. State Department official said earlier on Monday that Hezbollah has ignored repeated requests to stop firing at Israel, including a recent ultimatum. The official, who was not authorized to talk to the media and therefore spoke on condition of anonymity, added that Israel will never be expected to passively absorb attacks on its forces and civilians.

Since the ceasefire went into effect, Hezbollah has fired over a thousand drones and over 700 rockets to try and derail ongoing negotiations between Lebanon and Israel, the official said, adding that "the status quo is untenable."

Last month, Lebanon and Israel began their first direct talks in more than three decades with meetings held in Washington. Lebanese and Israeli military officials are to meet again on Friday, at the Pentagon, to discuss the ceasefire. Israel and the United States are seeking to have Hezbollah disarmed.

The State Department official said the direct Lebanon-Israel talks and the implication that Lebanon stands to get significant support from the U.S. is a threat to the Iran-backed Hezbollah, along with a challenge to its narrative of resistance against Israel.

"A successful ceasefire led by the government of Lebanon would strip Hezbollah of their power and their narrative," the official said.

Earlier Monday, an Israeli airstrike on the southern village of Kfar Rumman killed four people and wounded three, the Lebanese NNA reported. It said Israeli drone strikes on other parts in the south — including one on a road near the municipality of Kfar Rumman — killed three people.

The Israel military said that throughout the day, it struck more than 70 Hezbollah infrastructure sites.

The latest Israel-Hezbollah war began on March 2, when Hezbollah fired rockets into northern Israel, two days after the U.S. and Israel began their attacks on Iran.

More than 3,000 people have been killed in Lebanon in the latest fighting, according to the Lebanese Health Ministry. Also, 22 Israeli soldiers and a defense contractor have been killed in or near southern Lebanon, and two civilians have been killed in northern Israel, according to Netanyahu's office.

## Leaders keep a wary eye on Belarus for signs it might offer Russia help in Ukraine

By HANNA ARHIROVA and YURAS KARMANAU Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Belarus' exiled opposition leader Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya visited Kyiv on Monday as the Ukrainian capital cleaned up after Russia's biggest missile attack of the year, and world leaders



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 50 of 59**

kept a close eye on how much support the Belarusian government is ready to provide for Moscow's all-out invasion.

Russia and ally Belarus held joint nuclear drills last week, and Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has warned in recent days that Belarus could provide a launchpad for Russia to open a new front in northern Ukraine. Some Russian troops entered Ukraine from Belarusian territory in Moscow's invasion on Feb. 24, 2022.

In a further sign of concern, French President Emmanuel Macron spoke by phone with Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko on Sunday about the war in Ukraine, their first call since the invasion began.

Russia warns of more 'systemic strikes'

Further "systemic strikes" on Kyiv are in store, the Russian Foreign Ministry said in a statement Monday. It urged foreign citizens, including members of diplomatic missions, to leave the city as quickly as possible and told residents to stay away from military and government facilities.

The ministry said Friday's deadly Ukrainian drone strike on a college dormitory in Starobylsk was "the final straw." Ukraine said it hit only targets supporting Russia's invasion.

The Russian army is locked in a hard and costly slog on the 1,250-kilometer (780-mile) front line that mostly snakes through eastern and southern Ukraine.

"Russia hit a dead-end on the battlefield, so it terrorizes Ukraine with deliberate strikes on city centers," Kaja Kallas, the European Union's foreign policy chief, said on X, after the weekend barrage that killed two people and damaged buildings across the Ukrainian capital.

With U.S.-made air defense missiles in short supply because of the Iran war, Russian missiles are harder for Ukraine to stop. Meanwhile, U.S. efforts to stop the fighting have stalled.

Countries keep a wary eye on Belarus

In his call with Lukashenko, Macron "underscored the risks for Belarus of allowing itself to be dragged into Russia's war of aggression in Ukraine," according to a presidential aide in the French leader's office who spoke on condition of anonymity in accordance with the presidential palace's practices. Macron also spoke Sunday with Zelenskyy.

A terse readout released by the Belarusian presidential press service said the call with Macron took place "on the French side's initiative" and the leaders discussed "regional issues" and Belarusian relations with the EU and France.

Belarusian opposition leader Tsikhanouskaya on her first visit to Kyiv, told The Associated Press on Sunday that "Lukashenko's regime knows well what needs to be done to improve ties with the European Union, but it isn't happening. Instead, hybrid attacks, nuclear blackmail and threats to the entire region.

Speaking after meeting with Ukrainian officials in Kyiv, Tsikhanouskaya said that "Ukraine is defending not only its independence but also the right of our peoples to live without imperial dictatorship, without violence and fear."

"I am convinced that Ukraine's victory will open the way to Belarus's freedom," she told a news conference.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister Andrii Sybiha, who appeared alongside Tsikhanouskaya, emphasized that "Ukraine consistently differentiates between the regime that has dragged Belarus into Russian aggression and the Belarusian people," adding that "we appreciate the contribution of Belarusian volunteers, journalists, human rights advocates and activists who are fighting for freedom, both ours and yours."

Lukashenko, who has governed his country of some 9.5 million people with an iron fist for more than three decades, relies on the Kremlin for cheap energy, loans and other support. Western countries have repeatedly slapped sanctions on Belarus, including for its crackdown on human rights and for allowing Moscow to use its territory to invade Ukraine.

More recently, Lukashenko has been trying to improve ties with the West. Since U.S. President Donald Trump returned to the White House, Lukashenko has released hundreds of political prisoners as part of deals that lifted some U.S. sanctions.

Russia fires hypersonic missile at Ukraine

Sunday's bombardment included Russia's powerful hypersonic Oreshnik ballistic missile, which can carry multiple warheads. Russian President Vladimir Putin has boasted it can travel up to 10 times the speed of

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 51 of 59**

sound and evade air defense systems.

Zelenskyy said Ukrainian intelligence services had received tipoffs from the United States and European countries that Russia was preparing to launch an Oreshnik.

In addition to the two deaths, at least 91 people were wounded in Sunday's barrage, according to Tymur Tkachenko, the head of the Kyiv City Administration.

Shattered glass littered sidewalks on Monday after Ukrainian authorities said the assault damaged buildings across the city, including near government offices, residential buildings, schools and a market.

Sybiha, Ukraine's foreign minister, led ambassadors from more than 70 countries on a visit to the sites of the strikes. He urged the international community to step up pressure on Moscow and ensure Ukraine gets more air defense assets.

In other developments:

Russia's Federal Security Service said divers found magnetic mines attached to the hull of a liquefied petroleum gas tanker in the Russian Baltic port of Ust-Luga. The tanker Arrhenius was bound for Samsun, Turkey, it said, adding that the limpet mines were made in a NATO member country. Ukrainian officials made no immediate comment.

Meanwhile, a Russian missile hit a business in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Derhachi, killing two people and wounding 19 others Monday, Kharkiv regional administration head Oleh Syniehubov said. Seventeen people were hospitalized.

## **What we know and don't know about the emerging deal to end the Iran war**

By SAMY MAGDY, DARLENE SUPERVILLE and CARA ANNA Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — The United States and Iran appear to be closing in on a deal to end the war and open the Strait of Hormuz. U.S. President Donald Trump said Monday that negotiations are "proceeding nicely," while reiterating his warning that fighting would resume if no deal is reached.

It is not clear when or how the deal might be finalized and when its various parts will take effect. Details come from two regional officials and a U.S. official who spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive negotiations.

An Iranian delegation led by parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Qalibaf traveled to Qatar on Monday as part of talks, though it wasn't immediately clear what would be discussed. Qalibaf led historic face-to-face talks with Vice President JD Vance in Pakistan last month.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesman, Esmail Baghaei, said that while understandings have been reached on "a large portion of the issues," there was still work to be done. "To say that this means an agreement is on the verge of being signed is not something anyone can claim," he told reporters.

Here's what we know and don't know:

The war would end

In the 12 weeks since the U.S. and Israel launched the war with attacks that killed Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei and other top officials, Tehran has insisted that any deal focus on ending the fighting on all fronts. That includes Lebanon, where the Iranian-backed Hezbollah militant group has been fighting Israel since two days into the war.

A fragile ceasefire has held since April 7, despite occasional drone and missile attacks on the United Arab Emirates and some exchanges of fire in the Strait of Hormuz. A more permanent truce would allow for global shipping, including an estimated 20% of the world's oil, to begin flowing through the strait again. It also would allow the rebuilding of energy and other infrastructure in the region.

Both regional officials said the draft deal includes an end to the war between Israel and Hezbollah, as well as a commitment to not interfere in the domestic affairs of countries in the region. That's a reference to Iran's support for proxies, including Houthi rebels in Yemen, Hamas militants in Gaza and Shiite armed groups in Iraq.

The U.S. wants Israel to have a free hand to respond to what they view as threats in Lebanon, while

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 52 of 59**

Iran rejects it, one regional official said. The U.S. official said the deal would guarantee Israel's right to act against imminent threats in self-defense.

The Strait of Hormuz would reopen gradually

The stated objectives of the U.S. and Israel were to dismantle Iran's nuclear program, curb its missile program and end its support for armed proxies.

But Iran's chokehold on the Strait of Hormuz, which was open to international shipping before the war, quickly shot to the top of global concerns as hundreds of ships carrying oil, natural gas, fertilizer and other supplies were stranded, causing a spike in prices far beyond the region.

Under the emerging agreement, the strait would gradually reopen in parallel with the U.S. ending the blockade of Iran's ports it imposed on April 17, the regional officials said. The blockade has limited Iran's ability to ship its oil and bring in badly needed cash for its long-suffering economy.

The U.S. would allow Iran to sell its oil through sanctions waivers, said one of the officials, who has been briefed on the negotiations. Sanctions relief and the release of billions of dollars in frozen Iranian funds would be negotiated during a 60-day period, the official said.

Iran would give up its stockpile of highly enriched uranium

Iran's nuclear program and international concerns over its possible pursuit of a nuclear weapon underlie the tensions. The U.S. and Israel have considered highly complex military operations to go in and take out its highly enriched uranium.

Under the potential deal, Tehran would agree to give up that stockpile, according to the regional officials. One official, with direct knowledge of the negotiations, said how Iran would give it up would be subject to further talks over the 60-day period. Some would likely be diluted and the rest transferred to a third country, the official said. Russia has offered to take it.

A U.S. official confirmed the 60-day period and said if Iran doesn't give up its stockpile, there will be no sanctions relief.

Baghaei, the Iranian spokesperson, said "the focus of the negotiations is on ending the war, and at this stage we are not discussing the details of the nuclear issue."

Iran has 440.9 kilograms (972 pounds) of uranium that is enriched up to 60% purity, a short, technical step from weapons-grade levels of 90%, according to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Iran says it has an "inalienable" right to nuclear technology while insisting its program is peaceful. On Sunday, President Masoud Pezeshkian told state TV they were ready "to assure the world that we are not after a nuclear weapon."

What appears to be missing

"Negotiations with the Islamic Republic of Iran are proceeding nicely!" Trump wrote on social media Monday. "It will only be a Great Deal for all or, no Deal at all — Back to the Battlefield and shooting, but bigger and stronger than ever before — And nobody wants that!"

Despite the claims of progress, several issues appear to be unsettled, including whether Iran would be able to enrich uranium and to what level, and the fate of its missile program, which Israel in particular views as a major threat.

While the United States and Israel entered the war with the stated hope of seeing Iranians rise up against their government after nationwide protests early in the year, any discussion of leadership change in Tehran appears to be out.

As for Iran's past stated aims during negotiations, there appears to be no mention of any withdrawal of U.S. forces from the region, or for reparations for the damage the war has caused.

## **Rubio's visit to India focuses on US trade tensions, the Quad alliance and sightseeing**

By SHEIKH SAALIQ Associated Press

NEW DELHI (AP) — U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio's visit to India marks an effort by Washington and New Delhi to steady strained relations as the two countries seek to reinforce strategic and economic



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 53 of 59**

ties despite recent trade tensions.

In meetings Sunday with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Foreign Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, Rubio stressed cooperation on trade, energy, defense and maritime security. Rubio said the countries remained strategically aligned and expressed optimism about a broader trade deal.

Rubio's four-day trip also includes talks with members from the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, the Indo-Pacific alliance more commonly known as the Quad.

Here is what Rubio's visit means for India-U.S. ties:

**India-US ties strained by tariffs**

Relations between India and the U.S. have strained in recent months after the Trump administration imposed steep tariffs on Indian exports, partly over New Delhi's continued purchases of Russian oil. The move angered Indian officials and fueled concerns in the Indian government over Washington's reliability.

The two countries later reached an interim trade arrangement that eased some tariffs and expanded Indian purchases of U.S. goods, including energy products. But talks on a broader trade deal remain unresolved.

Despite the tensions, India and the U.S. continue to strengthen defense and technology ties, with Washington viewing India as a key counterweight to China in the Indo-Pacific region.

During his talks with Jaishankar on Sunday, Rubio described India as one of Washington's most important strategic partners and said he was optimistic the two countries would finalize a bilateral trade deal soon. Rubio also conveyed an invitation from U.S. President Donald Trump for Modi to visit Washington later this year.

**Questions over the Quad's role**

Rubio's visit also is expected to include talks on Tuesday with foreign ministers from India, Australia and Japan, which are member nations of the Quad alliance along with the United States.

The grouping has become a key platform for cooperation on maritime security, supply chains and regional strategy as China expands its military and economic influence in the Indo-Pacific.

The Quad has repeatedly criticized China's actions in the South China Sea, accusing Beijing of militarizing disputed waters. The Chinese government has accused the Quad of trying to contain China's rise and regional influence.

Recent trade tensions between Washington and New Delhi, along with Trump's recent visit to China, have prompted renewed attention to the grouping.

Praveen Donthi, a senior analyst at the International Crisis Group, said India's growing global influence has been largely tied to its role in balancing China's power in the region and any shift in U.S. policy toward Beijing could affect New Delhi's strategic value to Washington.

"If the U.S. changes its approach towards China, it will diminish India's importance," Donthi said.

**Iran war adds pressure on India**

The Iran war has added to India's energy concerns, raising worries about shipments through the Strait of Hormuz, a vital route for the country's crude imports. Rising fuel costs have increased pressure on the Indian economy.

Jaishankar said Sunday that India would continue expanding energy imports, including from the U.S., while diversifying suppliers to keep markets stable and prices affordable. He said New Delhi wants energy markets to remain open and unconstrained to support global economic growth.

India's purchase of discounted Russian crude since the start of the Ukraine war has at times strained relations with the U.S.

Washington has urged India to increase purchases of U.S. oil and gas as part of broader efforts to diversify energy supplies, with Rubio emphasizing stronger energy cooperation during meetings in New Delhi.

**Sightseeing in India**

Alongside official meetings, Rubio's visit also has included cultural engagements.

He began the trip in eastern city Kolkata and visited the Missionaries of Charity headquarters founded by Mother Teresa. He also attended a gala reception in New Delhi marking the 250th anniversary of U.S. independence.

Rubio's itinerary includes stops in the cities of Agra and Jaipur, two of India's most visited tourist destinations known for monuments, forts and palaces.

## Pope Leo XIV makes historic apology for Vatican's role in legitimizing slavery

By NICOLE WINFIELD and PAOLO SANTALUCIA Associated Press

VATICAN CITY (AP) — Pope Leo XIV made a historic apology on Monday for the Holy See's role in legitimizing slavery and for having failed to condemn it for centuries, calling the Vatican's record a "wound in Christian memory."

Past popes have apologized for Christians' involvement in the trans-Atlantic slave trade. But no pope had ever publicly acknowledged, much less apologized for, the role that past popes played in giving European sovereigns explicit authority to subjugate and enslave "infidels."

History's first U.S.-born pope, whose family history includes both enslaved people and slave owners, delivered the apology in his first encyclical, "Magnifica Humanitas," (Magnificent Humanity), which was released Monday.

The sweeping manifesto is about safeguarding humanity in an era of increasing reliance on artificial intelligence. Leo raised the slave trade in relation to what he called the new forms of slavery and colonialism that the digital revolution is fueling.

Black American Catholics, activists and scholars have long called for the Holy See to atone for its role in the colonial-era trade in human beings, beyond generic apologies for the involvement of individual Christians.

"It is impossible not to feel deep sorrow when contemplating the immense suffering and humiliation endured by so many in stark contrast to their immeasurable dignity as persons infinitely loved by the Lord," Leo wrote. "For this, in the name of the church, I sincerely ask for pardon."

Shannen Dee Williams, historian at the University of Dayton and author of the 2022 history of American Black Catholic nuns, "Subversive Habits," welcomed the apology as a "monumental step toward the kind of essential truth-telling and reparation that many Catholics have prayed and worked to witness."

"The Catholic Church has never been an innocent bystander in the history of white supremacy," said Williams. "Black Catholics have waited a long time to hear the Vatican speak honestly about the church's leading roles in the trans-Atlantic slave trade and chattel slavery--and thus by extension the enduring systems of anti-Black racism in the world today."

Centuries of legitimizing slavery for European colonizers

The Vatican has insisted that it always upheld the dignity of all human beings as children of God. But a series of 15th-century directives from the Vatican authorized Portuguese sovereigns to conquer Africa and the Americas and enslave non-Christians.

In 1452, for example, Pope Nicholas V issued the papal bull *Dum Diversas*, which gave the Portuguese king and his successors the right "to invade, conquer, fight and subjugate" and take all possessions — including land — of "Saracens, and pagans, and other infidels, and enemies of the name of Christ" anywhere.

The bull also gave the Portuguese permission "to reduce their persons to perpetual slavery."

That bull and another issued three years later, *Romanus Pontifex*, formed the basis of the Doctrine of Discovery, the theory that legitimized the colonial-era seizure of land in Africa and the Americas.

Nicholas V's permissions to the Portuguese were confirmed or renewed by Pope Callixtus III in 1456, Pope Sixtus IV in 1481 and Pope Leo X in 1514, according to the Rev. Christopher J. Kellerman, a Jesuit priest and author of "All Oppression Shall Cease: A History of Slavery, Abolitionism, and the Catholic Church."

Spanish kings received the rights for the Americas.

In 2023, the Vatican formally repudiated the Doctrine of Discovery, but it never formally rescinded, abrogated or rejected the bulls themselves. The Vatican insists that a later bull, *Sublimis Deus* in 1537, reaffirmed that Indigenous peoples shouldn't be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, and weren't to be enslaved.

Holy See late to condemn slavery, Leo says

In his encyclical, Leo recalled that his namesake, Pope Leo XIII, was the first pope to explicitly condemn slavery in 1888, long after many countries had abolished it. Before that, in antiquity and the Middle Ages, church institutions and even popes — Gregory the Great — had slaves, Kellerman said.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 55 of 59**

In acknowledging the 15th century papal bulls, Leo wrote in his encyclical: "Already in the early modern period, the Apostolic See of Rome, responding to the requests of sovereigns, intervened several times in order to regulate and legitimize forms of subjugation, and, in certain cases, including the enslavement of 'infidels.'"

Leo said it wasn't possible to judge the morality of the decisions with today's standards.

"Yet neither can we deny or diminish the delay with which both society and the church came to denounce the scourge of slavery," he said.

The pope said that the church has long affirmed the dignity of every human being as the basis of its doctrine, "even if it took eighteen centuries for its full incompatibility with slavery to be explicitly recognized."

"This constitutes a wound in Christian memory, one from which we cannot consider ourselves detached," he said.

Leo said that the church must firmly condemn all forms of trafficking related to the digital technological revolution "if we want to avoid the need to ask for pardon again in the future for having failed to respect the treasure of human dignity that is required by our faith."

Anthea Butler, senior fellow at the Koch History Center, Oxford University, said Leo needed to acknowledge and atone for the church's complicity in historic slavery if he wanted to credibly "speak to the current issues of technological enslavement."

"For descendants of enslaved persons, this is once again a much needed apology from the pope," said Butler, who is Black.

Leo's own family history and past apologies

Kellerman, the scholar, welcomed Leo's apology but said more needs to be done to further acknowledge how the Catholic Church legitimized and expanded slavery.

"Pope Leo has strengthened the moral credibility of the church with this admission and apology today," he told The Associated Press. "Hopefully a future document will explain in more detail the church's involvement with slaveholding. As a scholar I have some quibbles with the wording, but this is a truly remarkable moment."

During a 1985 visit to Cameroon, St. John Paul II asked forgiveness of Africans for the slave trade on behalf of Christians who participated in it, but not the popes. In a 1992 visit to Goree Island, Senegal, which was the largest slave-trading center in West Africa, he denounced the injustice of slavery and called it a "tragedy of a civilization that called itself Christian."

According to genealogical research published by Henry Louis Gates Jr., 17 of Leo's American ancestors were Black, listed in census records as mulatto, Black, Creole or a free person of color. His family tree includes slaveholders and enslaved people, Gates wrote in The New York Times.

During a visit to Angola last month, Leo prayed at a Catholic shrine at the site of an important hub of the African slave trade during Portugal's colonial rule. While at the Sanctuary of Mama Muxima, Leo recalled the "sorrow and great suffering" Angolans endured for centuries, but he didn't refer specifically to slavery.

## **AP Decision Notes: What to expect in the Texas US Senate Republican primary runoff**

By ROBERT YOON Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — Voters in the Lone Star State will make their second attempt to nominate a Republican candidate for U.S. Senate in a primary runoff election on Tuesday, the electoral version of the Texas two-step.

Also on the ballot are primary runoffs in more than a dozen congressional districts, plus state contests for lieutenant governor, attorney general and others.

U.S. Sen. John Cornyn was the top vote-getter in the March 3 primary, but strong showings by two GOP challengers forced the four-term incumbent to Tuesday's head-to-head matchup with state Attorney General Ken Paxton, the second-place finisher who received President Donald Trump's endorsement on May 19.

The contest is Trump's next opportunity to purge the party of incumbents he views as insufficiently loyal



# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 56 of 59**

to him and his agenda. It also sets the stage for a general election where Democrats are increasingly optimistic about their chances to score an upset in the heavily Republican state as they look to retake control of the U.S. Senate. Historically, voters have tended to punish the incumbent president's party at the ballot box in midterm election years.

The winner will face Democratic state Rep. James Talarico in the general election.

Trump seemed open to endorsing Cornyn following the primary, and he did not excoriate the incumbent in his endorsement of Paxton, as he's done recently with Republican incumbents in Indiana, Louisiana and Kentucky. But he said Cornyn "was not supportive of me when times were tough."

Cornyn was critical of Trump ahead of the president's 2024 campaign.

Since much of the Texas primary campaign has focused on the candidates' loyalty to Trump, the counties where the president has the most support could play a decisive role. Although many of the counties Trump won in 2024 with 80% or more of the vote are rural and sparsely populated, collectively they made up about a fifth of the GOP primary vote. Paxton beat Cornyn in these counties, 45% to 40%, while Cornyn performed better than Paxton in the rest of the state.

In counties Trump carried with between 50% and 80% of the vote, Cornyn received about 42% of the vote, edging Paxton by a percentage point. Republican primary voters in the 12 counties Democrat Kamala Harris carried in 2024 preferred Cornyn, 44% to 40%. These counties made up 25% of the overall primary vote, larger than the share of Trump's 80%-plus counties.

Only two incumbent U.S. senators from Texas have lost a primary in the last 100 years.

In 2025, Republicans redrew the state's congressional districts at Trump's urging as part of an effort to maintain control of the U.S. House.

Among the notable primary runoffs that resulted from the new congressional map, Democratic U.S. Reps. Christian Menefee and Al Green will face each other in the redrawn 18th Congressional District. In the new 33rd Congressional District, Democratic U.S. Rep. Julie Johnson faces a challenge from her predecessor, former Democratic U.S. Rep. Colin Allred.

Here are some of the key facts about the election and data points the AP Decision Team will monitor as the votes are tallied:

When do polls close?

Polls close statewide at 7 p.m. local time, which is 8 p.m. ET and 9 p.m. ET. Most polls are in Central time and close at 8 p.m. ET, while polls in the westernmost part of the state are in Mountain time and close at 9 p.m. ET.

What's on the ballot?

The AP will provide vote results and declare winners in Republican primary runoffs for U.S. Senate, U.S. House, railroad commissioner, Court of Criminal Appeals, state Senate and state House and in Democratic primary runoffs for U.S. House, lieutenant governor, attorney general, state Board of Education and state House.

Who gets to vote?

Voters who did not participate in a party primary on March 3 may vote in the runoff for either party. Voters who did cast a ballot in a party primary may only vote in the runoff of the same party as they did in the primary. In other words, Democratic primary voters may not vote in a Republican primary runoff or vice versa. Voters in the non-partisan primary may vote in either party's runoff.

How many voters are there?

As of the March 3 primary, there were nearly 19 million registered voters in Texas.

How many people actually vote?

About 2.2 million Republican primary votes and about 2.3 million Democratic primary votes were cast in the March 3 Texas primary.

In the 2022 Republican primary for Texas Attorney General, turnout was about 1.9 million voters in the primary and about 932,000 in the primary runoff.

How much of the vote is cast early or by absentee ballot?

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 57 of 59**

About 63% of the vote in the March 3 Republican primary was cast before primary day. As of Thursday, about 621,000 Republican primary ballots and about 262,000 Democratic primary ballots had already been cast in Tuesday's election.

When are early and absentee votes released?

Counties tend to release all or nearly all results from early and absentee voting in the first vote update of the night, before any in-person Election Day results are released.

How long does vote-counting usually take?

In the U.S. Senate primary in March, the AP first reported results at 8 p.m. ET just as polls closed in most of the state. By 11:39 p.m. ET, 75% of the vote had been counted. Vote results were released continuously until about 5:58 a.m. ET, with about 98% of the total vote counted.

When will the AP declare a winner?

The Associated Press does not make projections and will declare a winner only when it's determined there is no scenario that would allow a trailing candidate to close the gap. If a race has not been called, the AP will continue to cover any newsworthy developments, such as candidate concessions or declarations of victory. In doing so, the AP will make clear that it has not yet declared a winner and explain why.

How do recounts work?

Texas requires an automatic recount only in cases of a tie vote. Losing candidates may request and pay for a recount if the margin is less than 10% of the leading candidate's vote. The AP may declare a winner in a race that is subject to a recount if it can determine the lead is too large for a recount or legal challenge to change the outcome.

Are we there yet?

As of Tuesday, there will be 161 days until the 2026 midterm elections.

## **Muslims begin the annual Hajj in sweltering heat against a backdrop of war concerns**

By BARAA ANWER and MARIAM FAM Associated Press

MECCA, Saudi Arabia (AP) — The annual Hajj pilgrimage, one of the Five Pillars of Islam, officially began Monday.

More than 1.5 million pilgrims have arrived in Saudi Arabia from outside the country, Saleh bin Saad Al-Murabba, commander of the Hajj passport forces, said Friday. The faithful have been pouring into the country for the Hajj against the backdrop of a tenuous ceasefire in the Iran war and related regional tensions and uncertainty.

Egyptian pilgrim Samya Abdul Moneim said she was grateful to God that she made it to the Hajj, which is required once in a lifetime of every Muslim who can afford it and is physically able to make it.

"I am in a state of blessing and happiness," she said in Mecca on Sunday. "It's an indescribable feeling, truly. I mean, thank God, I am in a blessing."

Typically on the first day, many pilgrims in Mecca converge on a vast tent camp in the nearby desert. Ahead of that, pilgrims have been circling the cube-shaped Kaaba in the Grand Mosque in sweltering temperatures. For pilgrims, Hajj can be a deeply moving spiritual experience and a chance to seek God's forgiveness and the erasure of past sins. Pilgrims perform the Hajj rituals over several days.

This Hajj "is, in effect, a hard reset for me," Youssef Chouhoud, a political scientist at Christopher Newport University in Virginia, said Monday from the tent city of Mina. "I pray that I emerge on the other side of this journey with a new sense of purpose and the discipline to see it through."

Around him, many pilgrims were resting and refueling, he said via WhatsApp, noting how demanding the pilgrimage is.

"It is for many pilgrims the most difficult thing they will ever do in their lives," he said. "But nothing this meaningful is ever going to be easy."

He found it inspiring "to see so many who have sacrificed so much to be here ... only to compete with one another in giving charity and helping each other along the way," he said. "All this in the hope that

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 58 of 59**

their intentions and actions may be accepted by their Lord.”

Pilgrims brave intense heat

Many spend years hoping and praying to one day perform the Hajj or saving up money and waiting for a permit to embark on the trip.

As they brave the intense heat to perform religious rituals, many pilgrims have been using umbrellas for shade and carrying handheld fans. Volunteers hand out water bottles to help them stay hydrated and fans spray fine mists of water.

On Saturday, U.S. President Donald Trump said a deal with Iran on the war, including opening the Strait of Hormuz, has been “largely negotiated” after calls with Israel and other allies in the region. He described it as a “Memorandum of Understanding pertaining to PEACE” that still must be finalized by the United States, Iran and the other countries that participated in the calls. That capped a week in which the U.S. weighed a new round of attacks on Iran.

Ahead of the trip for Hajj, some have said they were leaning on their faith as they embark on the journey amid the tensions and that they were feeling immense gratitude for the opportunity to go.

Hajj brings together large numbers of Muslims of diverse races, ethnicities, languages and economic classes, creating a sense of unity for many.

Regional tensions and Hajj travel plans

With uncertainty and global concerns high, authorities in Indonesia, home to the world’s largest Muslim population, have in the run-up to the Hajj season emphasized contingency planning for the pilgrimage and issued instructions to ensure that additional travel costs not be passed on to Indonesian pilgrims.

In India, home to a large Muslim minority, pilgrimage planning has proceeded largely as normal, but high fuel prices have pushed up travel costs for pilgrims.

A reopening of the strait would begin to ease a worldwide energy crisis sparked by the U.S. and Israeli attacks on Iran on Feb. 28, which led Tehran to effectively close the waterway. Prices have spiked for oil, gas and several related products, jolting the world economy. The U.S. has blockaded Iranian ports for over a month, and Trump on Sunday said the blockade “will remain in full force and effect until an agreement is reached, certified, and signed.”

In response to the U.S.-Israeli attacks, Iran has launched retaliatory strikes and the conflict widened. A fragile ceasefire was reached in April.

In Saudi Arabia, pilgrims have been doing the ritual circuit around the Kaaba since arriving in Mecca over recent days. Pilgrims in Mina will camp there and pray and worship.

On Tuesday, in what is considered the pinnacle of the pilgrimage, the pilgrims will stand on the plain of Arafat, where they praise God, plead for forgiveness and make supplications. Many carry prayer requests from loved ones and raise their hands in worship with tears streaming down their faces.

## **Today in History: May 26**

### **The World War II Dunkirk evacuation begins**

By The Associated Press undefined

Today is Tuesday, May 26, the 146th day of 2026. There are 219 days left in the year. This is Memorial Day.

Today in history:

On May 26, 1940, Operation Dynamo, the evacuation of more than 338,000 Allied troops from Dunkirk, France, began during World War II.

Also on this date:

In 1864, President Abraham Lincoln signed a measure creating the Montana Territory.

In 1924, President Calvin Coolidge signed the Immigration Act of 1924, which barred immigration from Asia and restricted the total number of immigrants from other parts of the world to 165,000 annually.

In 1927, the Ford Model T officially ended production as Henry Ford and his son Edsel drove the 15 millionth Model T off the Ford assembly line in Highland Park, Michigan.

In 1938, the House Un-American Activities Committee was established by Congress.

# Groton Daily Independent

**Tuesday, May 26, 2026 ~ Vol. 26 - No. 355 ~ 59 of 59**

In 1954, an explosion occurred aboard the aircraft carrier USS Bennington off Rhode Island, killing 103 sailors.

In 1967, the Beatles album "Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band" was released.

In 1972, President Richard M. Nixon and Soviet leader Leonid Brezhnev signed the Strategic Arms Limitation Treaty in Moscow. (The U.S. withdrew from the treaty under President George W. Bush in 2002.)

In 1981, 14 people were killed when a Marine jet crashed onto the flight deck of the aircraft carrier USS Nimitz off Florida.

In 2009, California's Supreme Court upheld the state's Proposition 8 same-sex marriage ban but said the 18,000 same-sex weddings that had taken place before the prohibition passed were still valid. (Same-sex marriage became legal nationwide in June 2015.)

In 2009, President Barack Obama nominated federal appeals judge Sonia Sotomayor to the U.S. Supreme Court.

In 2011, Ratko Mladić, the Bosnian Serb general suspected of leading the massacre of 8,000 Muslim men and boys in Srebrenica, was arrested after a 16-year manhunt. (Extradited to face trial in The Hague, Netherlands, Mladić was convicted in 2017 on genocide and war crimes charges and is serving a life sentence.)

Today's Birthdays: Singer-songwriter Stevie Nicks is 78. Actor Pam Grier is 77. Country singer Hank Williams Jr. is 77. Celebrity chef Masaharu Morimoto is 71. Actor Genie Francis is 64. Comedian Bobcat Goldthwait is 64. Musician Lenny Kravitz is 62. Actor Helena Bonham Carter is 60. Actor Joseph Fiennes is 56. Actor-producer-writer Matt Stone is 55. Singer-songwriter Lauryn Hill is 51. Singer Jaheim is 48. NHL player Mathew Barzal is 29. Actor Lola Flanery is 21.