

# Groton Daily Independent

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## Last day of school is May 22

The last day of school will be Wednesday, May 22nd, with staff in-service on May 23-24. Easter Monday will remain a no-school day. During the discussion of the final day of school, Superintendent Joe Schwan recommended that the final day be May 24th with teacher inservice May 28-29. Board Member Deb Gengerke questioned on extending the school year that much. "It's financial cost versus benefit," she said. "We're still running buses and we're still serving lunch. In my mind, it's quality versus quantity." Schwan said when the calendar was adopted, the district had 33 days over the minimum requirement for the elementary school and 16 days over the minimum for the middle/high school. The senior's last day is Friday, May 10. The original last day of school was May 16, so only four days will be made up.

There are two major projects that will cost the district about \$250,000. The first is replacing the boiler in the 1934 addition. It needs to be replaced. The board accepted a proposal from Obermiller Nelson Engineering for the project. They are the same ones who did the elementary project. The new boiler would need the ability to be retubed from steam to hot water in the event it gets moved to the gym area. The second project is tuck pointing at the elementary school. The tuck pointing that needs to be done at the elementary school will cost around \$100,000 so JLG Architect has approved to have them spearhead the project.

Brandon Clocksene talked about the school lunch program during the program presentation at the meeting. He said that the biggest challenge is trying to get more people to eat breakfast and lunch at the school. "Our quality has improved," he said. "We would like to see more of the staff to help serve. It would give a good impression on the students as well." Clocksene said he has implemented a salad bar every Wednesday to compete with Table Talks. "We're trying to get more to stay here at the school and eat. It's a good program, but it hurts our budget," he said. About 40 students attend Table Talks where

## Groton Dairy Queen's 25th Anniversary!

*Come Celebrate With Us - March 25-29!*

**Monday: Soft Drinks for 25¢**

**Tuesday: Buy one regular priced Blizzard®  
and get one of the same size or smaller for 25¢**

**Wednesday: Root Beer Float: \$1.25**

**Thursday: Indian Tacos: \$5.25**

**Friday: Small Cones for 25¢**



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a free meal is served.

Loren Bahr talked about the bus routes. The roads are somewhat sloppy, but they are getting through okay. "For as much as snow as we've had, the roads are good," Bahr said. Bus 14 is the new bus, but there have been issues with it. A new engine is being put in - still under warranty. Overall, "We've had better luck with the buses this year than we had last year," he said.

Head janitor Mike Nehls reported that the Arena will be closed June 19 through July 8 as the floor will be redone during that time. In addition, the gym floor will also be stripped this year.

Other items that Nehls talked about was the roof by the weight room has some major leaks. Looking at putting heat tapes in the down spouts and eave troughs. There is leakage in the kitchen around the vents. Look at painting the stripes in the parking lot. Nehls said that as long as he can see the stripes, he should be able to do the work himself. The mower needs to be replaced this year. The transmission in the pickup will need to be replaced. Nehls said the HVAC in the elementary school has been working great. There is no more smell and the climate control is great over there. He did report that there were a couple of issues that were not covered under warranty. Travis Kiefer, former GHS graduate, did the asbestos inspection and Nehls said everything looks good.



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*Motors*

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**Hi, my name is Bary Keith, a Groton resident. I have just recently joined the Harr Motors sales team. I'm excited to start helping people get into the right vehicle for them. Right now, any vehicle purchased from me, until the end of April, will receive an Autostart at no charge. Give me a call (605-216-6952) or (605-725-8624) or stop out and see me at Harr Motors today!!!**

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Beth Gustafson talked about wellness and health services. The roundup will be starting in April and she said she is trying to gather immunization information for the students. There will be a hearing screening van that will be in Groton on May 2nd. Certain grades will be tested for hearing. It will be done through the school coop. There will be a health fair scheduled for the elementary school and for the middle/high school as well. There are four elementary students and 20 middle/high school students that use inhalers.

There have been a number of slips and falls at the elementary school parking lot. Nehls said at times he has had the city come through with the sanding truck. "They've been very good at doing that," he said.

The board approved membership to the South Dakota High School Activities Association for the next school year.

There are 40 students in the district that are home schooled and there has been discussion about allowing them to participate in extra curricular activities. "That's a lot of kids with a district having 600 students," Schwan said. Board member Deb Gengerke said she has concerns about allowing those students to participate. "How do you discipline them if they don't attend the center?" she asked. "All of our students have to abide by the policies. How would you apply policies to those students?" She went on to say that participation in extra curricular activities is a privilege rather than a right. Schwan said he had three parents ask about the policy. The board decided not to change the current policy on extra curricular participation.

Lynn Miller was hired as a school bus driver effective March 18, 2019.

The board approved for St. John's Lutheran Pre-school to use a bus on May 1 for a trip to Watertown. The usual charge will be applied according to the mileage chart.

The video of the school board meeting is archived at [397news.com](http://397news.com). [You can click here for the quick link to the video.](#)

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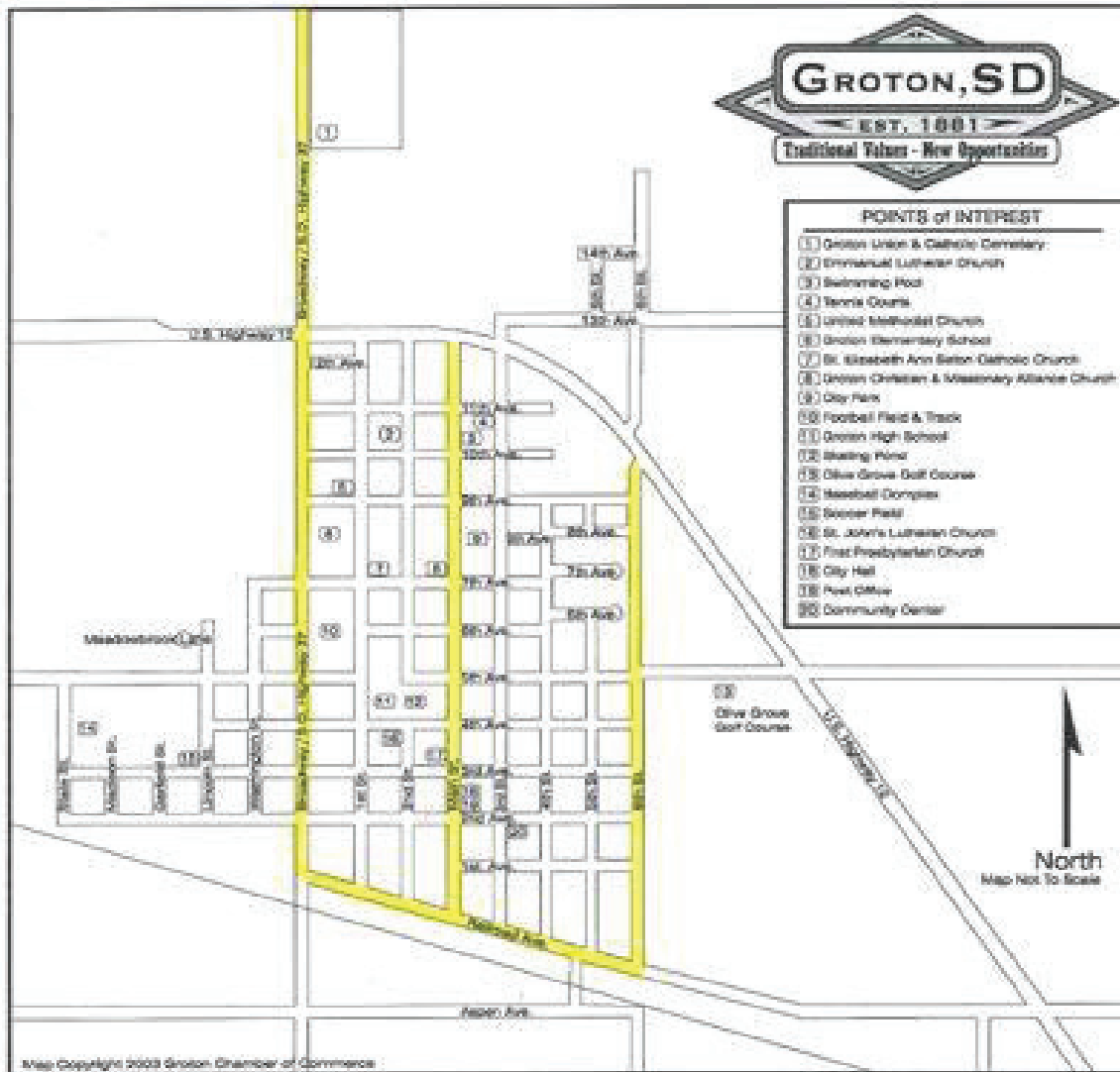
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## Notice of Garbage Pickup- Effective March 20<sup>th</sup>



Groton residents are asked to bring their garbage to the following locations until further notice:

**Railroad Avenue, Main Street, Sixth Street, & Highway 37**

Residents of HRH Mobile Home Park need to take their garbage to **Highway 37**.

Residents north of 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue (Olson and Jacobson Development) need to bring their garbage to the **Bus Barns**.

***Your cooperation is greatly appreciated during the spring thaw.***

**Please bring your garbage bags & cans to these streets for Tuesday pickup**



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## Today in Weather History

March 26, 1977: During the early morning, severe weather event, hail up to 1.75 inches in diameter fell 1 mile NE of Watertown in Codrington County. Also, hail up to 1.50 inches in diameter fell in Milbank, Grant County.

March 26, 1995: Heavy snow fell over most of central South Dakota, as well as in the northern Black Hills. Heavier accumulations included 14 inches at Murdo, 13 inches at Lead, and 12 inches at Eureka, and Leola. Only a few traffic accidents were reported, although many other vehicles slid into ditches. There was some damage to power lines and poles. Some livestock losses were feared, as the snow fell during the calving season, although this could not be assessed in the short term.

March 26, 2008: An area of low pressure moving across the Northern Plains brought heavy snow from 6 to 15 inches in a band across much of central and northeast South Dakota from the evening to the early morning hours. Schools were delayed or canceled and road travel was difficult, if not impossible. Some snowfall amounts included: 6 inches at Stephan, Willow Lake, Harrold, Miller, and near Hoven; 7 inches at Hayti, east of Hayes, and Eagle Butte; 8 inches at Highmore and Doland; 9 inches at Orient, Bryant, and near Onida; 10 inches at Gettysburg and Faulkton; 11 inches at Seneca and Redfield. Locations with a foot or more of snowfall included: 12 inches 23 miles north of Highmore; 13 inches near Agar; 15 inches 24 miles north of Highmore.

1948: Good Friday tornadoes moved from Terre Haute to Redkey, Indiana killing 20 people. About 80% of the town of Coatesville was destroyed, and 16 people were killed. The Coatesville Carnegie Library was a total loss. The path was a half mile wide.

2009: The proof is in the pudding - A NOAA Weather Radio can save your life. Near Belk, AL, a family was alerted to a tornado by their weather radio; they went to their storm cellar. They heard the "jet roar" of the EF1 tornado as it damaged their home; they were unhurt.

1913 - The Ohio River Basin flood reached a peak. Ten inch rains over a wide area of the Ohio River Basin inundated cities in Ohio, drowning 467 persons, and causing 147 million dollars damage. The Miami River at Dayton reached a level eight feet higher than ever before. The flood, caused by warm weather and heavy rains, was the second mostly deadly of record for the nation. (David Ludlum)

1954 - The temperature at Allaket, AK, plunged to 69 degrees below zero. (The Weather Channel)

1971 - Parts of northern and central Georgia experienced their worst snow and ice storm since 1935. Two day power outages ruined two million eggs at poultry hatches. Two persons were killed when a tree landed on their car. (25th-26th) (The Weather Channel)

1987 - A cold front crossing the Plateau Region produced high winds in Utah causing some property damage. Winds gusted to 51 mph at Salt Lake City. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - Twenty cities in the southwestern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. Afternoon highs of 73 degrees at Flagstaff AZ, 90 degrees at Sacramento CA, 95 degrees at Santa Maria CA, 95 degrees at Los Angeles CA, 99 degrees at Tucson AZ, and 100 degrees at Phoenix AZ set records for March. (The National Weather Summary)

1989 - The Easter Bunny brought record warm temperatures to the central U.S. while such records were still welcome. A dozen cities reported record warm readings, including Dodge City KS with an afternoon high of 88 degrees. Strong southerly winds gusted to 51 mph at Dodge City, and reached 55 mph at Salina KS. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1990 - Fair weather prevailed across the nation for the second day in a row. Freezing temperatures were reported in the Middle Atlantic Coast Region in the wake of an early spring snowstorm. Afternoon highs were again in the 70s and 80s in the southeastern U.S., and for the ninth day in a row, temperatures in the southwestern U.S. reached the 90s. (The National Weather Summary)

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Today



Mostly Cloudy

High: 43 °F

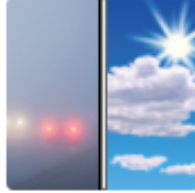
Tonight



Mostly Cloudy  
then Patchy  
Fog

Low: 33 °F

Wednesday



Areas Fog  
then Mostly  
Sunny

High: 52 °F

Wednesday  
Night



Mostly Cloudy

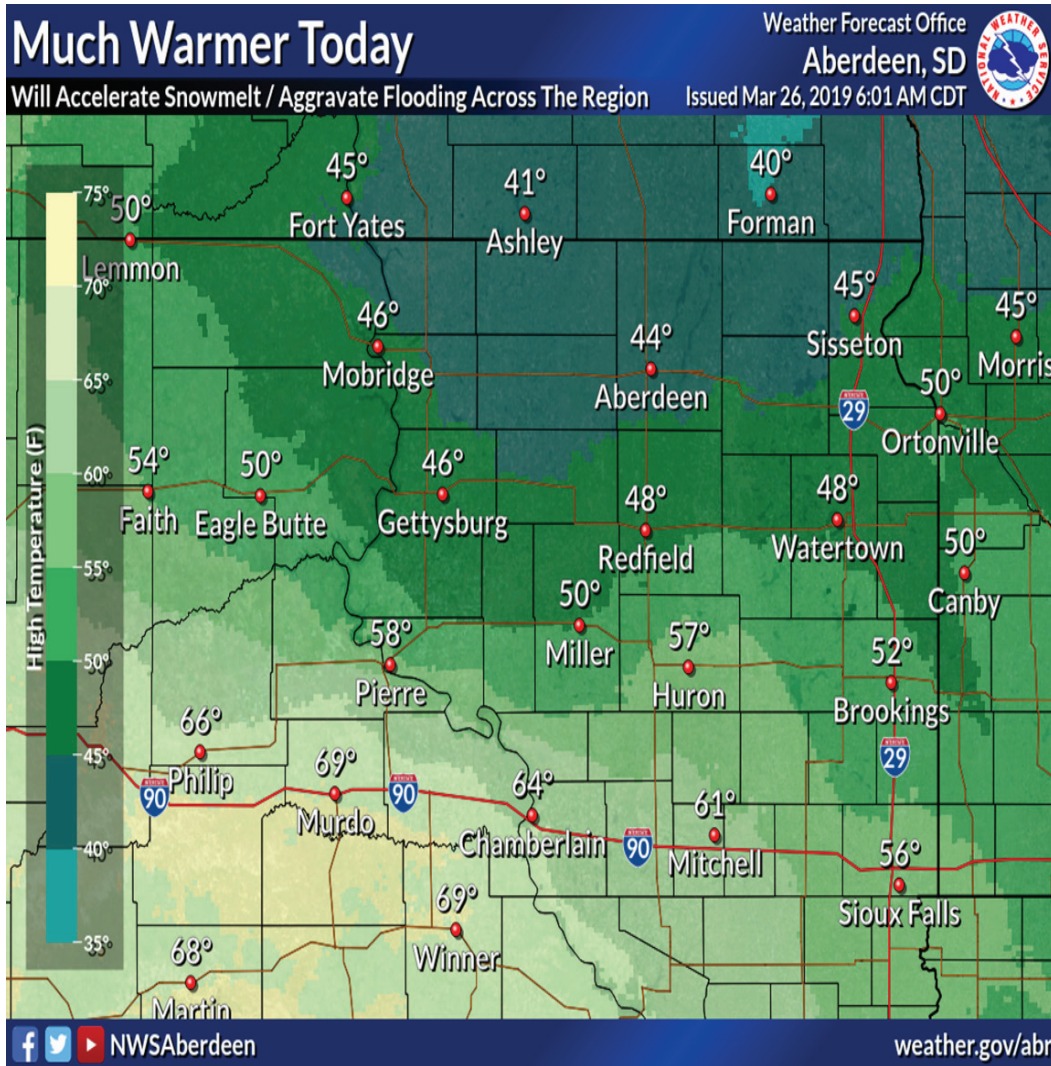
Low: 29 °F

Thursday



Mostly Cloudy

High: 41 °F



A warm up is in store for the region starting today and continuing Wednesday. Will have to watch area rivers, streams and creeks to see what impact a faster snow melt will have.



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## Yesterday's Weather

**High Outside Temp: 34 °F at 4:54 PM**

**Low Outside Temp: 22 °F at 9:01 AM**

**High Gust: 14 mph at 12:01 AM**

**Precip:**

## Today's Info

**Record High: 74° in 1905**

**Record Low: -13° in 1964**

**Average High: 45°F**

**Average Low: 24°F**

**Average Precip in Mar.: 0.88**

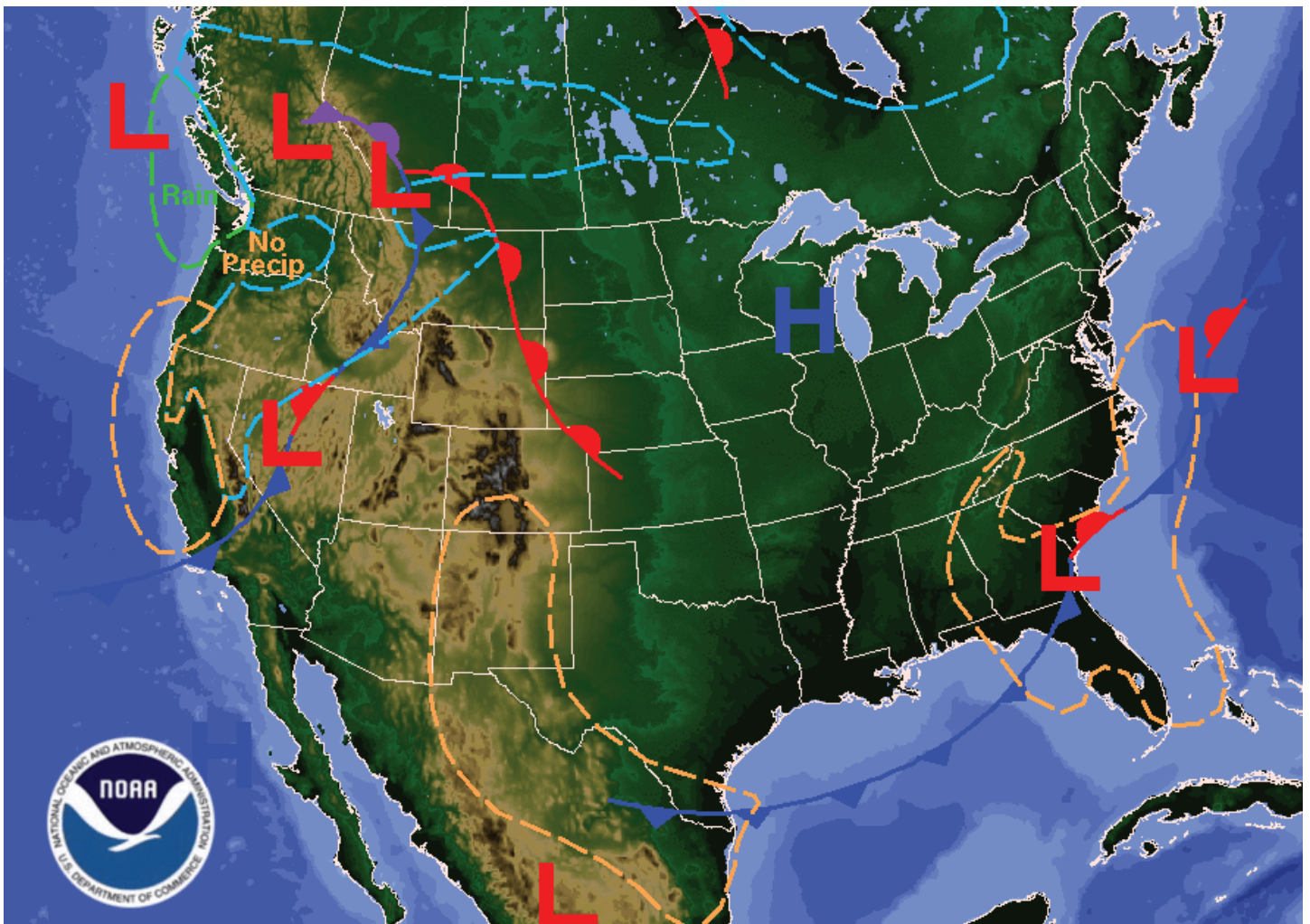
**Precip to date in Mar.: 0.87**

**Average Precip to date: 1.90**

**Precip Year to Date: 3.06**

**Sunset Tonight: 7:54 p.m.**

**Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:24 a.m.**



### Day 1 National Forecast Chart

Valid Tue, Mar 26, 2019, issued 4:38 AM EDT  
DOC/NOAA/NWS/NCEP/Weather Prediction Center  
Prepared by McCreynolds with WPC/SPC/NHC forecasts

Rain  
Rain and T'Storms  
Rain and Snow  
Snow

Flash Flooding Possible (hatched)  
Severe T'Storms Possible (hatched)  
Freezing Rain Possible (hatched)  
Heavy Snow Possible (hatched)



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## THE CALL TO PRUDENCE

God certainly enjoys a sense of humor. Chapter eight begins with a call to applied wisdom and the fact that it even goes looking for followers. Here we find a distinct call from God Himself to the simple and foolish to stop and gain understanding! Its like the stop, look and listen warning signs at railroad crossings: If you are not careful and stop, tragedy may strike!

How very gracious of Him to care for everyone! He knows that there are many who go through life aimlessly wandering from one mistake to another. It disturbs Him so much that He makes an urgent attempt to reach them once again and offer His grace, guidance, and willingness to guard everyone against themselves.

Does not wisdom call out? we read in His Word. His Word does not say, Go here and there, and if you are fortunate, you may run into some good advice now and then. That in itself would reveal a god who was not wise and caring. But throughout Scripture, God often appears as the town crier attempting to get the attention of people before disaster strikes. It is a common thread that binds the Old and New Testaments together.

Our God is not a silent god sitting on the sidelines of life watching us as though He were uninvolved and disinterested in our lives. Rather, He is always somewhere listening, watching, observing - but never a reluctant advisor. He is our Creator-Sustainer and waits anxiously and patiently to be our Redeemer and Savior. But we must respond to His voice to be victorious.

Those who do not respond to Him have no excuse. He makes His will and His way plain.

Prayer: Father, its never about You hiding from us or confusing us, but always about us rejecting You and refusing to hear Your voice or see Your Son. Forgive us! In Jesus Name, Amen.

Scripture For Today: Proverbs 8:1 Listen as Wisdom calls out! Hear as understanding raises her voice!

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## 2019 Groton SD Community Events

- 01/27/2019 Carnival of Silver Skates 2pm & 6:30pm (Last Sunday of January)
- 03/17/2019 Legion Post #39 Spring Fundraiser (Sunday closest to St. Patrick's Day, every other year)
- 04/13/2019 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 04/27/2019 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 05/04/2019 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)
- 05/27/2019 Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Program (Memorial Day)
- 06/13/2019 Transit Fundraiser (Thursday Mid-June)
- 06/14/2019 SDSU Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 06/15/2019 Triathlon (Saturday before Father's Day)
- 06/21/2019 Best Ball Golf Tourney
- 06/22-23/2019 Groton Junior Legion Tournament
- 06/29/2019 Groton U10/U12 Round Robin Tournament
- 07/04/2019 Firecracker Golf Tourney (4th of July)
- 07/14/2019 Summer Fest/Car Show (Sunday Mid-July)
- 07/18/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Tournament
- 07/21/2019 Granary Ice Cream Social & Family Music Fest
- 08/02/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Wine on Nine
- 08/09-11/2019 State Junior Legion Tournament in Groton
- 08/22/2019 First Day of School
- 09/07/2019 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday after Labor Day)
- 09/08/2019 Sunflower Classic at Olive Grove Golf Course
- 09/08/2019 Granary Living History Fall Festival
- 10/12/2019 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
- 10/11/2019 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
- 10/31/2019 Trunk or Treat/Halloween on Main (Halloween)
- 11/09/2019 Legion Post #39 Turkey Shoot (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
- 12/07/2019 Olive Grove Golf Course Holiday Party
- 12/07/2019 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
- Bingo: every Wednesday, Labor Day-Memorial Day, 6:30pm at the Legion Post #39

## 2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 4/4/2020 Easter Egg Hunt (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
- 4/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
- 5/2/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Saturday in May)

## News from the Associated Press

### Woman injured by shopping scooter sues Walmart

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A Sioux Falls woman is suing Walmart after she was injured when a customer driving a motorized shopping scooter crashed into her.

A civil lawsuit filed in Minnehaha County this week claims Walmart was negligent in its instructions on how to operate the scooter. Eighty-five-year-old Versella Grasz was shopping at a Walmart in Sioux Falls in June 2017 when the driver of the scooter crashed into her right side. The lawsuit says Grasz was brought to her knees in pain and taken to a hospital.

The lawsuit does not specify a requested damage amount. The Argus Leader reports Walmart says it regrets Grasz was injured, but says the customer operating the scooter was responsible for the woman's injuries.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

### Missouri State crashes the Sweet 16 as 11 seed

By **DOUG FEINBERG AP Basketball Writer**

NEW YORK (AP) — The Sweet 16 is set and Missouri State is crashing the party for the first time in 18 years.

The 11th-seeded Lady Bears, who last made it this far in 2001 when the team made its historic Final Four run, are the only double-digit seed to reach the regional semifinals. It's the ninth time in 10 years that a team seeded 10 or lower has reached the Sweet 16. Missouri State knocked off Iowa State on the Cyclones' home court to advance.

Missouri State had gone one-and-done in its previous four NCAA appearances.

"Wow. That was amazing," said Missouri State coach Kellie Harper, who won three national championships as a point guard under Pat Summitt at Tennessee. "We did it our way. This is a dream come true."

While Notre Dame and Baylor cruised to easy victories, Missouri State wasn't the only lower seed to advance. Six seeds UCLA and South Dakota State also pulled off surprising wins, beating Maryland and Syracuse, respectively, on their home courts. It's the first trip to the Sweet 16 ever for the Jackrabbits.

"It's a great, great, great day to be a Jackrabbit," said South Dakota State coach Aaron Johnston, who suffered a fat lip in the postgame celebration.

Next up, UCLA will try to do something the school has never done — beat UConn. The Huskies have won all five meetings, including a 15-point win in the Sweet 16 in 2017. The Huskies won at UCLA by 18 points last year.

#### CONFERENCE DOMINANCE

The Pac-12 had five of its six teams advance to the round of 16 — the most of any conference. Oregon State will join UCLA in Albany, New York. Oregon and Arizona State advance to play in Portland, Oregon, on Sunday. Stanford rallied to beat BYU and reach the Chicago Regional.

"For five teams to be in the Sweet 16 is a great statement about our league," Stanford coach Tara VanDerveer said. "Congrats to UCLA and Oregon State. That's awesome."

It's the second time in three years that the Pac-12 has had five teams in the Sweet 16. The SEC and ACC each have three teams, with the Big 12, Big Ten, American, Missouri Valley and Summit all having one team.

#### GETTING BIG

Three of the finalists for the Lisa Leslie Award, given to the best center in the country, are still playing. Baylor's Kalani Brown, Mississippi State's Teaira McCowan and Iowa's Megan Gustafson are still around. If the Lady Bears and the Hawkeyes win their next games, Brown and Gustafson will square off. McCowan could potentially face off with either one if two of the teams reach the Final Four.

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## ATTENDANCE

Fans turned out for the opening round, with no place better than Iowa for attendance. The Hawkeyes drew an average of 11,548 over the first two rounds, including 12,376 for its second-round win over Missouri. The average is the highest total in the past five years, topping South Carolina, which had over 10,500 in 2015 and 2018. The average attendance at the 16 first-round sites was 5,299 for the first- and second-round games. It's the highest average attendance for the opening rounds since 2008.

## FALLING SHORT

Iowa State star Bridget Carleton had 31 points in the loss to Missouri State. She finished just seven points shy of tying Angie Welle's career scoring record at the school with 2,149 points.

Follow Doug Feinberg on Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/dougfeinberg>

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/WomensNCAATournament> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## South Dakota State beats Syracuse 75-64, reaches Sweet 16

By MARK FRANK Associated Press

SYRACUSE, N.Y. (AP) — Syracuse seemed to be in total control. And then it wasn't.

A 10-0 run fueled by three turnovers to start the fourth quarter propelled the No. 3 Orange to a 57-53 lead with a little more than seven minutes to go against No. 6 South Dakota State.

With a loud Carrier Dome crowd behind them, the Orange had all the momentum.

South Dakota State had other ideas.

Led by Madison Guebert, who scored 18 of her 20 points on 3-pointers, including two critical 3s in the fourth quarter, the Jackrabbits went on a 16-2 run to defeat Syracuse 75-64 on Monday night in the second round of the NCAA Tournament.

"Our team is a very poised team. We always stay composed. There really wasn't ever a sense of panic for us, even when they had their few runs, especially when we had those few turnovers," Guebert said. "We had confidence in each other. We knew that if we kept into our system, moved the ball, we were going to be able to knock down shots."

The victory sends the Jackrabbits (28-6) to the Sweet 16 for the first time in program history. They will face No. 2 Oregon on Friday in the regional semifinals in Portland, Oregon.

Guebert had 14 of her points in the second half. Myah Selland added 17 for South Dakota State, Macy Miller had 11, and Paiton Burckhard 10.

Tiana Mangakahia led Syracuse (25-9) with 18 points. Kiara Lewis had 13.

Syracuse shot 10 of 16 in the first quarter but hit just 16 of 48 the rest of the way, the Orange caving at the end by missing shot after shot after shot as the game slipped away.

"You can't end the game 1 of 11 and on a 16-2 run," Syracuse coach Quentin Hillsman said. "We have to do a better job of closing games. We were playing unsettled (during the Jackrabbits' run). When we're



**South Dakota State's Myah Selling (44) shoots as Syracuse's Maeva Djaldi-Tabdi (3) defends during a second round game in the NCAA women's college basketball tournament in Syracuse, N.Y., Monday, March 25, 2019.** (AP Photo/Heather Ainsworth)



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making shots it's different. We really couldn't get into our pressure and that's our game. We have to make shots so we can press."

The Orange defense forced three consecutive turnovers and Syracuse scored 10 straight points to open the fourth quarter to take a 57-53 lead with 7:23 to go. Miranda Drummond scored four points during the run.

"Syracuse did a great job of making that stretch really hard for us," South Dakota State coach Aaron Johnston said. "I thought part of what that fourth quarter was, I know we came out of a break, but we were just a little bit worn down, too. In the timeout, we talked about what we had done well in that game and the fight that it took to have going into that quarter just to settle ourselves back in.

"When you have players like Macy (Miller) and Maddy (Guebert) out there that have been there before, they are a calming influence and they made some shots."

A lay-in by South Dakota State's Tagyn Larson tied the game at 57 with 6:13 remaining. With the game tied at 59, Mangakahia hit a corner 3 to give the Orange a 62-59 lead with 4:50 to go, but the Jackrabbits scored 12 straight points, six on consecutive 3s by Guebert, to take a 71-62 lead with less than a minute remaining.

The Orange scored just two points in the final 4:50.

On the other side, South Dakota State looks forward to Friday.

"It's a great, great, great day to be a Jackrabbit," said Johnston, who sustained a fat lip in the post-game celebration.

## BIG PICTURE

South Dakota State: The Jackrabbits have one of the longest winning streaks in the nation at 18 and their fans and support are impressive. While Miller is key, the rest of the lineup is capable of big contributions just as they did against the Orange.

Syracuse: Mangakahia, second in the nation in assists per game, finished with eight, giving her a program-record 591 for her Syracuse career, one more than Alexis Peterson. She has one more year of eligibility but could opt to turn pro. That would leave a big void, though Hillsman still has a strong roster that had the Orange ranked in the top 15 at the end of the regular season.

"If Tiana is ready to go, and they want to draft her, then she should go," Hillsman said. "If she's a high draft pick she should go. I'm never going to tell someone to not follow their dreams and what's in their best interest. I'll support Tiana in whatever she wants to do."

## UP NEXT

South Dakota State plays No. 2 Oregon on Friday in the regional semifinals in Portland, Oregon.

More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/WomensNCAATournament> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Flooding damage extensive in Midwest and more rain forecast

OMAHA, Neb. (AP) — Floodwaters are receding across most of the hard-hit Midwest, but there could be new problems if the forecast for significant rain later this week holds up. Already the flooding along the Missouri River and its tributaries has caused at least \$3 billion damage and forced thousands from their homes as floodwaters penetrated or flowed over several hundred miles of levees.

The flooding is blamed in three confirmed deaths, and two Nebraska men have been missing for more than a week.

## EXTENSIVE DAMAGE

The flooding has taken a heavy toll on agriculture in the region, inundating tens of thousands of acres, threatening stockpiled grain and killing livestock. Thousands of people have been forced from their homes in Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri, and some have yet to return to assess the damage. Residents of Kansas City, Missouri, are being asked to conserve water while KC Water treats murky water caused by filtration issues. Flooding has closed about 140 roads in Missouri, even as water levels begin falling along much of

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the Missouri River.

Officials in those three states plan to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to determine if any changes need to be made to the system of levees that is supposed to protect towns and cities from swollen rivers.

Yet more flood damage is possible as spring rains arrive and more snow in northern states melts and flows into rivers.

"We're not done yet and I think that's the other thing that we want to make sure folks are watching very closely," Iowa Agriculture Secretary Mike Naig said.

## LINGERING PROBLEMS

Flooding continues to cause problems along several major rivers in the eastern Dakotas and northwestern Minnesota.

The National Weather Service says there's a 10 percent chance the Red River will approach the 2009 record of 41 feet (12.5 meters) in Fargo, North Dakota, and neighboring Moorhead, Minnesota.

Both cities have implemented significant flood-fighting measures in the last decade, including home buyouts and levees that could be tested this year. But both cities have still declared emergencies and are launching sandbag-filling efforts — 1 million sandbags in Fargo and 150,000 in Moorhead.

Spring flooding also is a concern in southern Minnesota. Gov. Tim Walz, Lt. Gov. Peggy Flanagan and U.S. Rep. Angie Craig were among the public officials who joined Hastings residents to fill thousands of sandbags over the weekend. The Mississippi River at Hastings is forecast to rise to major flood stage this week.

In eastern South Dakota, major flooding is expected along the James and the Big Sioux rivers in the next couple of weeks, though record crests are not anticipated, according to Mike Gillispie, National Weather Service hydrologist in Sioux Falls.

"Sioux Falls itself should be in pretty good shape," he said. "Just upstream (on the Big Sioux), though, Baltic, Dell Rapids, Trent, some of those smaller communities up through that stretch of river, there are significant impacts up there. Roads in the cities are being flooded, maybe even houses."

## FORECAST FEARS

The weather service predicts eastern Nebraska and western Iowa could receive 1 to 2 inches (2.5 to 5 centimeters) of rain from Wednesday to Friday. That much rain would certainly send river levels higher, creating problems for homes behind levees that were weakened in the initial flooding.

The forecast may be revised as the storm gets closer. Meteorologist Bryon Miller said the good news is that the river crests following this week's forecast storm will likely be lower than during recent floods.

"It doesn't look like it will be anywhere near the crests we saw at the height of this," said Miller, from the NWS office in Valley, Nebraska.

A combination of heavy rains and rapid snowmelt atop ground that was already saturated and in some



**Treyton Gubser, left, and his uncle Daniel Gubser paddle using shovels through the floodwaters after they rescued Daniel's kid's cat, Bob Wednesday, March 20, 2019, in Hamburg, Iowa. As some communities along the Missouri River start to shift their focus to flood recovery after a late-winter storm, residents in two Iowa cities are still in crisis mode because their treatment plants have shut down and they lack fresh water.** (Chris Machian/Omaha World-Herald via AP)

places still frozen sent the Missouri River and other rivers over the top earlier this month.

## FLOOD FLOW

This week's storm system could also bring rain to the Mississippi River basin and exacerbate problems there.

But so far most of the flooding along the Mississippi hasn't created major issues, National Weather Service meteorologist Jim Hladik said.

"The current levels are somewhat routine along the Mississippi," Hladik said.

The Mississippi is expected to crest sometime in April, depending on the timing of spring rains and snowmelt. The river will be susceptible to flooding over the next month, Hladik said.

The Mississippi River is expected to keep rising in the Minnesota capital of St. Paul this week after reaching major flood stage Monday morning. About half a dozen roads in the city are closed, as well as several parks and boat launches. City leaders have started building a temporary levee in the Lowertown area of St. Paul.

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Associated Press Writers Josh Funk in Omaha, Nebraska; Blake Nicholson in Bismarck, North Dakota; Jeff Baenen in Minneapolis; and Heather Hollingsworth in Kansas City, Missouri, contributed to this report.

## University of Wyoming president Nichols to step down

CHEYENNE, Wyo. (AP) — University of Wyoming President Laurie Nichols will step down and take a faculty job when her contract expires June 30.

UW officials announced the change Monday. Nichols says in a press release she is proud of enrollment growth, new degree programs and other accomplishments during her three years at Wyoming's only four-year, public university.

Neither Nichols nor the university offered reasons why she was stepping down.

Nichols was the first woman to hold the job and the fourth UW president in a five-year period. Her base salary was \$350,000 a year.

University trustees in 2018 refused to release an evaluation of Nichols to the public, saying the document was confidential by law.

Nichols was provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at South Dakota State University from 2009-2016.

## Legal hemp denied in South Dakota as nearby states legalize

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Industrial hemp — a product Gov. Kristi Noem recently refused to decriminalize — has the potential to become a competitive commodity that boosts the economies of South Dakota's neighboring states, agricultural experts say.

Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota have had industrial hemp trial programs since authorization by the 2014 Farm Bill. Wyoming's governor recently signed a law approving industrial hemp, and the Iowa and Nebraska Legislatures are discussing similar measures.

Doug Goehring, North Dakota's agriculture commissioner, said legalizing industrial hemp production would expand farming to ensure a strong agricultural economy, the Sioux Falls Argus Leader reported. An average-sized farm in central North Dakota of 3,200 acres supports one family and produces around \$1.1 million in yearly gross revenue, Goehring said.

"They only get to keep about 13 percent of that," he said. "The rest goes into the economy and that's what's fueling the economy."

North Dakota typically has between 26 and 43 producers cultivating roughly 3,000 acres of industrial hemp, which can be used in products including clothing, food and construction materials. Farmers usually begin with less than 100 acres of industrial hemp to become acquainted with the crop, Goehring said.

States with industrial hemp pilot programs see indirect advantages from sales taxes and farmers having

more revenue to inject into the economy. Processing industrial hemp can be “a huge benefit for a company” and there’s a rising number of companies getting ready to process industrial hemp in the Midwest, according to Anthony Cortilet, supervisor of Minnesota’s industrial hemp program.

Noem has expressed concern that allowing hemp farming would eventually lead to the legalization of marijuana. The governor said law enforcement worries that industrial hemp production could complicate their work.

Under federal law, industrial hemp can only contain 0.3 percent THC, the chemical compound that gives marijuana its high.

North Dakota doesn’t have worries regarding law enforcement, Goehring said, although he conceded some applicants to the industrial hemp test program have been denied because their proposal appears to be illegitimate.

Information from: Argus Leader, <http://www.argusleader.com>

## 2 bodies in garbage truck pulled from flooded river

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Authorities say they’ve found the bodies of two men whose garbage truck was found in a flooded South Dakota river.

The men were last seen Thursday driving away from a landfill in Mitchell. Crews spotted a damaged guardrail Saturday on a highway along the James River and later found the truck.

The South Dakota Highway Patrol says the bodies of the 61-year-old driver and 46-year-old passenger were inside the truck when it was pulled from the river Sunday.

The patrol says equipment failure likely caused the crash, but that the investigation is ongoing.

Three deaths have been blamed so far on flooding along the Missouri River and its tributaries. Two men remain missing in Nebraska.

The flooding has also damaged thousands of homes and inundated vast swaths of agricultural land in Nebraska, Iowa and Missouri.



**The Missouri River has set records with historic flood marks measured in 30 places in Nebraska, Iowa and South Dakota.**

## 2 accused of hauling 151 pounds of pot plead not guilty

PIERRE, S.D. (AP) — Two Indiana residents who authorities say were caught in South Dakota with 151 pounds of marijuana in a rental truck have pleaded not guilty to federal drug charges.

The U.S. attorney’s office says 23-year-olds Brendan Lee, of Chesterton, Indiana, and Sarah Worthman, of Bloomfield, Indiana, were stopped on Feb. 21 while traveling through the Cheyenne River Sioux Reservation.

They’re scheduled for trial April 30 on drug possession and conspiracy charges and could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison if convicted.



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## Excerpts from recent South Dakota editorials

By The Associated Press undefined

### Rapid City Journal, March 21

#### Keystone XL security bills handled poorly

Master chefs bring everything together perfectly. Amateurs run from the kitchen with late surprises, insulting patrons as they trip over explanations and damage reputations — sometimes irreparably.

The Noem administration's poor management of a bill package meant to discourage unruly Keystone XL oil pipeline protests and pay for needed construction security could haunt South Dakota.

Senate Bill 189 established civil penalties for "riot boosting," or contributing money to or encouraging violent pipeline protesters.

Senate Bill 190 created a funding source for extraordinary costs attributed to pipeline protests, sourced from local, state and federal dollars, as well as contributions from the pipeline company.

Nobody should take issue with the bills' objectives. South Dakota rightly seeks to discourage violence and avoid a repeat of the Dakota Access oil pipeline standoff, which left North Dakotans facing \$38 million in law enforcement costs.

Will the package work? The courts ultimately will have to rule on whether an incident equates to riot boosting or a disturbance constitutes a riot — which probably looks different depending on which side of the water cannons you find yourself.

But Noem dropped these surprises on an unprepared public in the waning days of the legislative session following extended private consultation with lawmakers, law enforcement and pipeline developer TransCanada. Tribal leaders were not consulted.

The Legislature approved both bills using an emergency process that allowed for little public debate. Tribes were understandably insulted, and Noem's righteous defense of the process didn't help.

"I'm well aware that some of our (tribal) leaders are not in favor of the pipeline, although we should all be in favor of it being peaceful," Noem said.

Peace seldom results when one group feels that its voice on a critical matter was intentionally disregarded. American colonists dressed up as Native Americans and dumped tea in Boston Harbor because an estranged government acted without input.

Was Noem not also aware of the deep distrust which stems from the longtime paternalistic attitude of whites toward Natives? By not allowing Natives in the room, she signaled they still don't matter.

The administration doubled down on insults when Matt McCauley, who serves as legal counsel to Noem's office, said tribes weren't consulted because the proposed pipeline route does not intersect with tribal land.

Boyd Gourneau, chairman of the Lower Brule, offered the best rejoinder: "We realize that our state's nine tribes do not own all of the land we have originally inhabited within our great state," he wrote. "However as the original stewards of this very land, it is natural that we expect some regard and consultation during the preparation of legislation that would surely affect the well-being of our environment."

Keystone XL will traverse 316 miles of South Dakota. Tribal members worry oil spills near river crossings will affect their drinking water. Of course, they have a stake.

A skeptic might think the Capitol tribal flag ceremony which Noem proposed a few days before springing her Keystone XL package on the Legislature was mostly a marketing ploy to lessen blowback. If so, it failed.

Last week, chairmen of the Oglala, Crow Creek, Lower Brule, Yankton and Cheyenne River Sioux tribes angrily requested their tribes not be included in the ceremony where Noem's administration planned to erect the flags of South Dakota's nine federally recognized tribes "as a sign of unity."

"The purpose of these bills is to punish anyone who opposes the agenda of outside oil conglomerates like TransCanada," said Oglala Sioux President Julian Bear Runner.

Should any Keystone XL riots result, Noem should expect to see the phrase "tribes were not consulted" in resulting national and international news accounts.

Noem said the bills were introduced in the final days because her staff wanted to spend ample time on the package. "What we wanted to make sure of was that we brought legislation that was ready, that was

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right, that did what we wanted it to do, that was well thought-out and was responsible," she said.

It boils down to a need for expediency.

In her State of the State address, Noem said she'd work toward building the most transparent administration South Dakota has ever seen.

The thing about transparency: It has nothing in common with expediency. King's edicts were expedient. Americans prefer openness.

Noem's gubernatorial campaign website yearned for "a different kind of relationship with South Dakota's nine tribes, one that truly embraces the meaning of Dakota, or ally."

Governor, this is not how you do it.

## **Argus Leader, Sioux Falls, March 22** **Nursing home closures require bold solutions**

To refer to the cascading closures of South Dakota nursing homes as a "crisis" gives crises a bad name. Let's call it what it is: a disaster unfolding in real time.

The pace is accelerating. The South Dakota Health Care Association reports that a Huron facility's end marks the sixth such closure in three years, half of which occurred in 2019.

Two of the most recent facility closures, in Mobridge and Madison, were managed by Black Hills Receiver, LLC. The state-approved receivership still manages 16 of the South Dakota nursing homes orphaned when New Jersey-based Skyline Healthcare declared bankruptcy. The outlook for those facilities appears bleak.

The culprit is the financial loss long-term care facilities incur with residents who rely on Medicaid. The state's funding formula falls far short of what it costs to provide them care.

We've seen this coming. The party in power in Pierre has ignored South Dakota's rock-bottom Medicaid reimbursement rates for years. Their stubborn refusal to turn out their pockets and fix the problem has driven our nursing home system over the edge.

Gov. Kristi Noem, who has called this situation a priority, proposed a mere 5 percent increase to Medicaid reimbursement. At first glance, the legislature doubling that amount to stanch the industry's financial hemorrhage looks like a bold step in the right direction.

It is a step, but it's hardly bold. It's a Band-Aid on a gut shot.

Former Republican Gov. Dennis Daugaard proposed expanding Medicaid in the state, a move that would have netted South Dakota a windfall of federal funds. He was forced to abandon the effort due to resistance among the most conservative factions in his own party.

As Daugaard told the Argus Leader at the time, if legislators only crunched the numbers, they would have agreed to the expansion. But because such expansion was an element of the Affordable Care Act — Obamacare — it was a political non-starter. South Dakota is one of the 14 states in the nation that have not yet expanded Medicaid.

That's Pierre in a nutshell: partisanship over practicality for our supermajority. In the case of nursing home closures, such intractable shortsightedness has dire consequences for elderly citizens.

These closures are not just an inconvenience for families who can't visit loved ones as often because they now live hours away. Nor are they merely late-in-life instances of residents forced from towns where they have lived most, or all, of their lives.

The closures are literally a matter of life and death. Research of mortality rates of nursing home populations being suddenly dispersed, their support systems and network pulled out from under them, reveals that it's more likely that residents will die sooner. It's called "transfer trauma."

One of its recent victims was Harold Labrenz, whose story was reported in The New York Times. The nursing home where he lived in Mobridge closed for good this January. Able to find no better option, Harold's wife found a place for him 220 miles away in North Dakota.

Three days after he arrived, he was dead.

The critical state of our nursing homes is not unique to South Dakota, and the challenges facing the industry are many. Operational margins have fallen to around zero, which makes it hard to keep quality

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employees due to low pay. That makes it difficult to attract private-payer residents, whose fees are needed to bridge the Medicaid reimbursement gap.

Noem's one-time \$5 million grant to encourage innovation in care is a nice idea — in the long term. Innovating takes time, while implementing such measures can be costly.

We can certainly explore ways to keep our grandparents and great-grandparents independent longer, or in assisted living for longer. We might be able to find ways to lure more workers to such facilities — big breaks or even forgiveness on student loans for certified nursing assistants, LPN or RN degrees, for instance.

But all that innovation won't help if there are no more nursing homes to benefit from the changes. Lawmakers need to be able to hit the ground running at the beginning of the next legislative session. We know our new governor hates the idea, but this is the perfect time to put smart people from stakeholder agencies and organizations into a room to knock this out.

Task forces aren't the answer to everything, but they're tailor-made to solve problems that we can get our arms around. It's time for our governor and our lawmakers to take measure of their political will and take care of South Dakota.

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## **Yankton Daily Press & Dakotan, March 18** **Nature's wrath and a fragile moment**

Sometimes, Mother Nature can be a monster.

Too many people in far too many places confronted that last week as a massive storm — classified by some as a "bomb cyclone" — unleashed misery across the central swath of this nation. For some people, it was epic flooding; for others, it was paralyzing snow. For everyone, it was a March storm that few will ever forget.

And it won't be forgotten across Nebraska — and in places like Niobrara and Santee — which saw misery on an immense, paralyzing scale.

It won't be forgotten in Yankton, either. With record rainfall falling on frozen ground, flood waters flushed across the city and county, creating damage to roads and bridges, homes and yards.

One casualty is the Auld-Brokaw Trail, the popular pathway that parallels Marne Creek as they jointly wander through the heart of Yankton. The heavily-used recreational trail has sustained severe damage in places, making it largely unusable for the foreseeable future.

The trail was built in the early 2000s as a flood mitigation project for the creek, whose drainage basin extends well into the county. As Mayor Nathan Johnson pointed out last week, the project has basically done its job through the years, including in 2011, when the trail and the creek were pushed to the brink by wet, stormy conditions (at least in the first half of that year).

Last week, the trail system simply couldn't keep up with the critical combination of conditions — the heavy rain, the unmelted snow, the frozen ground — that were present here.

It points to an inescapable truth about our attempts to control flood water, either on a relatively local basis like Marne Creek or, as we saw in 2011, large-scale objectives such as the Missouri River: There is always a threshold at which nature cannot be denied. There's a limit to what man can do to tame the natural elements. We have been quite successful at it, as the Pick-Sloan project on the Missouri River has shown: Once, flooding was an annual threat along the unpredictable river, but now it's a rare occurrence. However, it is, as we well know, not impossible. So, while the Auld-Brokaw Trail has done well to move high water through the city, it has limits. That's what we saw last week.

We hope that the trail system can be repaired with the help of federal disaster funding. In fact, the city really needs it to be there.

Beyond that, last week's storm and flood have left behind more than mud, destruction and memories.

We now are also left in a very fragile moment. There is water everywhere and the ground, which is saturated from rains last fall, is still largely frozen. Plus, a look to the west and north reveals a snowy landscape with potential misery still locked in its drifts. Much of it will drain into the rivers that lead to



the Yankton-Vermillion area. And rivers like the James and the Vermillion are already out of their banks. The storm is gone but the problems remain; now the work begins to clean up and carry out needed repairs. But it may also be just the end of the beginning of what could be a very precarious time.

## Gaza tense after Israel, Hamas exchange heavy fire overnight

By ARON HELLER and FARES AKRAM Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — The Gaza border region was quiet but tense on Tuesday morning after a night of heavy fire as Israeli aircraft bombed targets across the Gaza Strip and Gaza militants fired rockets into Israel in what threatened to escalate into a major conflict, just two weeks before the Israeli election.

Schools in southern Israel were cancelled for the day and the military massed forces on the Gaza border and imposed restrictions on civilian public gatherings, after dozens of rockets were fired toward communities in the area, including one that struck a house in the town of Sderot.

The Israeli air force pounded militant sites of Gaza's Hamas rulers and the smaller Islamic Jihad group. The targets included a multistory building in Gaza City that Israel said had served as a Hamas military intelligence headquarters and the office of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. Gaza's Health Ministry said seven Palestinians were wounded in the airstrikes.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu landed back in Israel from Washington and headed directly to military headquarters in Tel Aviv for consultations on the next steps. He faces the difficult task of delivering a tough blow to Hamas while avoiding protracted fighting that could work against him on election day.

Netanyahu has come under heavy criticism from both allies and opponents for what they say has been an ineffective policy of containing Gaza militants, with calls demanding he deliver a devastating blow to Hamas. He has conducted indirect cease-fire talks through Egyptian mediators in recent months, and even allowed the delivery of millions of dollars of Qatari aid to Hamas to ease harsh conditions in Gaza.

After a meeting with President Donald Trump and before leaving Washington, Netanyahu indicated the election would not deter him from acting.

"We have responded very, very forcefully. Hamas needs to know that we will not hesitate to go in and take all necessary steps — regardless of anything, any date, other than Israel's security needs," he said.

The cross-border fighting was triggered by a surprise rocket fired early Monday from Gaza that slammed into a house in central Israel and wounded seven people.

The Israeli military said it was a self-manufactured rocket with a range of 120 kilometers (75 miles), making it one of the deepest strikes ever carried out by Hamas. The military mobilized two armor and infantry brigades and drafted some reserve forces before striking back at militant sites in Gaza.



**Palestinians inspect the damage of the destroyed multi-story building of Hamas-affiliated insurance company, in Gaza City, Tuesday, March 26, 2019. A tense quiet took hold Tuesday morning after a night of heavy fire as Israeli aircraft bombed targets across the Gaza Strip and Gaza militants fired rockets into Israel in what threatened to devolve into a major conflict two weeks before the Israeli election.** (AP Photo/Adel Hana)



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Gaza's Hamas rulers announced later in the day that Egyptian mediators had brokered a cease-fire but the firing continued overnight before calm appeared to return early Tuesday.

The rocket attack prompted Netanyahu to cut short a visit to Washington and return home, setting the stage for perhaps the most serious conflict since a war in 2014. But with no fatalities reported on either side yet, and the quiet holding for the moment, it still seemed possible to step back from the brink once again.

Two weeks ago, rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel's densely populated commercial capital of Tel Aviv, and the Israeli military struck back. Gaza's Hamas leaders said the rocket was fired accidentally and the fighting quickly subsided.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars in the last decade. Although neither side appears to have an interest in another war, fighting could easily spin out of control. The 2014 conflict lasted 50 days and ended with over 2,000 Palestinian deaths, including hundreds of civilians, and 73 killed on the Israeli side.

In Gaza, Hamas is facing perhaps its toughest domestic test since seizing control of the coastal territory from the rival Palestinian Authority 12 years ago.

An Israel-Egyptian blockade, imposed to weaken Hamas, combined with sanctions by the Palestinian Authority and mismanagement by the Hamas government, have all fueled an economic crisis that has left Gaza with an unemployment rate above 50 percent.

Hamas has been leading weekly protests along the Israeli border for the past year in hopes of easing the blockade, but the demonstrations, in which some 190 people have been killed by Israeli fire, have done little to improve conditions.

Last week, hundreds of Gazans protested the dire conditions, a rare expression of public discontent against the authoritarian government. Hamas responded with a violent crackdown, beating and arresting dozens of demonstrators and drawing rare public criticism.

By limiting its fire to border communities after Monday's long-range launch, Hamas seems to be trying to keep the conflagration on low intensity. For Israelis living along the border who have suffered from years of rocket attacks that is little comfort.

"The Israeli government can't, under no circumstances, settle," said Haim Jellin, a Labor party candidate for parliament and a former head of the bordering Eshkol regional council. "Firing at Israeli communities that border with Gaza is the same as firing toward Tel Aviv, and it's impossible we will show restraint at the continuous firing."

Akram reported from Gaza City, Gaza Strip.

## Money Madness: AP analysis shows growing gap in NCAA payouts

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP) — Powered by Ja Morant's no-look passes and Dylan Windler's step-back 3s, March Madness has been a bonanza for the Ohio Valley Conference.

The league placed two teams in the NCAA men's basketball tournament for the first time in 32 years. Then Morant's Murray State Racers and Windler's Belmont Bruins both won games during the first week of play, making them darlings for underdog-loving fans everywhere.

That's over now — both teams lost their second tournament game. But the big payoff for the conference's 12 schools comes over the next six years, a windfall of at least \$6.77 million that starts in 2020 with a \$1.1 million payment from the NCAA.

Every year, millions of dollars are distributed to 32 Division I conferences by the NCAA based on what teams get into the tournament and how far they advance. Last year it was \$216 million.

The hoops showcase is the centerpiece of the NCAA's revenue. And in recent years, the portion of those funds going to the five most powerful conferences in college sports has increased, according to an AP analysis of more than \$3 billion in payments distributed from 1997-2018.

For leagues outside the wealthiest, an upset or elusive at-large bid is like winning the lottery. And windfalls like the one heading toward the Ohio Valley have become even more important to mid-major hoops.

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"This is a moment in time we have and we have to take advantage of this moment," Ohio Valley Conference Commissioner Beth DeBauche said hours before Murray State was eliminated by Florida State on Saturday. "We will start as soon as this tournament run ends, talking about what this means and how we can build upon it."

It all points to a long-term problem for mid-majors as power conferences stockpile wins and invites in the tournament: It takes revenue to build a program that can compete with the big boys. For those with less, it is becoming harder to generate more.

"It is a vicious cycle," Atlantic Sun Commissioner Ted Gumbart said.

The 2018 tournament brought in \$844.3 million in television and marketing rights, the vast majority from a contract with CBS and Turner Sports to televise the games. That deal grows annually, its latest extension worth \$8.8 billion over eight years, starting in 2024.

From 1997-2018, the Big Ten Conference has been paid the most at \$340 million, while the Southwest Athletic Conference has earned \$25 million, nearly the minimum it can earn given that all leagues make money from their teams that qualify automatically.

Since massive realignment among college conference in 2012-2014, Power Five schools from the Atlantic Coast, Southeastern, Big Ten, Big 12 and Pac-12 have earned even more under the system of "units," the term used by the NCAA to tally performance payouts.

How it works: Each distribution year is assigned a value for a single unit, which is then applied to bids and most wins earned by conferences over the previous six tournaments. The \$216 million doled out last year amounted to \$273,500 per unit for tournament results from 2012-2017.

The Power Five conferences earned 47.5 percent of tournament units from 2002-13. From 2014-18, those same conferences — which also rake in billions from media rights deals, conference networks and postseason football — earned 55.3 percent of units.

Some of that has come at the expense of the Big East, which was picked apart during realignment and reconfigured from 16 teams to 10. The Big East earned 8.3 percent of units from 2014-18 after earning 12.4 percent from 2002-13. Still, with a 12-year, \$500 million television contract with Fox and no major college football to support, the Big East is in much better shape than others outside the Power Five.

Units earned by the 26 other Division I conferences have fallen from 39.4 percent from 2002-13 to 36.4 percent since. The decline tracks with a falling number of at-large bids going to conferences outside the Power Five and Big East.

"It's discouraging because the challenges are increasing on a year-to-year basis," said Doug Elgin, who has been commissioner of the Missouri Valley Conference for 31 years. "The gap in resources between



**In this combination of NCAA college basketball tournament photos, Murray State's Ja Morant, left, scrambles for the ball on March 21, 2019, in Hartford, Conn., and Belmont's Dylan Windler, right, rebounds March 19, 2019, in Dayton, Ohio. Morant and Windler were two of the top stories of the tournament's first week, leading their mid-major conference teams to victories. Those wins will be paying dividends for years to come for the Ohio Valley Conference.** (AP Photos)

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the high majors and everyone else is accelerating at an alarming rate.”

The NCAA began its current system in 1991. It provided The Associated Press with unit values dating back to 1997, the earliest year for which it had reliable data. The AP calculated NCAA distributions, confirming figures since 2008 with detailed payouts provided by the NCAA and applying unit values to tournament results from earlier years. The AP also used formulas where provided by conferences to estimate how money was shared by schools, before expenses.

Leagues distribute the funds in various ways, depending on the wishes of member schools. For mid-majors, the funds that come from unexpected tournament success are often used to improve basketball programs, to give teams a better chance to be the next Murray State or Belmont.

“That additional money is absolutely significant,” DeBauche said. “It also shapes the way the membership feels about the league. ... We support one another with the view that collectively we’re going to get better as a league, and I don’t want to understate the significance of that.”

The Missouri Valley Conference will collect \$1.4 million in April and at least \$8.45 million total from what Loyola University Chicago earned during its stunning run with Sister Jean to the 2018 Final Four. The conference is still cashing in from Wichita State’s Final Four in 2013 as well as Creighton’s recent NCAA appearances. Wichita State (American Athletic Conference) and Creighton (Big East) have both left the Missouri Valley, ripple effects from Power Five expansion. Elgin provided AP with MVC financial projections that show annual unit revenue falling from nearly \$7.2 million in 2019 to \$2.6 million in 2025.

The MVC hopes to cushion some of that fall through NCAA changes that will redirect a small percentage of money toward academic targets.

Conferences such as the Atlantic 10, Conference USA and the Mountain West could be in a similar situation. They regularly sent multiple teams to the tournament, recently their bids have dwindled and soon, so will their payouts.

The Atlantic Sun Conference has one more payment of \$840,900 coming for Florida Gulf Coast University’s historic tournament performance in 2013, when the team dubbed “Dunk City” became the first No. 15 seed to win two NCAA games. FGCU’s run was worth a total of \$4.76 million — triple what the league normally gets from one tournament — and the conference banked another unit the next season when Mercer upset Duke.

Conference members voted to invest the unexpected revenue into campus video production equipment so the league’s games could be shown live on ESPN’s streaming service, Gumbart said. It’s a long way from SEC Network-level exposure, but Gumbart said having a consistent platform for fans to watch helps recruiting.

“That was a difference-maker that would have been a three- to five-year project,” he said. “And with that money we were able to say, ‘Hey, rather than just give it to the schools and they use it on scholarships and it runs out, what can we do with a long lasting impact?’”

America East Conference schools made similar investments. This year, the conference will start to cash in on UMBC’s unprecedented upset of overall top seed Virginia last year, the first No. 16 seed to beat a 1 in the men’s tournament, a one-game jackpot worth at least \$1.68 million delivered by a commuter school known more for competitive chess than hoops.

The investments also help sports that don’t make money on their own stay competitive for recruits and titles, said American East Commissioner Amy Huchthausen.

The Southern Conference hoped to create a fund that would incentivize members to improve their basketball programs after Steph Curry and Davidson generated an extra \$4.2 million by reaching the Elite Eight in 2008, SoCon Commissioner John Iamarino said. Instead, the recession hit and the money was distributed back to its schools to simply help make ends meet. Davidson got an extra share as a bonus.

With exit and entrance fees paid during conference realignment, the Southern Conference finally created that incentive program and Iamarino said it might have paved the way for the league’s best season in recent memory.

SoCon champion Wofford earned a No. 7 seed in the NCAA Tournament and runner-up UNC Greens-



boro just missed an at-large bid. Wofford then beat Seton Hall in first round before losing a close game to Kentucky on Saturday, yielding at least \$3.39 million total. Iamarino said the extra money from Wofford's victory could lead the SoCon to restart the incentive fund.

Conferences are more concerned than ever about occasionally landing an extra at-large bid, and not just hoping to spring a major upset to earn a bigger piece of the pie.

"If that window of opportunity is shrinking for all of us ... it really becomes an elevated concern more than it probably has been in the past," Huchthausen said.

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Associated Press data journalist Larry Fenn contributed to this report.

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More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/MarchMadness> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Trump says investigation abused him, led to 'evil things'

By MARY CLARE JALONICK Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — House Democrats pressed the Justice Department to provide the full report from special counsel Robert Mueller even as Republicans gleefully called for them to "move on" from the Russia investigation. President Donald Trump accused those responsible for launching Mueller's probe of "treasonous things against our country" and said they "certainly will be looked into."

Trump said the release of Mueller's full report "wouldn't bother me at all," and Democrats quickly put that statement to the test, demanding that his administration hand over the entire document and not just Sunday's four-page summary from Attorney General William Barr.

Six House Democratic committee chairmen wrote to Barr that his summary is "not sufficient" and asked to have Mueller's full report by April 2. They also want to begin receiving the underlying evidence the same day. The information is "urgently needed by our committees to perform their duties under the Constitution," they wrote, implying that the information would be subpoenaed if it is not turned over by the deadline.

Barr said in his letter to Congress that Mueller did not find that Trump's campaign "conspired or coordinated" with the Russian government to influence the 2016 presidential election — knocking down arguments from Democrats who have long claimed there was evidence of such collusion.

But he also said Mueller reached no conclusion on whether Trump obstructed the federal investigation, instead setting out "evidence on both sides" of the question and stating that "while this report does not conclude the president committed a crime, it also does not exonerate him." Absent a recommendation from Mueller, Barr stepped in and decided there wasn't sufficient evidence to establish that the president obstructed justice. Democrats said Barr's judgment is not the final word.

"All I'm interested in is them releasing the full report, the full Mueller report," said House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, D-Calif.

Despite Mueller's refusal to exonerate Trump, his spokesmen and leading congressional Republicans all claimed total vindication for the president. Questioned by reporters, Trump said he welcomed Mueller's results but complained he had been abused by the investigation occurring at all and taking too long.

"We can never let this happen to another president again," he said. "There are a lot of people out there that have done some very evil things, very bad things, I would say treasonous things against our country."

"Those people will certainly be looked at. I've been looking at them for a long time. And I'm saying, why haven't they been looked at? They lied to Congress. Many of them you know who they are."

He didn't name names, but Trump has railed against former Justice Department officials, including former FBI Director James Comey, accusing them of an illegal witch hunt for the purpose of delegitimizing his presidency. He has also falsely claimed that the investigation was based on memos compiled by former British spy Christopher Steele, and even blamed Sen. John McCain, who died last year, for passing the memos to the FBI.

The investigation began months before the FBI saw the dossier — and the FBI already had a copy by the time McCain turned it in.



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Trump signaled Tuesday that he also faults the media, tweeting that "For two years they pushed the Russian Collusion Delusion when they always knew there was No Collusion. They truly are the Enemy of the People and the Real Opposition Party!"

He said the "The Mainstream Media is under fire and being scorned all over the World as being corrupt and FAKE."

On Monday, after a series of evening strategy meetings, Democrats vowed to continue their multiple investigations into Trump, perhaps with shifted focus. House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff, the California Democrat who has become a focus of Republicans' post-Mueller ire, said he is "circumspect about how much more we will be able to find on issues that he thoroughly investigated," but said Mueller's conclusion would not affect his own committee's counterintelligence probes.

"There may be other corrupt meetings between the Trump campaign and the Russians, there may be other profound financial conflicts of interest that are not mentioned in the Mueller report, and there may be unanswered questions even within what he did examine," Schiff said.

Democrats signaled that they will curtail some public focus, at least, from their investigations of Trump and try to keep attention on their policy goals. Pelosi was scheduled to hold a news conference Tuesday on health care legislation, Democrats' top campaign issue.

Rhode Island Rep. David Cicilline, a member of Democratic leadership, said he has been encouraging colleagues to talk about those policy issues like health care and infrastructure.

"We need to talk about the work we are doing on these really important economic issues that matter in people's lives," Cicilline said. "We're doing the work, but we need to be more effective about sharing that" and not just responding to questions about corruption and Mueller's investigation.

Democrats seem less likely to engage in the impeachment talk that has been amplified on Pelosi's left flank. Pelosi has tried to scuttle that talk by saying she's not for impeachment, for now.

But Mueller's report hasn't dissuaded some of Trump's fiercest critics among the new Democratic lawmakers who helped flip the House from Republican control. Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., is still planning to introduce her resolution calling for the Judiciary Committee to investigate grounds for Trump's impeachment.

Meanwhile, GOP lawmakers called for Congress to move on. "This is done with," said House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy. "It is time for the country to move forward."

Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, the No. 2 House Republican, said Democrats don't want facts, "They just want to change the outcome of the 2016 election."

At the same time, however, Republicans followed Trump's lead in looking into how the investigation began. Senate Judiciary Committee Chairman Lindsey Graham promised to "unpack the other side of the story" of the Russia investigation, including the actions of the Justice Department.

The South Carolina Republican also had a warning for Trump, saying that if Trump used his pardon power to help those who were ensnared by Mueller's investigation, "it would not play well."



**President Donald Trump listens to a question as he speaks with reporters before boarding Marine One on the South Lawn of the White House, Friday, March 22, 2019, in Washington.** (AP Photo/Evan Vucci)

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Among those Mueller charged during the course of his investigation were the president's former campaign chairman, Paul Manafort, and his first national security adviser, Michael Flynn. Five Trump aides pleaded guilty and a sixth, longtime confidant Roger Stone, is awaiting trial on charges that he lied to Congress and engaged in witness tampering.

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaró, Catherine Lucey, Jill Colvin, Alan Fram, Mike Balsamo and Padmananda Rama contributed to this report.

Follow all of AP's Trump Investigations coverage at <https://apnews.com/TrumpInvestigations>.

## Avenatti hit with Nike extortion claims, other charges

By BRIAN MELLEY and LARRY NEUMEISTER Associated Press

LOS ANGELES (AP) — A year ago, Michael Avenatti's star was rising as the combative, media-savvy lawyer representing porn actress Stormy Daniels in her legal battles against President Donald Trump.

He hammered the president as a regular fixture on cable news and baited and bashed critics on Twitter while flirting with his own run for the White House.

Those days seemed like a distant memory as Avenatti was arrested Monday and federal prosecutors on both coasts announced charges that could send him to prison for the rest of his life.

Avenatti tried to shake down Nike for as much as \$25 million by using his prominent position to threaten the company with bad publicity, federal prosecutors said. He was also accused of stealing a client's settlement money to pay his own expenses and filing fake tax returns to get \$4 million in loans from a Mississippi bank to fund a lavish lifestyle.

He was arrested at a New York law firm where he had gone to meet with Nike executives. It was just minutes after he tweeted that he planned to hold a news conference Tuesday to "disclose a major high school/college basketball scandal perpetrated by @Nike that we have uncovered."

"When lawyers use their law licenses as weapons, as a guise to extort payments for themselves, they are no longer acting as attorneys. They are acting as criminals," said Geoffrey S. Berman, the U.S. attorney in New York.

Prosecutors in New York said their investigation began only last week while California investigators had been building a tax case against Avenatti for more than a year.

The allegations "paint an ugly picture of lawless conduct and greed," said U.S. Attorney Nick Hanna in Los Angeles. Avenatti describes himself on Twitter as "fighter for good," but the accusations describe "a corrupt lawyer who instead fights for his own selfish interests."

Avenatti, 48, was ordered released on \$300,000 bond after a brief court appearance Monday evening in New York. He did not enter a plea. Emerging from the courthouse, he said he expected to be cleared of the charges.

"For the entirety of my career, I have fought against the powerful. Powerful people and powerful corporations. I will never stop fighting that good fight," he said. "I am highly confident that when all the evidence is laid bare in connection with these cases, when it is all known, when due process occurs, that I will be fully exonerated and justice will be done."

Avenatti's fame from the Daniels case made him a leading figure in the anti-Trump movement, with relentless cable news appearances, a hard-punching style and a knack for obtaining information about others' wrongdoing.

His sharp reversal of fortune led critics to hit back on Twitter. Donald Trump Jr., whom Avenatti inaccurately predicted would be charged in the investigation into ties between his father's 2016 presidential campaign and Russia, gloated.

"Good news for my friend @MichaelAvenatti, if you plead fast enough, you might just get to share a cell with Michael Cohen!" he wrote, referring to the former Trump lawyer set to go to prison next month for crimes that include orchestrating hush-money payments to Daniels. Trump Jr. mocked Avenatti by ending

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with the lawyer's trademark hashtag #basta, an Italian word meaning "enough."

Prosecutors said Avenatti and a co-conspirator initially approached Nike on behalf of a client who coached an Amateur Athletic Union basketball program sponsored by the company in California.

They claimed to have evidence of misconduct by Nike employees and threatened to hold a news conference last week on the eve of a company's quarterly earnings call and the start of the NCAA tournament. Avenatti told Nike the company could either pay them \$15 million to \$25 million to investigate the allegations, or pay him more than \$22 million for his silence, the criminal complaint said.

Two people familiar with the investigation confirmed the unidentified co-conspirator was Mark Geragos, a Los Angeles criminal defense lawyer known for his work with celebrities. The people spoke on condition of anonymity because the information was not made public by prosecutors.

Geragos, a CNN contributor, has a client list that has included Michael Jackson, Winona Ryder, Scott Peterson, Colin Kaepernick and most recently Jussie Smollett, the actor accused of fabricating a racist, anti-gay attack in Chicago. Geragos did not respond to messages seeking comment. Within hours, CNN cut ties with him.

While lawyers sometimes make demands to seek out-of-court settlements, it crosses the line to extortion if they threaten to go public with damaging information to get something of value or gain leverage in a civil dispute, attorney Neema Rahmani said.

"The Department of Justice historically has been very cautious when charging attorneys, so they likely have evidence that Avenatti seriously crossed this line," said Rahmani, a former federal prosecutor.

Nike officials told investigators Avenatti claimed to know of rules violations by an amateur basketball team sponsored by Nike. Executives immediately reported the threats to federal authorities.

The company "firmly believes in ethical and fair play, both in business and sports, and will continue to assist the prosecutors," Nike said in a statement.

Avenatti rose to national prominence by representing Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, in a lawsuit to break a confidentiality agreement to speak about her alleged affair with Trump. He also made headlines in recent weeks representing two women who accused R&B star R. Kelly of sexual abuse.

Daniels said she was "saddened but not shocked" by the arrest. She issued a statement Monday on Twitter saying she fired Avenatti a month ago after "discovering that he had dealt with me extremely dishonestly." She said she would not elaborate.

While Avenatti's lawsuit effectively tore up the gag order that threatened financial penalties if Daniels spoke about the case, a defamation lawsuit filed on her behalf against Trump backfired, and a court ordered her to pay the president's \$293,000 in legal fees.



**FILE - In this Nov. 14, 2018, file photo, Michael Avenatti speaks to the media outside the Los Angeles Police Department Pacific Division after posting bail for a felony domestic violence charge. U.S. prosecutors announced Monday, March 25, 2019 they have charged Avenatti with extortion and bank and wire fraud. A spokesman for the U.S. attorney in Los Angeles said Avenatti was arrested Monday in New York.** (AP Photo/Michael Owen Baker, File)



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Avenatti himself has been dogged with tax and financial troubles in recent years.

A U.S. bankruptcy court ordered his former firm to pay \$10 million to a lawyer who claimed it had misstated its profits.

The bank fraud case involved \$4 million in loans he got from The Peoples Bank in Biloxi, which prosecutors said he obtained by filing fraudulent tax returns claiming \$14 million in income over three years. However, he never filed tax returns those years, nor paid the \$2.8 million he reported on the forms. In fact, he still owed more than \$850,000 to the IRS at the time for previous income.

Mark Pearson, the assistant agent in charge of IRS criminal investigations in Los Angeles, said Avenatti's crimes supported a \$200,000-a-month lifestyle, a car racing venture and pricey homes in the wealthy Orange County communities of Newport Beach and Laguna Beach.

Convictions on all charges carry up to 47 years in the New York case and 50 years in the California case, prosecutors said.

Melley reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Jim Mustian in New York, Michael Balsamo in Washington and John Antczak in Los Angeles also contributed to this report.

## Mapping pot legalization politics: Not just red vs. blue

By JENNIFER PELTZ Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — To anyone who figured the path of legalizing recreational marijuana use ran along blue state-red state lines, a sudden setback for pot advocates in New Jersey may show the issue isn't so black-and-white.

Leaders in solidly-blue New Jersey are vowing it will still become the 11th state to legalize the drug. But when a state Senate vote was abruptly put off Monday because it didn't have enough support, the delay was a reminder that the politics of pot legalization aren't purely partisan. The key question instead can be whether voters or legislators are making the decision, experts say.

"It's a good illustration that even in a state that's entirely Democratically controlled, it's not obvious that it would be passed — or that it would be easy," says Daniel Mallinson, a Penn State Harrisburg professor who studies how marijuana legalization and other policies spread among states.

Since voters in the states of Colorado and Washington decided in 2012 to let adults use marijuana for fun, legalization has traveled a route that looks — from a distance — something like the red-and-blue maps that frame many a U.S. political conversation.

Residents of Democratic states on the West Coast and parts of the Northeast, for instance, have said yes, as has the District of Columbia. Lawmakers in Republican-led North Dakota and Arizona have said no.

But look closer, and the trend isn't so clear. Voters in Ruby-red Alaska OK'd recreational pot in 2014, while legalization fizzled this year in the state legislature in deeply Democratic Hawaii. Several states where it passed — like Massachusetts, Michigan and Vermont — are less blue than purple, with governors and legislative leaders of different parties.

And overall, 61 percent of American adults say marijuana should be legal, including majorities of Republicans and Democrats, according to the General Social Survey conducted by NORC at the University of Chicago.

The Democratic governors and legislature leaders of New York and New Jersey have been jostling to make their states next in line to legalize, but the effort hasn't gone as smoothly as they might have hoped.

New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo aimed to pass marijuana legalization in the budget due April 1, but the issue may well linger until later this spring. Open questions include how to handle clearing past convictions and how to ensure that minority communities that bore the brunt of criminalization get potential opportunities in the marijuana business.

Those are also among the sticking points that prompted the New Jersey Senate to postpone Monday's planned vote, which would fulfill a campaign promise from Gov. Phil Murphy. Senate President Steve Sweeney insisted it would still pass eventually but didn't say when a vote might come.



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Opponents see the development as an important victory.

"This is really going to send a strong signal nationwide that legalization is not inevitable," even in Democrat-dominated states, says Kevin Sabet, a former Obama administration drug-policy adviser who now heads Smart Approaches to Marijuana, an anti-legalization group.

Pot advocates, meanwhile, say they don't expect it to be easy to change policy about a drug that was illegal in all 50 states for decades, and still is in the federal government's view.

"It's not surprising that lawmakers are moving slowly and cautiously," said Mason Tvert, a spokesman for the pro-legalization Marijuana Policy Project.

Nine of the 10 states that have legalized recreational marijuana did so through voter referendums — not through their legislatures. Vermont is the exception.

To marijuana-policy experts, that's a more telling divide than a state's place on the partisan map.

"I actually see this as a populist-movement-vs.-representative (body) issue," says Andrew Freedman, who helped set up Colorado's recreational-pot program and now consults governments on doing so.

Why the difference? In part, voters are usually presented with more general propositions, with regulations to be fleshed out later, while legislators are likely weighing more details — and political considerations, experts say.

"A vote of the people is much more aspirational in terms of what you want your state to look like, and the vote to implement is much more what your state will look like. And then you have to own the outcome," Freedman says.

"When you start to talk about: how are you going to ensure minority-owned businesses, or what level of tax rates, or suddenly a representative has to go talk to their chief of police who is against it ... there's a lot of political risk for an elected official," he added.

For all that, lawmakers in 21 states at least proposed legalizing marijuana last year, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures.

"It's not an exclusive discussion to blue states or red states," says Karmen Hanson, a cannabis policy analyst for the group. "States are talking about it in the rainbow of red, blue and purple."

Peltz is a member of AP's marijuana beat team. Follow AP's complete marijuana coverage: <https://ap-news.com/Marijuana> .



**FILE - In this Friday, March 22, 2019, file photo, a marijuana plant is visible at Compassionate Care Foundation's medical marijuana dispensary in Egg Harbor Township, N.J. A setback for marijuana advocates in New Jersey may show that the path of legalizing recreational marijuana use doesn't run just along blue state-red state lines. Democrat-led New Jersey could still become the 11th state to legalize the drug, though a state Senate vote was put off Monday because it didn't have enough support. The delay is a reminder that pot legalization politics aren't just partisan.**

(AP Photo/Julio Cortez, File)

## 10 Things to Know for Today

By The Associated Press undefined

Your daily look at late-breaking news, upcoming events and the stories that will be talked about today:

### 1. HOUSE VOTE TO STOP TRUMP'S BORDER PLAN UNLIKELY TO SUCCEED

The vote to override the president's first veto seems certain to fail, which means his declaration of a national emergency at the Mexican border would stand.

### 2. HOUSE COMMITTEES PRESS FOR MUELLER REPORT

Trump says the release of Russia investigation findings "wouldn't bother me at all," and Democrats put that statement to the test, demanding that his administration hand over the entire document.

### 3. TENSE CALM IN GAZA

A quiet takes hold after a night of heavy fire as Israeli aircraft bombed targets across the Gaza Strip and Palestinian militants fired rockets into Israel.

### 4. AVENATTI HIT BY NIKE EXTORTION CLAIMS

The famed attorney tried to shake down the sneaker giant for as much as \$25 million by using his prominent position to threaten the company with bad publicity, federal prosecutors say.

### 5. BUTTIGIEG GAINS WITH CROWDS, TV SPOTS AND CAMPAIGN CASH

Saying "the buzz helps," the mayor of a midsized Indiana town is building his national profile as he pursues a longshot bid for the White House.

### 6. WHITE HOUSE, BUSINESS GROUPS PRESS NEW US-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE PACT

But prospects are uncertain given that Republicans are at odds with some aspects of the plan and Democrats are in no hurry to secure a political victory for Trump.

### 7. WHEN BLUE AND RED IS NOT BLACK AND WHITE

A setback for marijuana advocates in New Jersey may show that the path of legalizing recreational marijuana use doesn't run just along blue state-red state lines.

### 8. WHAT APPLE'S BIG REVEAL LEFT OUT

The tech giant's announcements lack some key details, such as pricing for its new streaming TV service and the terms of its own branded credit card.

### 9. 'PROPER PINA COLADAS ON ME FELLAS!'

UFC superstar Conor McGregor announces his retirement on social media, abruptly ending his remarkable fighting career.

### 10. MONEY MADNESS: DISPARITY IN NCAA PAYOUTS

An AP analysis of more than \$3 billion in NCAA Tournament money paid out over more than 20 years shows power conferences hoard most of the revenue.



**A Palestinian girl looks out from her family house at the damaged offices of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, in Gaza City, Tuesday, March 26, 2019. A tense quiet took hold Tuesday morning after a night of heavy fire as Israeli aircraft bombed targets across the Gaza Strip and Gaza militants fired rockets into Israel in what threatened to devolve into a major conflict two weeks before the Israeli election.** (AP Photo/Adel Hana)

## House vote to stop Trump's border wall plan likely to fail

By ALAN FRAM Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — President Donald Trump is nearing a victory over Democrats as the House tries overriding his first veto, a vote that seems certain to fail and would let stand his declaration of a national emergency at the Mexican border.

Tuesday's vote would keep the border emergency intact, which for now would let him shift an additional \$3.6 billion from military construction projects to work on a barrier along the southwest boundary. Building the wall was one of his most oft-repeated campaign promises, though he claimed the money would come from Mexico, not taxpayers.

Trump's emergency declaration drew unanimous opposition from congressional Democrats and opposition from some Republicans, especially in the Senate, where lawmakers objected that he was abusing presidential powers.

But while Congress approved a resolution voiding Trump's move, the margins by which the House and Senate passed the measure fell well short of the two-thirds majorities that will be needed to override the veto. That's expected to happen again when the House votes Tuesday.

"The president will be fine in the House," said Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., in a brief interview. "The veto will not be overridden."

Even with his veto remaining intact, Trump may not be able to spend the money for barriers quickly because of lawsuits that might take years to resolve.

Tuesday's vote was coming as Trump claimed a different political triumph after Attorney General William Barr said special counsel Robert Mueller had ended his two-year investigation without evidence of collusion by Trump's 2016 campaign with the Russian government.

Democrats were hoping to use the border emergency battle in upcoming campaigns, both to symbolize Trump's harsh immigration stance and claim he was hurting congressional districts around the country.

The Pentagon sent lawmakers a list last week of hundreds of military construction projects that might be cut to pay for barrier work. Though the list was tentative, Democrats were asserting that GOP lawmakers were endangering local bases to pay for the wall.

Congress, to which the Constitution assigned control over spending, voted weeks ago to provide less than \$1.4 billion for barriers. Opponents warned that besides usurping Congress' role in making spending decisions, Trump was inviting future Democratic presidents to circumvent lawmakers by declaring emergencies to finance their own favored initiatives.

Trump supporters said he was simply acting under a 1976 law that lets presidents declare national



**FILE - In this March 15, 2019, file photo, President Donald Trump signs the first veto of his presidency in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington. Trump issued the first veto, overruling Congress to protect his emergency declaration for border wall funding. Trump is nearing a victory over Democrats as the House tries overriding his first veto. Tuesday's vote seems certain to fail, which means his declaration of a national emergency at the Mexican border would stand.** (AP Photo/Evan Vucci, File)



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emergencies. Trump's declaration was the 60th presidential emergency under that statute, but the first aimed at spending that Congress explicitly denied, according to New York University's Brennan Center for Justice, which tracks the law.

The House approved the resolution blocking Trump's emergency by 245-182 in February. On Tuesday, Trump opponents will need to reach 288 votes to prevail.

Just 13 Republicans opposed Trump in February, around 1 in 15. Another 30 would have to defect to override his veto.

This month, the GOP-led Senate rebuked Trump with a 59-41 vote blocking his declaration after the failure of a Republican effort to reach a compromise with the White House. Republicans were hoping to avoid a confrontation with him for fear of alienating pro-Trump voters.

Twelve GOP senators, nearly 1 in 4, ended up opposing him.

If the House vote fails, the Senate won't attempt its own override and the veto will stand.

## **New trade deal getting a boost from Trump, business groups**

**By KEVIN FREKING Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — The White House and business groups are stepping up efforts to win congressional approval for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade accord. But prospects are uncertain given that Republicans are at odds with some aspects of the plan and Democrats are in no hurry to secure a political victory for the president.

President Donald Trump will meet with GOP lawmakers Tuesday to try to kick-start the process for rounding up votes on Capitol Hill. Supporters in Congress and business groups say they have a narrow window to push it through, given that lawmakers tend to avoid tough trade votes during election season.

Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., the chairman of the House subcommittee that has jurisdiction over trade, said the pact needs adjustments to be "worthy of support."

Some Republican lawmakers also have concerns. Sen. Chuck Grassley of Iowa, the Republican chairman of the Senate Finance Committee, maintains that the president should lift steel and aluminum tariffs on products brought in from Canada and Mexico as a first step to getting the trade agreement through Congress.

Trump's top trade negotiator, Robert Lighthizer, told lawmakers during a recent congressional hearing that if they don't pass the trade agreement, the United States will have "no credibility at all" with future trading partners, including China.

"There is no trade program in the United States if we don't pass USMCA. There just isn't one," Lighthizer said.

The White House's legislative affairs team has talked to more than 290 members of Congress and staff over the past two months to push the deal. But the administration knows that making changes in the agreement to win over lawmakers could jeopardize support for the pact from Canada and Mexico.

Sen. Joni Ernst, R-Iowa, told reporters recently that many in her state's agricultural community are "still with the president, but if we don't get the trade deals done, they could turn quickly."

She said, "We need to start wrapping this baby up."

The trade deal is designed to supplant the North American Free Trade Agreement, which took effect in 1994 and gradually eliminated tariffs on goods produced and traded within North America.

U.S. trade with its NAFTA partners has more than tripled since the agreement took effect, and more rapidly than trade with the rest of the world.

But Trump has called NAFTA a disaster for the United States. The new pact his administration negotiated is meant to increase manufacturing in the United States. Trump is warning that if lawmakers don't approve the pact, the U.S. may revert to what he has described as "pre-NAFTA."

Blumenauer is looking to make changes to the agreement in four areas: enhancing environmental and labor protections, ensuring enforcement of the agreement, and taking on protections for pharmaceutical companies that he believes drive up drug costs for consumers.



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"I don't think anyone wants to blow it up, but there is interest in strengthening it," Blumenauer said.

Rep. Vern Buchanan of Florida, the ranking Republican on the trade subcommittee, said he believes the vast majority of Republicans will end up voting for the agreement. He's tried to assure Democratic colleagues that Republicans were "open-minded to try and get some things done" to address their concerns.

"You put a lot of jobs at risk if this blows up," Buchanan said.

Vanessa Sciarra, a vice president at the National Foreign Trade Council, said it's too soon to tell how the vote will shake out.

Sciarra said one thing lawmakers don't want to see is Trump make good on a threat to withdraw from NAFTA if he can't get Congress to ratify the pact.

"Never has NAFTA been so popular," Sciarra said.

Canadian officials have been lobbying the U.S. to end Trump's steel and aluminum tariffs and have suggested that approval by Canada's Parliament could be conditioned upon them being lifted. David MacNaughton, Ottawa's ambassador to Washington, has said it will be a tough sell to pass if the tariffs are still in place.

Dan Ujcz, a trade lawyer and Canada-U.S. specialist in Columbus, Ohio, said the trade deal could pass "relatively quickly" once the tariffs are removed.

In Mexico, the administration of then-President Enrique Peña Nieto spearheaded Mexico's negotiations, but representatives of current President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador were deeply involved in the talks to ensure an agreement that both the outgoing and incoming administrations could live with.

Allies of Lopez Obrador, who took office Dec. 1, enjoy a large majority in the Mexican Senate, so passage of the agreement would seemingly go smoothly.

Kenneth Smith Ramos, who was chief negotiator for Peña Nieto's government and now works as an international trade consultant at Mexico City-based AGON, said Mexican enthusiasm for the deal could dim though if there are significant new demands on labor, pharmaceuticals, the environment or other issues.

"We made some important concessions," he said, adding that if "the U.S. still wants more, then that starts to unbalance the agreement and there may be a growing opposition in Mexico."

Associated Press writers Lisa Mascaro in Washington, Rob Gillies in Toronto and Peter Orsi in Mexico City contributed to this report.



**FILE - In this Nov. 6, 2018, file photo, Rep. Earl Blumenauer, D-Ore., speaks in Portland, Ore. The White House and business groups are stepping up efforts to win congressional approval for the U.S.-Mexico-Canada trade accord. But prospects are uncertain given that Republicans are at odds with some aspects of the plan and Democrats are in no hurry to secure a political victory for the president.** (AP

Photo/Steve Dykes, File)

## Buttigieg gains with crowds, TV spots and campaign cash

By SARA BURNETT Associated Press

COLUMBIA, S.C. (AP) — Democratic presidential hopeful Pete Buttigieg is riding in the back of a rented minivan to his last event of the day in South Carolina, munching on cold french fries and critiquing his stage performance so far.

The enthusiastic crowds of hundreds who've packed his first two stops have been much larger than the 37-year-old mayor of South Bend, Indiana, and his team expected. It's "wonderful," he says, but the cheering and prolonged applause are messing with his delivery. Sometimes he neglects to pause, and his next words are drowned out. Other times people start clapping when he doesn't expect it.

"I need to relearn the timing of my stump speech," Buttigieg says. "I've been used to a format where I go in, there's 50 people, I do my little spiel and then we have some Q&A and hopefully they walk away impressed. Now every one of these things we put on the calendar as a meet and greet is turning out to be a rally."

Buttigieg, a veteran and Rhodes scholar, was the longest of long shots when he announced a presidential exploratory committee in January. No mayor has ever been elected president, much less one from a community of roughly 100,000 people in the middle of America, and Buttigieg is barely old enough to be eligible for the job.

But his underdog bid is gaining momentum, and the clean-cut guy known to most people as "Mayor Pete" can feel it. Now he has to figure out how to turn one of the first surprises of the nascent race for the Democratic nomination into a full-fledged presidential campaign — and one that isn't remembered as a mere quirk.

"The buzz helps," Buttigieg says. "But you want to make sure that you have enough substance and enough organization that any kind of flavor-of-the-month period is something you can outlive."

Besides the crowds and the cheering, Buttigieg has seen increasing national media attention, from Fox News to MSNBC and his second appearance on ABC's "The View." After a breakout performance in a CNN town hall earlier this month, Buttigieg's team says he raised roughly \$600,000 from 22,000 donors in just over 24 hours. He has now received enough individual contributions to qualify for a spot on the Democratic debate stage this summer.

But there's still plenty of work to do, starting with raising money and hiring staff. Buttigieg said his goal early on was to raise \$1 million by the end of the first quarter on March 31, adding, "We're definitely there." He's fairly confident they'll have the funds needed for a healthy operation, at least in the early stages. But he also wants to "show well" when all candidates' first-quarter totals become public — the first time this cycle that campaigns are required to file campaign finance reports.

"I think we benefit from the fact that it's graded on a curve," Buttigieg said. "No one is expecting us to raise as though I were a senator from Florida or from a big city. But we've got to show that we can compete at this level."

Buttigieg also plans to double the size of his roughly 20-person team in the new few weeks, in preparation for an official campaign launch. He doesn't have an advance team - those campaign staffers who coordinate events on-site before the candidate arrives, hang campaign signs and ensure someone is capturing emails and phone numbers for every person who walks in the door.

Volunteers and local Democratic officials handled most of those duties during Buttigieg's swing Saturday through South Carolina, site of the South's first primary. Instead of professionally printed banners, someone hung poster boards with messages handwritten in black marker urging attendees to tweet photos and video using several different hashtags and Twitter handles. When Buttigieg took questions from the crowd in Rock Hill, there were no microphones for people in the audience, forcing him to ask a woman at the back of the gymnasium to shout her question — twice — so he could hear.

None of that seemed to bother voters. After his event in Columbia, Christina Goodwin, 32, called Buttigieg "exciting" and said he'd moved into her top three list, along with Sens. Kamala Harris and Kirsten Gillibrand, despite her misgivings about supporting another white man for president in 2020.

Goodwin, like other voters, said she's been picking up bits of intriguing information about Buttigieg

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through social media that have piqued her interest. That he learned to speak Norwegian, for instance, so he could read more books by a Norwegian author, Erlend Loe. Buttigieg, who speaks seven languages, demonstrated some of his language skills when a Norwegian media crew showed up to ask questions after the Columbia event. (He also speaks French, Italian, Spanish, Arabic, Dari and Maltese, the language of his father's home country.)

Buttigieg also plays piano and has been known to join local performers on stage in South Bend — video of which sometimes pops up on social media. When he was applying to his alma mater, Harvard, he won the Profiles in Courage essay contest with a piece about an independent then-congressman from Vermont whom he admired: Bernie Sanders. They would speak years later, when the senator called in 2017 to encourage him to drop out of the race for Democratic National Committee chairman, which Buttigieg later did.

Buttigieg believes he's gaining support because people are looking for something different and a more hopeful message to combat President Donald Trump.

The openly gay former lieutenant in the Navy Reserve uses his stump speech to talk about how political decisions have shaped his life, and how much is at stake in 2020. He recalls writing a letter to his family before he deployed to Afghanistan in 2014 so they could read it if he didn't return. He also talks about his marriage to his husband, which "exists by the grace of a single vote on the U.S. Supreme Court" - a line that generated some of his biggest applause during his trip through South Carolina.

Friends Catherine Paquin, 36, and Jonah Burrell, 37, attended Buttigieg's stop in Greenville wearing "Mayor Pete 2020" T-shirts they bought off Amazon.com.

Burrell, who is gay, said it's "really cool" to have an openly gay man in the race, but it's not the main reason he's supporting Buttigieg.

"That calm demeanor, the way he speaks is smart," Burrell said. "You can tell he thinks about all his answers. He's done his research."

And those doubters who say Buttigieg doesn't stand a chance?

"I think they underestimate him," Paquin said.

Wrapping up his remarks in Greenville, Buttigieg noted that's happening less these days than it did a few months ago, when hardly anyone knew his name.

"I don't know whether we can pull this off, but I'm feeling pretty good about it," he said.



**In this March 23, 2019, photo, South Bend Mayor Pete Buttigieg speaks to a crowd about his presidential run during the Democratic monthly breakfast at the Circle of Friends Community Center in Greenville, S.C. Buttigieg was the longest of long shots when he announced a presidential exploratory committee in January. But now the underdog bid is gaining momentum, and Buttigieg can feel it.** (AP Photo/

Richard Shiro)



## Australian party accused of asking US gun lobby for money

By ROD McGUIRK Associated Press

CANBERRA, Australia (AP) — Australia's prime minister on Tuesday accused an influential minor political party of trying to "sell Australia's gun laws to the highest bidders" by asking the U.S. gun lobby for donations.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison was responding to an Al Jazeera documentary that reported One Nation party officials Steve Dickson and James Ashby flew to the United States for meetings with pro-gun interests including the National Rifle Association and political donors Koch Industries in September last year seeking money to undermine Australian gun laws.

Dickson and Ashby later told reporters that they had not secured any U.S. money. They also said they had been quoted by Al Jazeera out of context and often after drinking.

The trip took place weeks before the Australian Parliament banned foreign political donations with laws that took effect Jan. 1.

Morrison said the revelations were reasons why Australians should not vote for One Nation at general elections due in May.

"We have reports that One Nation officials basically sought to sell Australia's gun laws to the highest bidders to a foreign buyer and I find that abhorrent," Morrison said.

Morrison said his government had made laws to "criminalize taking foreign political donations so foreign lobbyists cannot seek to influence our politics."

Opposition leader Bill Shorten, whom opinion polls suggest will be prime minister after the election, accused One Nation of a "betrayal of the Australian political system."

"The idea of One National political party operatives going to the United States, seeking millions of dollars, promising to water-down gun law protection in Australia — that was absolutely horrifying," Shorten said.

The Al Jazeera documentary used secret recordings made by a journalist posing as gun lobbyist Rodger Muller with a hidden camera.

One Nation, an anti-Muslim party that had four senators after 2016 election but has been left with two after defections, said in a statement that all party members "have always complied with the law."

One Nation also suggested the Qatar-owned Al Jazeera had breached new laws that prohibit covert foreign interference in Australian politics. The party said it had had complained to Australia's main domestic security agency and police "due to concerns of foreign interference into Australian politics in the lead up to the imminent federal election."

"Al Jazeera are a state owned propaganda arm of the Qatari government that supports Islamic extremist groups and are not a legitimate media organization," the statement said.

"One Nation was invited by Rodger Muller, who has now been outed as a foreign agent working for Al Jazeera to meet with the NRA, American business leaders and attend the Congressional Sportsmen's



**FILE - In this Feb. 13, 2019, file photo Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison addresses media at Parliament House in Canberra. Morrison, on Tuesday, March 26, 2019, accused an influential minor political party of trying to "sell Australia's gun laws to the highest bidders" by asking the U.S. gun lobby for donations.** (AP Photos/Rod McGuirk, File)



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Dinner" in Washington, the statement said.

The NRA did not respond to a request for comment on Tuesday.

Ashby, who is party leader Pauline Hanson's chief of staff, is recorded saying that the party would "own" both the Australian Senate and House of Representatives with a \$20 million donation from the U.S. gun lobby. This means the party would hold the balance of power in both chambers and influence a government's legislative agenda.

Ashby also warned that if such a donation became public, it would "rock the boat."

He told reporters on Tuesday that the U.S. trip had been a fact-finding mission to learn campaign tactics.

"These conversations with the NRA were to look at nothing more than their techniques. This was not about sourcing money from the NRA. This was about sourcing technology, sourcing an understanding of how they operate, but never was it about seeking \$20 million dollars from the NRA," Ashby told reporters.

The news followed the mosque attacks in New Zealand on March 15 for which an Australian white supremacist has been charged with murder. New Zealand has responded by banning a range of semi-automatic weapons and foreshadowing a government-funded buyback of newly outlawed guns. The country's response is similar to how Australia strengthened its gun laws following the murders of 35 people by a lone gunman in 1996 in Tasmania.

One Nation state president Steve Dickson, who is a Senate candidate at the next election, traveled with Ashby and Muller to the United States to ask for political donations, Al Jazeera reported.

Dickson told NRA officials that the Australian gun control model "will poison us all, unless we stop it," Al Jazeera reported.

Dickson told reporters on Tuesday he supported Australia's gun laws. He said had not solicited donations in the United States, but conceded his party was not wealthy.

"I will tell you the absolute, humble truth. When I was asked: 'Do we need money to run election campaigns?' I said: 'Yes,'" Dickson told reporters.

A former One Nation senator who is now an independent lawmaker, Fraser Anning, has been widely criticized for blaming Muslim immigration for the New Zealand massacre.

Hanson, One Nation's leader who was criticized for wearing a burqa in the Senate, voted for the ban on foreign donations in November.

"Overseas money should not have an influence in our political scene .... so I believe foreign donations should be stopped," Hanson told the Senate.

Ashby and Dickson said Hanson did not speak to the media on Tuesday because she was unwell.

## **Pentagon to defend projects targeted by Trump border project**

**By LOLITA C. BALDOR Associated Press**

WASHINGTON (AP) — Top defense leaders are expected to get a barrage of questions when they face worried lawmakers on Capitol Hill for the first time since the Pentagon spelled out the military construction projects that could lose funding this year to pay for President Donald Trump's border wall.

A number of Congress members have already expressed unhappiness with Pentagon plans that could divert funding from as many as 150 projects, totaling more than \$4.3 billion, across the country and the world.

Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan is slated to testify Tuesday at a House Armed Services Committee hearing along with Gen. Joseph Dunford, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Early last week Shanahan sent Congress a detailed list of projects that could be tapped.

Defense officials have repeatedly said that any projects that lose funding this year could be refunded next year. But some lawmakers have said they oppose any use of military construction money for barriers along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Both the House and Senate voted to overturn Trump's declaration of a national emergency to use construction money to fund the wall. Trump vetoed that bill.

A number of lawmakers also objected to the Pentagon's assumption that Congress would simply refund

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the affected projects next year, calling it a political maneuver to get Congress to pay for the wall.

"We take our oversight role very seriously, and will act as necessary to defend Congress' constitutional prerogatives in this matter," said Rep. Adam Smith, D-Wash., the chairman of the House panel. He said the committee looks forward to hearing Shanahan explain "how he intends to pilfer the military construction accounts, circumvent the intended nature of the law, while simultaneously abusing the trust of the American people."

Other lawmakers, such as the entire New Jersey congressional delegation, have written to Shanahan to defend the projects in their state. In their letter, they told Shanahan that they "adamantly oppose" diverting any money for a border barrier, adding that Congress, not the executive branch, has the power to appropriate funds for specific projects.

A plan to spend \$41 million at the Picatinny Arsenal's munitions disassembly complex in New Jersey is on the list of projects that could be affected.

The list Shanahan sent to the Hill included more than 400 projects worth about \$13 billion. But Shanahan has said that any money for military housing or barracks would not be touched, as well as any projects that will have contracts awarded before the end of this fiscal year, Sept. 30. When those projects are removed, about 150 remain.

Shanahan has also said that projects deemed necessary for military readiness or other high priorities will be protected. But those haven't been identified yet.

On Monday, Army Secretary Mark Esper told The Associated Press that he and other military service leaders will go through the list and work to protect critical projects.

"I will prioritize based on readiness, lethality and things like that," he said, noting that something like a training complex could be protected if it's designed to help soldiers face emerging threats from competitors such as Russia and China.

Esper added, however, that there are clearly some projects that could be used.

"I can tell you what's not a priority. It's the parking garage, the cemetery," Esper said, referring to two projects planned at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point in New York.

The garage could be affected, but the cemetery money would not be touched because the contract award date is June, and would therefore be exempt under rules set up by Shanahan.

At least half of the \$4.3 billion in vulnerable projects would affect U.S. military bases overseas or in Puerto Rico and Guam. And they include a vast cross-section of facilities, ranging from schools and maintenance facilities to shooting ranges, a cybersecurity center and a military working dog kennel.

Meanwhile, Shanahan has authorized the Army Corps of Engineers to begin planning and building 57



**Acting Defense Secretary Patrick Shanahan listens during a proclamation signing with President Donald Trump and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the Diplomatic Reception Room at the White House in Washington, Monday, March 25, 2019. Top defense leaders will face worried lawmakers on Capitol Hill for the first time since the Pentagon listed military construction projects that could lose funding this year to pay for President Donald Trump's border wall.** (AP Photo/Susan Walsh)

miles of 18-foot-high fencing in Yuma, Arizona, and El Paso, Texas, along the U.S. border with Mexico. The Pentagon says it will divert up to \$1 billion to support the Department of Homeland Security and Customs and Border Protection. The funding would also go toward installing lighting and constructing roads in those areas.

## AP study: MLB average salary on track for 2nd straight drop

By RONALD BLUM AP Baseball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Even with huge new contracts for Bryce Harper, Manny Machado and Nolan Arenado, Major League Baseball's average salary is on track to drop on opening day for an unprecedented second straight season, according to projections by The Associated Press.

The 872 players on rosters and injured lists on Monday evening averaged \$4.36 million, down from \$4.41 million at the start of last season and \$4.45 million on opening day in 2017, according to AP studies.

Back-to-back drops follow consecutive slow free-agent markets that saw salaries slashed for many veterans, and top pitchers Dallas Keuchel and Craig Kimbrel remain unsigned as openers approached.

This year's exact figure could rise or fall when teams set opening-day rosters Thursday. The number will be

impacted by how many players go on the injured list and how many lower-priced replacements are put on active rosters. In 2018, the average dropped slightly at the start when late-signing free agents Jake Arrieta of Philadelphia and Alex Cobb of Baltimore started the season in the minor leagues.

Last season's opening-day drop was only the second since the end of the 1994-95 strike, according to AP calculations, after a 2.7 percent decrease in 2004. The union determined its final average as \$4,095,686, down \$1,436 from 2017, while MLB's figure was \$4,007,987, up from \$3,955,920 in 2017. The union includes option buyouts in its average calculation while MLB does not.

Overall spending on big league payrolls fell last season for the first time since 2010, according to calculations by the commissioner's office, an \$18 million decrease to \$4.23 billion attributable to drug and domestic violence suspensions and a player retiring at midseason. The only previous drops since 2002 were by \$3 million in 2010 and by \$32 million in 2004.

Pitchers are the five highest-paid players, led by Washington's Max Scherzer at \$37.4 million and Arizona's Zack Greinke at \$32.4 million. Boston is set to lead the major leagues in payroll for the second straight year, followed by the Chicago Cubs and New York Yankees. For Scherzer and Greinke, deferred money is discounted to present-day value.

Stagnant-to-down salaries might not change in the next year. The 2019-20 free-agent class lost many of its most attractive players when Chris Sale, Justin Verlander, Nolan Arenado and Paul Goldschmidt agreed to new contracts during spring training. That left Gerrit Cole, Madison Bumgarner, Khris Davis, Xander Bogaerts, Didi Gregorius and Anthony Rendon to top the group for now.



**Philadelphia Phillies' Bryce Harper watches his single off Detroit Tigers starting pitcher Spencer Turnbull during the fourth inning of a spring training baseball game Wednesday, March 20, 2019, in Clearwater, Fla.** (AP Photo/Chris O'Meara)



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The players' association is angry over the marketplace and is embarking with management on an unprecedented early start to labor negotiations that could lead to major economic changes.

"Free agency is part of what drives baseball's economic system and it needs to remain a meaningful option for players going forward," union head Tony Clark said in a statement to the AP.

Scott Boras, an agent who prefers players to become free agents, advocates MLB and the union should adopt a "franchise player."

"Every club needs to allow designation of a luxury tax exception, and that is they get a player that they can sign who is not included in their luxury tax computation," he said Monday. "That way we're assured the teams can have a franchise player and many good players because every sports league should have Goliaths and every sports league should have Davids."

Los Angeles Angels outfielder Mike Trout was signed for two more years at \$66.5 million. Rather than wait, he agreed to a new \$426.5 million, 12-year deal last week, a record for total and average at just over \$35.5 million but a deal that actually lowered his 2019 figure from \$34.3 million to \$18.5 million.

As a free agent, the south New Jersey native likely could have averaged far more.

"I know there was a lot of talk about going back East and back to Philly, but I enjoy every minute being here," he said Sunday outside the Angels' ballpark in Anaheim. "I was going to be an Angel for life, for sure. ... I think spending your whole career with one team, I think it's pretty cool."

Staying with one team for his career also was a factor for Arenado, who agreed to a \$260 million, eight-year contract with the Colorado Rockies.

"The grass isn't always greener on the other side," he said. "I wasn't afraid of free agency. I didn't base my decision off that. I based my decision off of me wanting to be here."

Sale, the left-handed ace who helped Boston win its fourth title in 15 seasons, has been with the Red Sox for two seasons following his trade from the Chicago White Sox. A key for Sale was staying with a team that holds spring training in Fort Myers, Florida, where he lives in the offseason. Already guaranteed \$15 million in the final year of his previous contract, he agreed to a new contract for an additional \$145 million from 2020-24.

A left-hander who turns 30 next weekend, Sale was bothered by left shoulder inflammation last season. This locks in likely the biggest contract of his life.

"For me, the best possible deal wasn't the most money, right? And that is for some people, and I respect it," he said. "And I actually would tell people to do that: Hey, go to free agency, maximize your opportunity, get everything you can. We have a very small window as athletes in any sport to maximize our opportunity, because we can't do this for 30 years. But for me, living at my house for two extra months, picking my son up from school — I've made it to all of his practices for Little League. He's has 14 games, I've been able to see six of them."

Verlander, a 36-year-old right-hander, found similar happiness in Houston after spending 11-plus seasons with Detroit. He was acquired in August 2017 and helped the Astros win their first World Series title. Already signed for \$28 million this season, he agreed to a new three-year adding \$66 million in guaranteed money.

"I can't see a better situation, so that's for me why this situation was a perfect marriage," he said.

He claims "I wasn't scared of free agency" but thinks the market is broken.

"At the top of the food chain, those guys are always going to get their contracts," he said. "Teams are understanding the situation that they're in when they have the player in house. There's a mutual leverage there for both sides to get something done. And I think that's why you're seeing a lot of this happen right now."

Goldschmidt, a first baseman acquired by St. Louis from Arizona in December, had a \$14.5 million salary this season. He agreed to a deal with the Cardinals that guarantees an additional \$130 million from 2020-24. He emulated the decisions of Mark McGwire, Jim Edmonds and Matt Holliday, who all decided on long-term stays after trades to the Cardinals.

"There's a lot of great things about this game, but a lot times families are moving around and guys are going to different cities and different teams more out of necessity than want," he said, "so to have an



opportunity to stay in one place was a high priority.”

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Sports](https://twitter.com/AP_Sports)

## The good, bad and the unknown of Apple's new services

By BARBARA ORTUTAY AP Technology Writer

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — It took a while, but finally — and with the carefully curated help of Oprah, Big Bird and Goldman Sachs — Apple has at last unveiled a new streaming TV service, its own branded credit card and a news subscription product.

The moves have been largely expected and so far don't appear to drastically alter the competitive landscape the way Apple has done with previous products such as the iPhone and the iPad.

Still, the announcements represent an important step for the company as it seeks to diversify how it makes money amid declining sales of the iPhone, even if by themselves they are unlikely to turn Apple's big ship either way. But it's a way to keep fans sticking with Apple even when they aren't buying a new iPhone every year.

Monday's announcements lacked some key details, such as pricing of the TV service. Here's a rundown on what Apple unveiled — what's good, what's not so good and what we still don't know.

— APPLE TV PLUS

The good: Oprah, Jason Momoa, Big Bird, Steven Spielberg and a host of other stars have lent themselves to original Apple shows that range from documentaries to science fiction, drama and preschool television programming. The focus on “quality storytelling” is consistent with Apple's image and analysts say is likely to produce some hit shows.

The bad: Even so, “it will lack the full range and diversity of content available through Netflix, Amazon and others, and that is set to limit its appeal,” said Martin Garner, an analyst at CCS Insight. Apple also joins a crowded market and it's not clear how many more monthly subscriptions people have the money and the bandwidth for.

The unknown: Apple hasn't said how much it's going to cost.

— APPLE NEWS PLUS

The good: The price, \$10 per month, looks like a good deal compared to separate subscriptions for newspapers and magazines (Apple will include more than 300 of the latter, including The New Yorker and Sports Illustrated). Apple is touting “richly designed articles” that let people read publications tailored to Apple devices in all their glory. Apple has also included privacy protections, and says it will collect data about what people read in a way that it won't know who read what — just how much total time is spent on different articles.

The bad: While The Los Angeles Times and the Wall Street Journal have signed on, other big-name news publishers, such as The New York Times, have not. Nor have, in fact, most other major U.S. newspapers.

The unknown: It's not entirely clear how much news you're getting for your money. The Journal, famous for its business and industry coverage and commanding nearly \$40 a month, will make “specially curated” general-interest news available for Apple customers, for example. Other stories will still be there — but Apple says users will have to search for the articles themselves.

— APPLE CARD

The good: Security and privacy, two areas Apple prides itself on, are a clear focus. The physical version of the card has no numbers, and the digital version lives in your Apple Wallet on your phone, where it's protected by Face ID or Touch ID so even if someone steals your phone they won't be able to use the card to buy things. Apple says it won't get information on what you buy with the card or where or for how much. There are no late fees.

The bad: The rewards (2 percent cash back for all purchases using the digital version of the card, 1 percent using the physical version and 3 percent cash back at Apple stores) are nothing to write home about. The card is meant for Apple users, so if you aren't, it's probably not for you.

The unknown: What sort of credit score you need to get approved, as well as exact interest rates.

— APPLE ARCADE

The good: Apple's new game subscription service, which will launch this fall, will be free of ads and in-app purchases, which can quickly add up and have become common in mobile games. Apple promises more than 100 games, and they will be exclusive to the service, so there will be plenty of fresh adventures.

The bad: The service will only be available on Apple devices, including iPhones, iPads, Macs and Apple TVs. That could be frustrating for those who don't own Apple products.

Unknown: Apple said all games would be available with one subscription, but did not say how much it would cost or when exactly the service will launch. It has partnered with a few well-known game creators, including Hironobu Sakaguchi of "Final Fantasy" fame, but it's unclear how well all the new games will work or how fun they'll be to play.



**Jennifer Bailey, vice president of Apple Pay, speaks at the Steve Jobs Theater during an event to announce new products Monday, March 25, 2019, in Cupertino, Calif.** (AP

Photo/Tony Avelar)

AP Technology Writer Rachel Lerman contributed to this story.

## Israel, Gaza militants in 2nd day of cross-border fighting

By JOSEF FEDERMAN and FARES AKRAM Associated Press

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israeli aircraft bombed targets across the Gaza Strip and Gaza militants fired rockets into Israel early Tuesday, the second day of cross-border fighting that erupted in the last stretch of a closely contested race for Israeli prime minister between the long-serving incumbent and an ex-army chief.

The latest violence was triggered by a surprise rocket fired early Monday from Gaza, a territory ruled since 2007 by the Islamic militant group Hamas. The rocket slammed into a house in central Israel and injured seven people.

In response, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he would cut short a visit to Washington, Israel sent troop reinforcements to the Gaza border and Hamas leaders went into hiding — signals that both sides are heading into perhaps the most serious confrontation since a 2014 Israel-Hamas war.

Late Monday, Hamas announced a cease-fire had been brokered by Egyptian mediators, but the cross-border strikes continued into early Tuesday.

The conflagration comes at a time when both Netanyahu and his Hamas foes are in desperate situations, with little incentive to de-escalate quickly.

Netanyahu is in a tight race for re-election against former army chief Benny Gantz. Just two weeks before the April 9 vote, he faces tough criticism from political rivals, including in his own right-wing political camp, who accuse him of being too soft on Hamas.

Hamas, meanwhile, is under growing pressure domestically because of its failure to get Israel and Egypt to ease their Gaza border blockade, imposed after the 2007 Hamas takeover.

Netanyahu signaled a tough response.

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"Israel will not tolerate this. I will not tolerate this," he declared during a White House meeting with President Donald Trump.

"Israel is responding forcefully to this wanton aggression," he said. "We will do whatever we must do to defend our people and defend our state."

Israel opened public bomb shelters in most major cities and civil defense authorities canceled sports events and public transportation in southern Israel.

The Israeli army said several dozen rockets had been fired into Israel on Monday and Tuesday, as air raid sirens wailed across southern Israel. The army said nearly all rockets were either intercepted or landed in open areas.

Israeli airstrikes hit military sites for Hamas and the smaller Islamic Jihad group. Gaza's Health Ministry said seven Palestinians were injured in the airstrikes.

Targets included the office of Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh. The Israeli military confirmed the bombing, saying the building had "served as an office for many military meetings."

Haniyeh issued a statement warning Israel against heavy retaliation. He said the Palestinian people "will not surrender" and its militant factions "will deter the enemy if it exceeds the red lines."

Another blast destroyed a multistory building in Gaza City that Israel said had served as a Hamas military intelligence headquarters. The airstrike was so powerful it sent debris flying onto the roof of The Associated Press bureau on the 11th floor of a nearby high-rise.

In Beirut, the powerful Lebanese militant group Hezbollah said its leader, Hassan Nasrallah, met Monday with a senior Hamas delegation. Hezbollah said they discussed the Gaza situation and "Israeli aggression."

Hamas is facing perhaps its toughest domestic test since seizing control of Gaza from the rival Palestinian Authority 12 years ago.

An Israel-Egyptian blockade, imposed to weaken Hamas, combined with sanctions by the Palestinian Authority and mismanagement by the Hamas government, have all fueled an economic crisis that has left Gaza with an unemployment rate above 50 percent.

Hamas has been leading weekly protests along the Israeli border for the past year in hopes of easing the blockade, but the demonstrations, in which some 190 people have been killed by Israeli fire, have done little to improve conditions.

Last week, hundreds of Gazans protested the dire conditions, a rare expression of public discontent against the authoritarian government. Hamas responded with a violent crackdown, beating and arresting dozens of demonstrators and drawing rare public criticism.

The rocket attack, which caught Israel off guard, may have been an attempt by Hamas to divert attention from its growing domestic woes.

Israel and Hamas have fought three wars. Although neither side appears to have an interest in another



**An explosion caused by Israeli airstrikes is seen in Gaza City, Monday, March 25, 2019. Israeli forces on Monday struck targets across the Gaza Strip in response to a surprise rocket attack from the Palestinian territory, as the military beefed up troops and rocket-defense systems in anticipation of a new round of heavy fighting with the Islamic militant Hamas group.** (AP Photo/Adel Hana)



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war, fighting could easily spin out of control. The 2014 conflict lasted 50 days and ended with over 2,000 Palestinian deaths, including hundreds of civilians, and 73 killed on the Israeli side.

Netanyahu faces the difficult task of delivering a tough blow to Hamas while avoiding protracted fighting that could work against him on election day.

Monday's attack came 10 days after rockets were fired from Gaza toward Israel's densely populated commercial capital of Tel Aviv, and the Israeli military struck back. Gaza's Hamas leaders said the rocket was fired accidentally and the fighting quickly subsided.

The sounds of air raid sirens jolted residents of the Sharon area, northeast of Tel Aviv, shortly after 5 a.m. Monday, sending them scurrying to bomb shelters.

The rocket destroyed a residential home in the farming community of Mishmeret, wounding six members of a family. The Magen David Adom rescue service said it treated seven people, including two women who were moderately wounded. The others, including two children and an infant, had minor injuries.

The Israeli military said Hamas militants fired the rocket from southern Gaza. It said its Iron Dome rocket-defense system was not activated because the attack in central Israel had not been anticipated. The army added it was reinforcing its missile defense batteries in preparation for an escalation.

Maj. Mika Lifshitz, a military spokeswoman, said it was a self-manufactured rocket with a range of 120 kilometers (75 miles), making it one of the deepest strikes ever carried out by Hamas.

Lifshitz added that two armor and infantry brigades were being mobilized to the Gaza front and that a limited drafting of reserves was also taking place.

Several cities, including Tel Aviv and Beersheba, opened public bomb shelters. Civil defense officials canceled sporting matches and train service in southern Israel. Schools were ordered to hold classes in bomb shelters, and large public gatherings were banned.

Netanyahu came under heavy criticism from allies and opponents for what they say has been an ineffective policy containing Gaza militants.

He has conducted indirect cease-fire talks through Egyptian mediators in recent months, and even allowed the delivery of millions of dollars of Qatari aid to Hamas to ease harsh conditions in Gaza.

"The reality in which Hamas turned Israel into a hostage is unprecedented and unfathomable," his chief challenger, Gantz, wrote on Twitter on Monday. Gantz led the army during the last Gaza war in 2014.

Netanyahu also came under attack from his own nationalistic allies.

"Israel's deterrence has collapsed, and it has to be said in all honesty Netanyahu has failed against Hamas," said Education Minister Naftali Bennett, head of the Yamin HeHadash faction in Netanyahu's coalition.

Akram reported from Gaza City, Gaza Strip. Associated Press writer Sarah El Deeb in Beirut and Ilan Ben Zion and Isabel DeBre in Jerusalem contributed to this report.

## What's an NCAA Tournament unit worth? Millions. Here's how

By RALPH D. RUSSO AP College Sports Writer

The upstart run for Loyola Chicago making the Final Four last year delivered more than just excitement for fans of Sister Jean and the Ramblers.

Loyola's run will be worth at least \$8.45 million to the Missouri Valley Conference over the next six years.

It's payable to the league from the NCAA, through a complex system of payouts funded largely by the lucrative deal for CBS and Turner Sports to televise March Madness.

The system puts an exact price tag on bids and wins leading up to the Final Four. And once conferences are paid, they distribute money back to their member schools.

### UNITS, DEFINED

"Units" are what the NCAA calls its tally of wins, automatic qualifiers and at-large bids that determine how much conferences are paid.

Each distribution year is assigned a value for a single unit, which is then applied to units earned by conferences over the previous six tournaments.

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The NCAA paid conferences \$216 million in 2018 — \$273,500 per unit for tournament results from 2012-2017.

The value of each unit will be \$280,300 when payments are made in 2019 and \$282,100 in 2020.

## HOW TO WIN UNITS

The units come from two funds. The Equal Conference Fund is a baseline through which the NCAA awards one unit to each of the 32 Division I conferences that have an automatic bid. Through the Performance Fund, the NCAA also awards a single unit to every team that makes the tournament via an at-large berth.

There are 68 teams that make the tournament; each accounts for one unit just for getting in.

Units are also awarded from the performance fund for teams that advance. One unit is awarded for every win until teams reach the Final Four. Wins in the semifinals or final don't count for units.

## HOW \$\$ IS DISTRIBUTED

Payments are made each April to conferences. Most conferences share the money equally among members — the NCAA's recommendation — though conferences ultimately decide for themselves how to split the earnings. In some leagues, the school that earned the unit will get a bonus. Also, many smaller leagues share the revenue by funding the conference office or league-wide initiatives.

From 1997 through 2018, the Big Ten Conference has been paid the most at \$340.4 million, while the Southwest Athletic Conference has earned \$25 million, nearly the minimum it can earn given that all leagues make money from their teams that qualify automatically.

## RECENT WINDFALLS

Here's a look at how much some of the most surprising mid-major Final Four runs have been worth to their conferences:

— George Mason, 2006: The Patriots earned five units for the Colonial Athletic Association, worth \$6.39 million.

— Butler, 2010: The Bulldogs earned five units for the Horizon League, worth \$7.46 million.

— VCU, 2011: The Rams earned six units for the Colonial Athletic Association, going from the First Four to the Final Four, worth \$9.12 million. VCU and George Mason move to the Atlantic 10 Conference in 2012.

— Butler, 2011: The Bulldogs earned five units for the Horizon League, worth \$7.6 million. The Horizon League has not earned more than one unit in the tournament since 2011.

— Wichita State, 2013: The Shockers earned five units for the Missouri Valley Conference worth \$7.9 million. Wichita State moved to the American Athletic Conference in 2018.

## CONFERENCE PAYOUTS

Here's a look at how much each of college basketball's biggest conferences have been paid from 1997 to 2018:

— Big Ten: \$340.4 million.

— Atlantic Coast: \$316.3 million.



**Kansas State guard Mike McGuirl, bottom right, shoots against UC Irvine guard Evan Leonard, left, and UC Irvine forward Collin Welp during the second half of a first round men's college basketball game in the NCAA Tournament Friday, March 22, 2019, in San Jose, Calif. (AP Photo/Ben Margot)**

- Big 12: \$307.3 million.
- Southeastern: \$266.4 million.
- Pac-12: \$247.7 million.
- Big East, 1997-2013: \$245.4 million.
- Big East, 2014-2018: \$40.6 million.
- American Athletic: \$106.4 million.

The figures reflect the split of the Big East, which was picked apart during realignment and reconfigured from 16 teams to 10.

#### HOW WE KNOW

Simple — we did the math.

More specifically, The Associated Press analyzed more than \$3 billion in payments distributed from 1997 through 2018. The current system began in 1991 and the NCAA provided the AP with unit values dating back to 1997, the earliest year for which it had reliable data.

The AP calculated NCAA distributions, confirming figures since 2008 with detailed units and payouts provided by the NCAA, and applied unit values to tournament results from earlier years.

The AP also used formulas where provided by conferences to estimate how money was shared by schools, before expenses.

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Associated Press data journalist Larry Fenn contributed to this report.

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More AP college basketball: <https://apnews.com/MarchMadness> and [https://twitter.com/AP\\_Top25](https://twitter.com/AP_Top25)

## Asian stocks rebound after slide on growth worries

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Asian stock prices rebounded Tuesday after global markets slid on worries about U.S. and European economic growth.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 index rose 1.8 percent to 21,362.60 and Hong Kong's Hang Seng gained 0.5 percent to 28,663.04. The Shanghai Composite Index was unchanged at 3,043.02 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 was flat at 6,126.50. Seoul's Kospi advanced 0.4 percent to 2,142.50 and benchmarks in New Zealand, Taiwan and South-east Asia also rose.

On Monday, major markets in Europe and Asia tumbled as traders tried to make sense of pessimistic new outlooks on global growth.

On Wall Street, the benchmark Standard & Poor's 500 ended down 0.1 percent at 2,798.36 points. That added to losses from last week's sell-off.

Traders were rattled by a drop in long-term bond yields, which many



**FILE-** In this March 18, 2019, file photo trader John Santiago works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. U.S. stocks edged lower in early trading Monday, March 25, extending losses from a broad sell-off last week, as new economic data stoked investors' worries over slowing global growth. (AP Photo/Richard Drew, File)



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see as a warning sign of a possible recession.

"Worries about global growth are evident," said Shane Oliver of AMP Capital in a report.

Despite that, "we see this year as being a decent year for share market returns," said Oliver. He pointed to a shift by central banks toward easier monetary policy, China's plans for economic stimulus and fading fears about the U.S.-Chinese tariff war.

European investors are uneasy about the uncertain outlook for Britain's plan to leave the European Union.

British lawmakers seized a measure of control over the process from Prime Minister Theresa May on Monday. That set up votes that could alter the course of Britain's departure from the European Union.

The move came after May conceded Parliament would defeat her twice-rejected divorce deal with the EU again if she put it to a third vote.

Worried investors have shifted money into bonds, sending yields lower. The yield on the 10-year U.S. Treasury slid to 2.40 percent from 2.45 percent late Friday. At one point, the yield had fallen to 2.38 percent, briefly triggering deeper declines in the stock indexes.

The 10-year Treasury yield is below the yield on the three-month Treasury bill, a worrying sign that in the past has preceded recessions. That occurred Friday.

APPLE TV: The company announced plans to launch a subscription TV service but failed to impress investors. Its stock slid 1.2 percent. The company did not say how much Apple TV Plus, which will be ad-free, will cost or when exactly it will debut. It will compete with big streaming services including Netflix and Amazon Video.

ENERGY: Benchmark U.S. crude gained 37 cents to \$59.19 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. The contract shed 22 cents on Monday to close at \$58.82. Brent crude, used to price international oils, rose 10 cents to \$66.91 per barrel in London. It gained 6 cents the previous session to \$66.81.

CURRENCY: The dollar gained to 110.04 yen from Monday's 109.96 yen. The euro advanced to \$1.1317 from \$1.1313.

## Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Tuesday, March 26, the 85th day of 2019. There are 280 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 26, 1979, a peace treaty was signed by Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin (men-AH'-kem BAY'-gihn) and Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and witnessed by President Jimmy Carter at the White House.

On this date:

In 1812, an earthquake devastated Caracas, Venezuela, causing an estimated 26,000 deaths, according to the U.S. Geological Survey.

In 1827, composer Ludwig van Beethoven died in Vienna.

In 1934, Britain enacted a Road Traffic Act reimposing a 30 mile-per-hour speed limit in "built-up areas" and requiring driving tests for new motorists.

In 1945, during World War II, Iwo Jima was fully secured by U.S. forces following a final, desperate attack by Japanese soldiers. Former British Prime Minister David Lloyd George, 82, died in Ty Newydd, Llanystumdwy, Wales.

In 1962, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *Baker v. Carr*, gave federal courts the power to order reapportionment of states' legislative districts.

In 1967, Pope Paul VI issued an encyclical, "Populorum Progressio," on "the progressive development of peoples," in which he expressed concern for those trying to escape hunger, poverty, endemic disease and ignorance.

In 1988, Jesse Jackson stunned fellow Democrats by soundly defeating Michael S. Dukakis in Michigan's

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Democratic presidential caucuses.

In 1989, the science-fiction TV series "Quantum Leap," starring Scott Bakula as an errant time-traveler, premiered on NBC.

In 1992, a judge in Indianapolis sentenced former heavyweight boxing champion Mike Tyson to six years in prison for raping a Miss Black America contestant. (Tyson ended up serving three years.)

In 1997, the bodies of 39 members of the Heaven's Gate techno-religious cult who committed suicide were found inside a rented mansion in Rancho Santa Fe, California.

In 2005, German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger stood in for Pope John Paul II during the Easter Vigil Mass at the Vatican. (Ratzinger later succeeded John Paul, becoming Pope Benedict XVI.)

In 2013, Italy's top criminal court overturned the acquittal of American Amanda Knox in the grisly murder of British roommate Meredith Kercher and ordered Knox to stand trial again. (Although convicted in absentia, Knox was exonerated by the Italian Supreme Court in 2015.)

Ten years ago: President Barack Obama held an unprecedented Internet town hall from the White House as he made a direct sales pitch for his \$3.6 trillion budget. A 23,000-ton Norwegian-owned vessel with a crew of 27 was hijacked by pirates off the Somali coastline. (The Bow Asir was released two weeks later.) A Soyuz capsule carrying a Russian-American crew and U.S. billionaire space tourist Charles Simonyi blasted off for the international space station. All-Star shortstop Miguel Tejada received a sentence of a year's probation for misleading Congress about an ex-teammate's use of performance-enhancing drugs.

Five years ago: Osama bin Laden's son-in-law, Sulaiman Abu Ghaith (SOO'-lay-mahn AH'-boo gayth), was convicted in New York for his role as al-Qaida's fiery chief spokesman after 9/11. (He was later sentenced to life in prison.)

One year ago: The Commerce Department said the 2020 U.S. Census would include a question about citizenship status; opponents said the question would discourage immigrants from responding to the census. (The Supreme Court will hear arguments next month on a challenge to the citizenship question.) A toxicology report obtained by The Associated Press revealed that the late pop music superstar Prince had levels of fentanyl in his body that multiple experts described as "exceedingly high." Two women and their six adopted children were killed when one of the women drove their SUV off a cliff into the ocean about 150 miles north of San Francisco; authorities said Jennifer Hart was drunk when she intentionally drove the vehicle over the cliff.

Today's Birthdays: Retired Supreme Court Justice Sandra Day O'Connor is 89. Actor Alan Arkin is 85. Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas is 84. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi (puh-LOH'-see) is 79. Actor James Caan is 79. Author Erica Jong is 77. Journalist Bob Woodward is 76. Singer Diana Ross is 75. Actor Johnny Crawford is 73. Rock singer Steven Tyler (Aerosmith) is 71. Singer and TV personality Vicki Lawrence is 70. Actor Ernest Thomas is 70. Comedian Martin Short is 69. Country singer Ronnie McDowell is 69. Movie composer Alan Silvestri is 69. Rock musician Monte Yoho is 67. Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao is 66. Radio talk show host Curtis Sliwa is 65. Country singer Dean Dillon is 64. Country singer Charly McClain is 63. TV personality Leeza Gibbons is 62. Actress Ellia English is 60. Actress Jennifer Grey is 59. College and Pro Football Hall of Famer Marcus Allen is 59. Actor Billy Warlock is 58. Actor Eric Allan Kramer is 57. Basketball and College Basketball Hall of Famer John Stockton is 57. Actor Michael Imperioli is 53. Rock musician James Iha (EE'-hah) is 51. Country singer Kenny Chesney is 51. Movie director Martin McDonagh (Film: "Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri") is 49. Actress Leslie Mann is 47. Actor T.R. Knight is 46. Rapper Juvenile is 44. Actress Amy Smart is 43. Actress Bianca Kajlich (KY'-lihk) is 42. Moderator Margaret Brennan (TV: "Face the Nation") is 39. Actor Sterling Sulieman is 35. Actress Keira Knightley is 34. Rapper J-Kwon is 33. Actress Carly Chaikin is 29.

Thought for Today: "Make voyages. Attempt them. There's nothing else." — Tennessee Williams, American playwright (1911-1983).