

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 1 of 47

- [1- Upcoming Events](#)
- [2- Glimpses by Brock Greenfield](#)
- [4- Weekly Vikings Roundup](#)
- [5- Lana's Annals by Lana Greenfield](#)
- [6- Dr. Holm's Column: Save a Life by Listening](#)
- [7- Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs](#)
- [8- Weather Pages](#)
- [11- Daily Devotional](#)
- [12- 2020 Groton Events](#)
- [13- News from the Associated Press](#)



“BEGIN
DOING
WHAT YOU
WANT TO
DO NOW.”

-MARIE BEYNON RAY

Chicken Soup
for the Soul

Upcoming Events

Sunday, March 8, 2020

2:00pm- 6:00pm: Open Gym at GHS Arena

2:00-4:00 PM Grades JK-8 (Students must be accompanied by an adult) 4:00-6:00 PM Grades 6-12

Monday, March 9, 2020

School Board Meeting, 7 p.m.

OPEN: Recycling Trailer in Groton

The recycling trailer is located at 10 East Railroad Ave. It takes cardboard, papers and aluminum cans.

© 2019 Groton Daily Independent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 2 of 47

Glimpses

by Brock Greenfield

With eight weeks behind us, the main issues that remain budgetary, along with some major policy discussions. Last week, I mentioned SB 66, which sought to establish some charter-type schools on tribal grounds. As the bill passed out of the Senate, it appeared there was consensus that this bill should move forward. However, when the bill went to the House Committee, a whole host of opponents testified in opposition to the bill. Much of the opposition came from the education establishment, but also those from the areas who would be most affected spoke loudly against the bill. For those who used to listen to Paul Harvey, now we know "the rest of the story". Look for that issue to be put to rest for this session.

On a side note, this is a very good example of why our system works well. Every so often, issues come to light regarding legislation as it works its way through the process. I remember one year when two bills regarding funerals and perpetual cemeteries had passed the Senate unanimously. They came to the House committee, and, once again, they met with no opposition. The bills were placed on the consent calendar, which meant that there was no opposition to them, and they were set to be voted on the following day in an expedited procedure. However, I received word from a funeral director back home. Greg Furness from Clark expressed concern. In the end, we pulled the bills from the consent calendar and held them over for further examination. Ultimately, one bill was killed, and the other was extensively amended to address what came to be widespread opposition. It is the involvement of, and input from, the people that is so important in helping us to navigate through the issues. We try to educate ourselves as best as possible, given the information available to us, but hearing the contrary viewpoint is vitally important to making well-informed decisions.

UPDATE: Over the past six years I do not recall any time (until tonight after I had finished my article) when I have visited with Representative Greenfield regarding our articles prior to submitting them. I said, "Unbelievable!" when I told her of my "Paul Harvey...rest of the story..." line and she told me she also used that theme. Suffice it to say the new information presented by constituents from Oglala Lakota left an impression on both of us!

On the budget front, we are still trying to determine whether we can meet our statutory obligation for K-12 education, as well as provide additional dollars for nursing homes, adjustment training centers, mental health institutions, chemical dependency counseling centers and state employees. As you know, the original budget request called for modest increases for education, but not specifically for state aid. With current revenues now far exceeding original estimates, it would appear we will be able to provide some additional funding for our priority areas. We had some very good news at the end of last week regarding sales tax collections.

I will highlight a few House Bills that passed the Senate last week. HB 1175 seeks to provide a definition of dyslexia in SD Codified Law. This bill has a storied past dating back at least five sessions. This year, though, we finally passed the legislation on to the Governor's desk. The bill would set the table for children suffering from this learning disability to be diagnosed and to be taught in a way tailored to their individual needs. This is a huge step in the right direction for those who have shared their heart-breaking stories of the difficulties they and their loved ones have struggled to overcome. The Senate nearly passed it unanimously, with only Senator Wismer voting against it.

HB 1025 seeks to ensure proper performance bond coverage for natural gas companies going forward after what happened in Northwest South Dakota when a company abandoned wells on private property and the landowners were left without proper recourse. That bill passed, 34-0, and SB 17, subsequently passed calling for an existing cleanup fund, known as the "Petroleum Release Compensation Fund" to be

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 3 of 47

utilized in the NW. This will not obligate any general funds and will adequately address the problems of plugging the wells and the associated surface reclamation that have been encountered. Truly this has been a highly emotional issue for those whose land was disrespected by the bad actor known as Spyglass.

Finally, I want to tip my hat to Jeff and Lesa Dahl of Castlewood for their tireless efforts in promoting HB 1169 in the hopes that no other South Dakota families will endure the pain they have. HB 1169 essentially calls for establishing texting and driving as a primary offense, which allows law enforcement to pull over people who are observed paying attention to electronic devices rather than the road. It was my conversation with Jeff and Lesa that led me to changing my mind on this issue. We already have "distracted driving" prohibitions on the books, and we already had gone beyond that with respect to texting and driving by making it a secondary offense. However, after hearing directly from the Dahls and seeing their pain and understanding their hearts, I was challenged in my previous position. The Dahls lost their son to an horrific accident a few years ago. There were no skid marks, and it was determined through the investigation that he had been utilizing his electronic device and did not even see the vehicle that he rear-ended. The Dahls took it upon themselves to contact a legislator who brought a similar bill last year, and they were faithful in coming to Pierre when the bill had its hearing in each committee. They know no legislation can bring back their dearly loved son, but they also know they have an opportunity to save somebody else's loved one(s). I thought back to a comment my mom told me dozens of times when I was first learning to drive. "Driving is a full time job," she would say. "You need to pay attention all the time." Further, when somebody asked what the penalty was associated with a primary offense, the discussion turned to the fine and potential jail time. Having found the Dahls testimony to be compelling enough to change my mind, I countered that the maximum penalty could be a person paying the ultimate price. While the bill narrowly lost last year, it passed the Senate 24-11 this year. Jeff and Lesa Dahl and their precious son truly made a difference, and I am going to echo the words of my mother once again. "DRIVING IS A FULL TIME JOB!" All too often, we become complacent about the responsibility of traveling down the road at 65 miles per hour and just assume we will arrive safely at our destination. If this bill saves one life, it will be worth it! To the Dahls, your efforts are appreciated and they most certainly were not in vain!

Here's wishing you many blessings in the week to come, and here's hoping for a positive outcome regarding all the issues that remain. May God bless you, and I pray he will direct our paths and our decision-making.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 4 of 47

Weekly Vikings Roundup

By Jordan Wright

The Minnesota Vikings are not in a good position when it comes to the salary cap. The NFL cap is set at roughly \$200 million for the 2020 season, and the Vikings have the least amount of cap space out of all 32 NFL teams. With less than \$800,000 remaining, while also having numerous holes (cornerback, safety, defensive tackle etc.) that will need to be filled somehow, the Vikings have a tough task ahead of them this offseason.

For those unfamiliar with the term, a salary cap is the amount of money teams can spend on their players per year. In principle, a salary cap is simple – but when you dig into it, there are tons of variables which leads to a multitude of different directions a team can take when it comes to assembling their roster.

Quarterback Kirk Cousins accounts for the biggest cap hit on the roster, with \$31 million due this year. This is the last year of the three-year deal he signed in 2018, and since the contract is fully guaranteed there is virtually nothing the Vikings can do to avoid paying over 15% of the cap to one player.

Stefon Diggs is the second biggest cap hit of 2020, with a salary of \$14.5 million. There have been rumors swirling of the wide receiver being unhappy in Minnesota and the Vikings looking to trade him, but don't worry because the chances of that happening are very slim. He still has four years left on his contract, and there's \$9 million in dead money (guaranteed money that would need to be paid immediately upon release and that still counts against the cap) so the Vikings would only save \$5.5 million if they decided to part ways with one of the better receivers in the game. Not happening.

Adam Thielen is another player who takes up a chunk of the salary cap but likely isn't going anywhere. He will be paid \$12.77 million, which is 6.39% of the team's salary cap.

It's crazy to think the Vikings are spending over \$58 million on three players, but there's no denying they are one of the best QB-WR-WR combos in the league. Luckily, if the Vikings are looking to create some cap space, there are two players on offense who could be on the chopping block.

Riley Reiff has the fourth highest salary on the team (\$13.2 million) and only has \$4.4 million in dead money, so cutting or trading him would save the Vikings nearly \$9 million. However, Reiff hasn't been bad at left tackle and it would be hard to upgrade the position without paying an arm and a leg. To put it into perspective, Reiff is the 10th highest paid offensive tackle in the NFL, but there are many free agent tackles who will end up making more than him. So, unless the Vikings can hit on a tackle in the draft who can step in right away and protect Cousins' blindside (very doubtful), the team will have to either pay Reiff or take a significant step back along the offensive line.

Kyle Rudolph is one of the greatest tight ends in Vikings' history, but with a cap hit of \$9.5 million the 30-year-old might have played his last game in Minnesota. The team would only save \$3.65 million by cutting Rudolph, but his replacement was drafted last year so it wouldn't hurt the Vikings too much to let him go. Besides Irv Smith Jr., the Vikings still have David Morgan, Tyler Conklin and Brandon Dillon on the roster – making \$3.3 million combined.

Make sure to check back next week, when we check out the Vikings' defense. And if you have any questions or comments, reach out to me on Twitter (@JordanWrightNFL). Skol!

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 5 of 47

Lana's Annals by Lana Greenfield

Greetings! This week was a busy one as we had to get all of the bills out of our respective committees. A total of 293 bills have been introduced in the House while 186 appeared in the Senate. Some were passed; some were not. HB1008, the hemp bill, continues to gain some speed. The funding piece remains in question.

The legislature continues to be concerned about accidents caused by electronic devices. Therefore we have HB1169, which prohibits the use of these while operating a motor vehicle. We will see if this bill survives. My fear is people will still be using these devices but will hold them low and out of sight which causes even more risk of an accident. SB113 changes the valid instruction permit timeline from 180 days to 275 continuous days in order to increase restriction time on minor driving permits. This past summer, several youngsters were in fatal crashes. Some were 15 years old. This was of grave concern; therefore, the thought was to give the youth more days of restrictive driving before a regular license is obtained. Remember though, that these possible solutions to lessen accidents are only effective IF people truly follow the law. Just making a law does not eliminate any problem.

I pitched SB150 on the floor this week. This was to grant out of state waterfowl hunters a two-five day license period instead of mandating that they take one solid 10 day period. I thought this was a good idea as it is fair to say that people cannot take 10 solid days away from home. It aligns with the 2- five day pheasant licenses except it still caps at 4000 licenses drawn from a lottery as usual. So the only thing that changed was the split days. To me, 10 is 10. One opponent said that was not fair as he buys 10 bags of dog food per year and an out of state hunter only buys 1. I guess he was trying to say that residents buy more than out of state hunters. I pointed out that the same would apply when we go out of state to hunt, camp, fish, or go to an amusement park. We cannot compete with what residents in those states purchase with our short visits. In the end, the bill passed 45-19. It should be noted that if the habitat stamp proposal passes (SB75), out of state hunters will be charged 25.00 per year for a one time stamp in contrast to residents who will pay 10 dollars.

Those of you who have lived longer than others may remember the radio news commentator Paul Harvey. He always told a pertinent historical event. There would be a break. Then he would come back to tell "the rest of the story." Well, last week Senator Greenfield talked about SB66, which would set up reservation charter schools and was passed unanimously in the Senate. Fast forward. Before we heard it in my House education committee, I found out that the schools that were to be involved as charter school sponsors knew nothing about it. Some came and testified strongly against it, saying that many of the items to be created in the bill were already implemented. After compelling testimony, we defeated the bill 9-5. In the afternoon, a House sponsor tried to smoke the bill out so it could be heard on the floor. The supporters did not get enough people to stand for the smoke out. Therefore it died. I felt we had done the right thing: it was not wanted or needed according to the opponents; it was an unfunded mandate. I was grateful that the people from Oglala Lakota showed up to tell "the rest of the story!" We, on the other hand, passed SB39, a program that is used by 5 schools to help youth at risk. Three students told their stories (which took great courage), and they all indicated that JAG saved their lives. It was very emotional as they told of home lives of abuse, neglect, drugs and drunkenness. The program is funded by donors but needed added approval to renew it, and hopefully, enough ongoing and new private funds could successfully expand this to other schools where there is great need. These are some of the same students whose families are in crisis, and school becomes the only stable place in their lives.

The budget continues to gather bumps and bruises. How it works is this: each body has things that we want to use any extra money for while the Governor has her list. Some match; some do not. It will be an interesting week as we continue to have the conversation as to what and how to prioritize. Dakota Promise Scholarship, asking for 2 million, is being supported by the colleges. USD science building is asking for 5 million. Meanwhile we have state employees, teachers, and nursing homes needing more money. I am suggesting 2 per cent, but it may end to be 1 per cent or less. We will know after Thursday.

I enjoy being in the Legislature, and I want to thank all of you who have voted for me in the past. I do plan to run again this year as do our other two District 2 legislators. Until my wrap up next week, please stay safe and have a good week.

Rep. Lana Greenfield lane.greenfield@sdlegislature.gov or lane.greenfield@gmail.com

Save a Life by Listening

Our nation has a large and growing public health problem called suicide. It is the tenth leading cause of death in the United States and it is preventable. The Centers for Disease Control indicates suicide was responsible for more than 47,000 deaths in 2017, resulting in about one death every 11 minutes and it affects all ages. Suicide is the second leading cause of death for people 10 to 34 years of age, the fourth leading cause among people 35 to 54 years of age, and the eighth leading cause among people 55 to 64 years of age.



By Richard P. Holm, MD ~ Prairie Doc® Perspectives

While the causes of suicide vary, depression is often an underlying factor. Most of us periodically have what is called "situational depression," such as the understandable sadness that follows severe loss or death, but what is more typical of harmful depression is when there is no particular situation, no identifiable "reason" for it.

The diagnosis of depressive disorder is not easy. We suspect depression when people experience chronic pain, find it hard to concentrate, are without energy, have flares of temper, sleep too much or too little, have a loss of appetite or have over-eating binges, have unexplained crying spells, or become filled with anxiety for minimal reasons. Often people make things worse by covering-up depression with alcohol, sleeping pills, anti-anxiety medications, or substance abuse, and these all make the diagnosis even more difficult.

The challenging concern is that with or without a diagnosis of depression, suicide remains extremely hard to predict. We know that "talking about it" is probably our most important means to help someone who is planning suicide. Although two-thirds of the people with depression do not seek or receive help; of the one-third that do get help and follow-through with treatment, 80 percent are better in four to six weeks.

Whenever possible, it's best to guide people for whom we have concern to talk about their feelings with a professional. However, the most important preventer of suicide is, in many cases, the loved one, friend or kindly neighbor who can give that person an ear, offer true compassion and call for help when red flags are flying. You may never know it, but you might save a life by listening and being a friend.

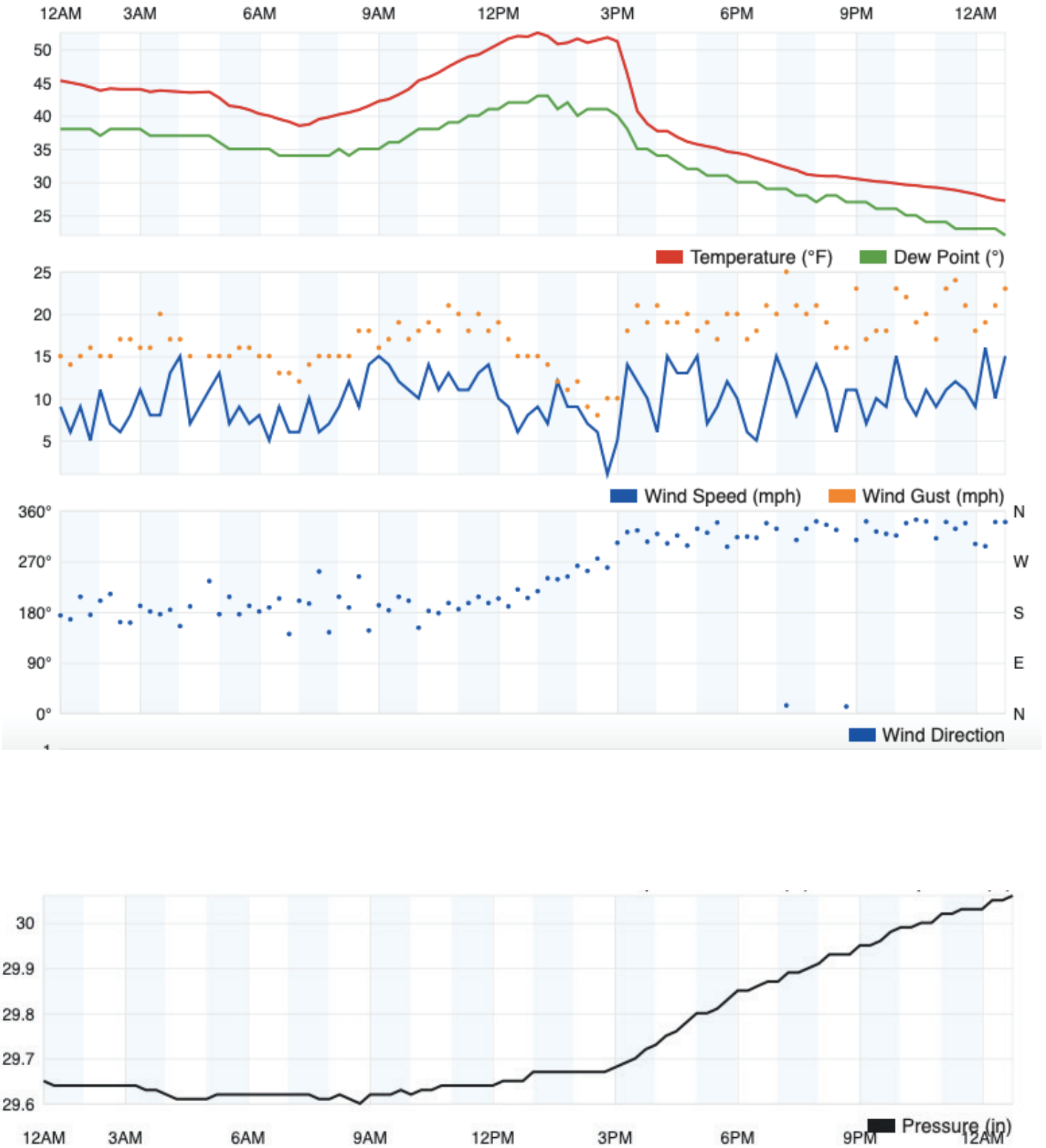
If you or someone you know is struggling emotionally, help is available 24/7. Call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK (8255).

Richard P. Holm, MD is currently living with pancreatic cancer. He is founder of The Prairie Doc® and author of "Life's Final Season, A Guide for Aging and Dying with Grace" available on Amazon. For free and easy access to the entire Prairie Doc® library, visit www.prairiedoc.org and follow Prairie Doc® on Facebook, featuring On Call with the Prairie Doc® a medical Q&A show streaming on Facebook and broadcast on SDPB most Thursdays at 7 p.m. central.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 7 of 47

Yesterday's Groton Weather Graphs



Broton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 8 of 47

Today



Partly Sunny
and Blustery
then Mostly
Sunny

High: 28 °F

Tonight



Partly Cloudy

Low: 13 °F

Tuesday



Chance Snow

High: 33 °F

Tuesday
Night



Mostly Cloudy


Low: 22 °F

Wednesday




Partly Sunny

High: 46 °F

 Today's Forecast


Highs 25 to 35°
Except in the upper 30s to mid 40s over central SD.
Cool. Decreasing Clouds.

 Tuesday

Highs in the 30s to low 40s.
Light snow. Light rain possible over central and southern SD. 1" of snow or less, mainly north of US-212

weather.gov/abr

National Weather Service
Aberdeen, SD
Updated: 3/9/2020 4:08 AM Central



Cool and Dry, with decreasing clouds today! Highs will be mainly in the mid 20s to mid 30s, except in the upper 30s to mid 40s over central SD. For Tuesday, temperatures will top out in the 30s to low 40s. Expect light snow, with precipitation mixing with or changing over to rain over central and southern South Dakota in the afternoon. Snow accumulations are expected to be 1 inch or less, mainly north of US-212.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 9 of 47

Today in Weather History

March 9, 1993: High winds gusting more than 50 mph moved east across South Dakota behind a strong cold front. Peak wind gusts reported included 62 mph at Pierre and 49 mph at Aberdeen. High winds flipped over a mobile home on top of a car and a utility shed near The Oahe Reservoir. A semi-tractor trailer was overturned while crossing Ft. Randall Dam. An office trailer was also tipped over at the same location.

1891: From March 9th through the 13th, a blizzard struck southern England and Wales with gale-force winds. An estimated 220 people were killed; 65 ships foundered in the English Channel, and 6,000 sheep perished. Countless trees were uprooted, and trains buried. Up to a foot of snow and snowdrifts of 11.5 feet were reported in Dulwich, London, Torquay, Sidmouth, and Dartmouth. Click [HERE](#) for more information about this storm from the National Maritime Museum.

1956: A whopping 367 inches of snow was measured on the ground at the Rainier Paradise Ranger Station in Washington. The snow depth was a state record and the second-highest total on record for the continental U.S.

1957: An earthquake measuring a magnitude 8.6 struck the Aleutian Islands of Alaska. A Pacific-wide tsunami was generated that caused damage in Hawaii, but fortunately, no lives were lost. Hardest hit was the island of Kauai, where houses were destroyed and roads washed away. Waves reached 34.1 feet high at Haena, HI.

1956 - A whopping 367 inches of snow was measured on the ground at the Ranier Paradise Ranger Station in Washington. The snow depth was a state record and the second highest total of record for the continental U.S. (The Weather Channel)

1960 - A winter storm produced a narrow band of heavy snow from north central Kentucky into Virginia and the mountains of North Carolina. Snowfall amounts ranged from 12 to 24 inches, with drifts up to eleven feet high in western Virginia. (David Ludlum)

1987 - Gale force winds ushered arctic air into the north central U.S. Some places were 50 degrees colder than the previous day. Northeast winds, gusting to 60 mph, produced 8 to 15 foot waves on Lake Michigan causing more than a million dollars damage along the southeastern shoreline of Wisconsin. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1988 - A cold front brought high winds to the southwestern U.S. Winds in the Las Vegas Valley of Nevada gusted to 70 mph, and one person was injured by a falling tree. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

1989 - Twenty-two cities in the southwestern U.S. reported new record high temperatures for the date. In New Mexico, afternoon highs of 72 at Los Alamos, 76 at Ruidoso, and 79 at Quemado, were records for March. (The National Weather Summary)

1990 - Evening thunderstorms produced severe weather in West Texas. Thunderstorms produced wind gusts to 71 mph at Lubbock, and golf ball size hail was reported at several other locations. Strong thunderstorm winds injured two persons north of the town of Canyon. (The National Weather Summary) (Storm Data)

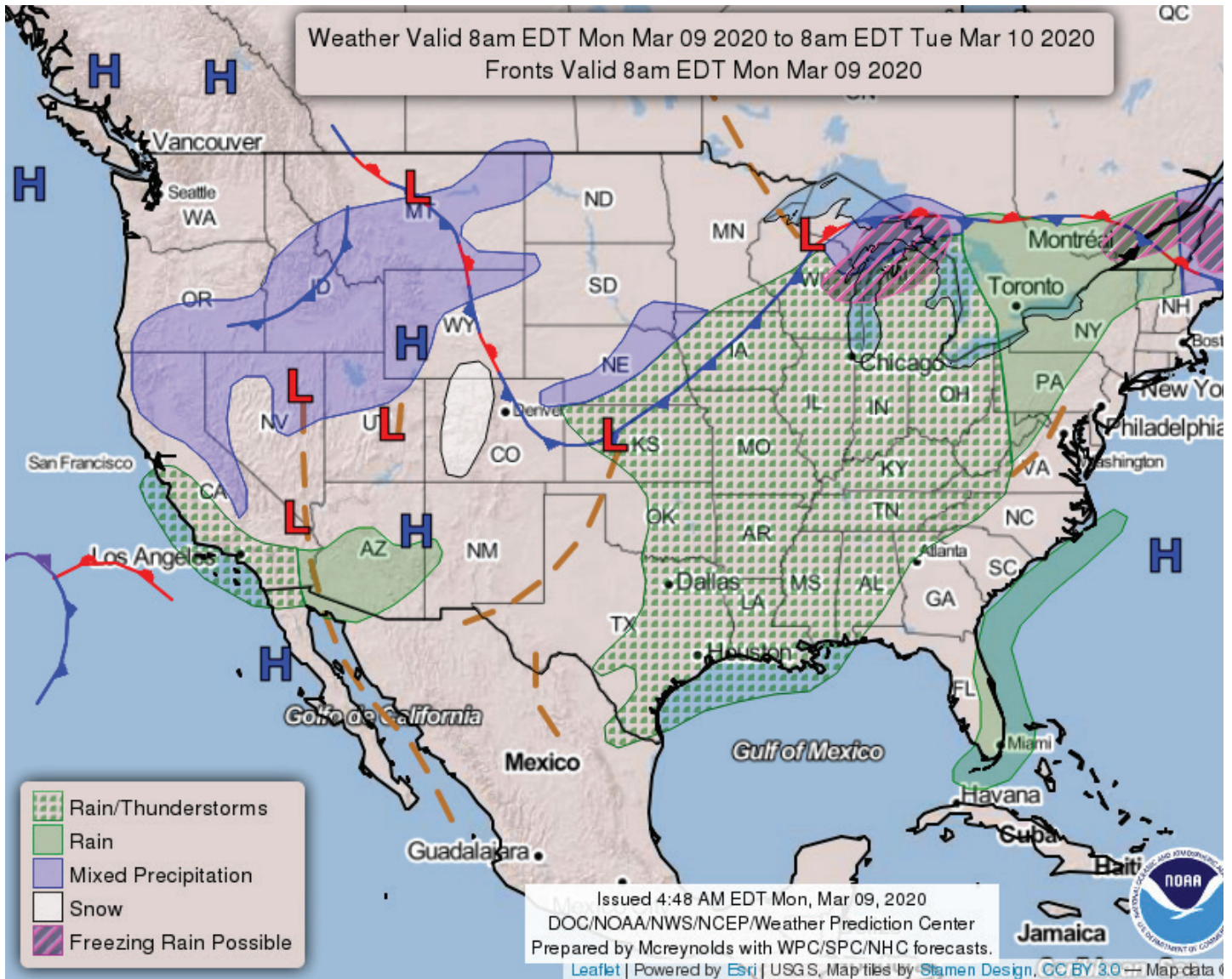
Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 10 of 47

Yesterday's Groton Weather Today's Info

High Temp: 53 °F at 1:03 PM
Low Temp: 28 °F at 11:58 PM
Wind: 25 mph at 7:11 PM
Snow

Record High: 64° in 1936
Record Low: -20° in 1951
Average High: 36°F
Average Low: 17°F
Average Precip in March.: 0.23
Precip to date in March.: 0.00
Average Precip to date: 1.25
Precip Year to Date: 0.35
Sunset Tonight: 7:32 p.m.
Sunrise Tomorrow: 7:55 a.m.



Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 11 of 47



JUST ASK

During a lull in the Spanish-American War of 1898, Colonel Teddy Roosevelt went to a nurse named Clara Barton. Politely he said, "I have men who are sick and wounded in my regiment. They need the delicious treats that you of the Red Cross have. I'm ready to pay for them out of my own pocket."

"Not for a million dollars," came the reply. "All you have to do is to ask."

Salvation is like that. We cannot buy it or earn it, work to attain it, nor expect to inherit it from a parent or relative. We must ask for it with sincerity and the simple faith of a small child.

When offered a gift, we must accept it if we want to receive it. God's salvation, through Jesus Christ, is like that. It is offered to us as His gift. But, we must ask for it if we want to receive it. Even the faith to accept His salvation is a gift. But we must ask for it to receive it.

Perhaps the most concise definition of how a person is saved is contained in the words: "By grace are you saved through faith - which is a gift from God." Our salvation comes from God's grace and our trust in what He did for us through His Son. As Christians, we live and die depending on God's grace, that includes His love, mercy, faith, salvation, and hope.

Prayer: Father, we are grateful for the gift of Your grace. In faith, we reach out to You, trusting in Your Word and Your salvation. In Jesus' Name. Amen.

Scripture For Today: Ephesians 2:8-9 God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 12 of 47

2020 Groton SD Community Events

- 03/14/2020 Youth Girls/Boys Basketball Tourney Grades 4th-6th (Baseball/Softball Foundation Fundraiser)
 - 04/04/2020 Groton Lions Club Easter Egg Hunt - City Park (Saturday a week before Easter Weekend)
 - 04/04/2020 Dueling Piano's Baseball Fundraiser at the American Legion
 - 04/25/2020 Fireman's Stag (Same Saturday as GHS Prom)
 - 04/25-26/2020 Front Porch 605 Rural Route Road Trip
 - 04/26/2020 Father/Daughter dance.
 - 05/02/2020 Spring City-Wide Rummage Sales, (1st Saturday in May)
 - 05/11/2020 Girls High School Golf Meet at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 05/25/2020 Groton American Legion Post #39 Memorial Day Services
 - 06/05/2020 Athletic Fundraiser at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/8-10/2020 St. John's VBS
 - 06/19/2020 SDSU Golf at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/20/2020 Shriner's Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 06/22/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Ladies Invitational
 - 06/26/2020 Groton Businesses Golf Tournament at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/04/2020 Firecracker Golf Tourney at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 07/12/2020 Summer Fest/Car Show
 - 07/16/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Pro Am Golf Tourney
 - 07/31-08/04/2020 State American Legion Baseball Tournament in Groton
 - 08/07/2020 Wine on Nine Event at Olive Grove Golf Course
 - 09/12/2020 Fall City-Wide Rummage Sales (1st Sat. after Labor Day)
 - 09/13/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Couples Sunflower Classic
 - 10/09/2020 Lake Region Marching Band Festival (2nd Friday in October)
 - 10/10/2020 Pumpkin Fest (Saturday before Columbus Day)
 - 10/31/2020 Downtown Trick or Treat
 - 10/31/2020 Groton United Methodist Trunk or Treat
 - 11/14/2020 Groton Legion Annual Turkey Party (Saturday closest to Veteran's Day)
 - 11/26/2020 Community Thanksgiving at the Community Center
 - 12/05/2020 Olive Grove Golf Course Tour of Homes & Holiday Party
 - 12/05/2020 Santa Claus Day at Professional Management Services
 - 01/--/2021 83rd Annual Carnival of Silver Skates
-
- Bingo every Wednesday 6:30pm at the American Legion Post #39
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Meat, American Legion Post #39 7pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
 - Groton Lions Club Wheel of Pizza, Jungle Lanes 8pm (Saturday nights November 30th thru April 11th)
-
- All dates are subject to change, check for updates here

News from the Associated Press

High rivers, saturated soil: A recipe for spring flooding

By **MAKENZIE HUBER** Sioux Falls Argus Leader

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Southeastern South Dakota is only one heavy rain or snow storm away from major flooding this spring.

While Sioux Falls got a fraction of snow during February, there's still an elevated risk of flooding. City, county and National Weather Service officials are preparing for almost guaranteed levels of flooding throughout the region.

"Extreme wetness" caused by heavy precipitation in recent years has set the region on the brink of overflowing, said Mike Gillispie, senior service hydrologist for NWS in Sioux Falls.

"Even though we don't have a lot of snow left, we're just getting into spring where we're looking for heavier snow or rains," Gillispie said. "We just don't have the room to store that moisture that we would normally have had two or three years ago."

While southeastern South Dakota has experienced some of the most ideal conditions to slow flooding threats, one major precipitation event could wash that away. Several factors have already set up Sioux Falls and surrounding areas for guaranteed minor flooding this spring, the Argus Leader reported.

Moderate flooding in Brookings, Dell Rapids and Sioux Falls are all but guaranteed, Gillispie said. The catch is that the severity of flooding will be driven by rain and snow the area receives over the next two months — and how much of it falls at one time.

"We just don't have that storage," Gillispie said. "Even with a little precipitation and snow melt, that's enough water to push us up toward that moderate level of flooding."

Due to a wet past few years, the soils around Sioux Falls are heavily saturated, the river levels are higher than normal, and the aquifers are nearly full.

Just a few inches of precipitation could lead to major flooding in the area, Gillispie said.

As of late February, Sioux Falls has a 50% chance of hitting the flood levels of March 2019, which tore through Dell Rapids, Renner and Sioux Falls. Several homes had to be evacuated in a southern Sioux Falls neighborhood near Tomar Park.

Normally, the chance of reaching that stage of flooding for this time of year would be 15%, Gillispie said.

Last year's Big Sioux River flow rates at this time of the year were around 300 cubic feet per second. The river was at 1,200 as of Feb. 27, which is nearly 1,000 cfs more than normal.

Partnered with heavily saturated soil, the Big Sioux River is on the edge of overflowing.

The NWS issued a flood warning for the Big Sioux River at Interstate 90 between Thursday and Monday. The location's minor flood stage river level is 12 feet, and the river level was at 11.68 feet as of 2 p.m. on Wednesday. The river is expected to rise to 13.5 feet by Monday afternoon, according to the warning.

Aquifers storing groundwater are nearly full around southeastern South Dakota. That means that the ground has little room to absorb any additional snow melt or rainfall.

Aquifers are about an extra four inches full than normal, Gillispie said.

"If soils would be normal, the first four inches of snow melt could soak in, but now there's not that room to hold four inches of water," Gillispie said. "That storage space isn't available. That water will run off into the rivers."

Minimal snow pack around southeastern South Dakota is keeping conditions stable for now, Gillispie said. Sioux Falls has had a relatively dry winter; while areas north, like Brookings, have more snow that will work its way into the Big Sioux River over the next month.

Additionally, the last two weeks have been an ideal melt, with above-freezing temperatures during the day and below-freezing overnight. That's allowed precipitation to slowly absorb into the soil and rivers, instead of overwhelming the system in one fast melt.

Sioux Falls is expecting above-normal temperatures and minimal precipitation for the next few weeks.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 14 of 47

Seasonal outlooks are pointing to a relatively normal spring, but since March is expected to be dry, that could mean April and May might be wetter than normal.

"It's better than above normal," Gillispie said. "But because of how wet it is, even normal precipitation is going to cause worse than normal flooding."

Although it's a recipe for concern, Gillispie is less worried than he was a month ago. The chances of a repeat of March 2019's flood are relatively low, locally. But, some minor to moderate flooding will happen.

"There are still a couple of months to get through before we're out of the woods for the probability of major flooding again," he said. "Until we get a chance to thaw and dry out the soil, any rain or snow has the potential to cause issues."

City and county officials are preparing for flooding as spring makes its way into the Midwest.

"We're expecting and preparing to have spring flooding," said Sioux Falls Mayor Paul TenHaken at a February news conference.

Sioux Falls officials have been working since fall 2019 to prepare for this year's flooding — reviewing last year's response, buying additional pumps, and inventorying sandbags and trap supplies, said Sioux Falls Emergency Manager Regan Smith.

Several leaders and key players in flooding response teams attended a flooding preparation workshop in late February, where they discussed emergency response protocol. Smith said that city officials remain "cautiously optimistic" as they prepare for flooding.

"We're going to have flooding every year to some degree," he said.

Stewart hits winner, N. Dakota upsets third-seed S. Dakota

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Marlon Stewart juked his man and lofted the go-ahead basket with 10 seconds left as North Dakota clipped South Dakota 74-71 in the Summit League quarterfinals Sunday night.

North Dakota faces seventh-seeded Purdue Fort Wayne in a semifinal Monday.

Stewart finished with 21 points, leading five into double figures for sixth-seeded North Dakota (14-17) as the Fighting Hawks avenged a season-ending loss to No. 3 seed South Dakota (20-12) in the final regular-season game a week earlier.

South Dakota was led by Tyler Hagedorn's 17 points and eight rebounds, while Tyler Peterson added 14 points before fouling out with 2.8 seconds left.

UND's Brady Danielson drew Peterson into an offensive foul and made both free throws for the final margin.

De'Sean Allen-Eikens had 14 points for North Dakota, Billy Brown added 13, Filip Rebraca and Kienan Walter 11 each.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

Elements of this story were generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>, using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

Abmas, Oral Roberts breeze past cold-shooting Omaha 79-52

SIoux FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Max Abmas scored 20 points as Oral Roberts romped past cold-shooting Omaha 79-52 in the quarterfinals of the Summit League tournament on Sunday night.

Deondre Burns had 17 points and six assists for No. 4. seed Oral Roberts (17-13). Kevin Obanor added 13 points and 11 rebounds. Emmanuel Nzekwesi had 13 points and nine rebounds.

Omaha was 27% shooting from the field (16 of 59), the lowest percentage against Oral Roberts this season.

KJ Robinson had 15 points to lead the fifth-seeded Mavericks (16-16). JT Gibson added 14 points. Wang Tut had eight points and eight rebounds. Matt Pile had a career-high 21 rebounds plus two points.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 15 of 47

Omaha outrebounded Oral Roberts 47-39.

For more AP college basketball coverage: <https://apnews.com/Collegebasketball> and http://twitter.com/AP_Top25

This was generated by Automated Insights, <http://www.automatedinsights.com/ap>, using data from STATS LLC, <https://www.stats.com>

Man severely burned in grass fire in rural Sioux Falls

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — A 74-year-old man was severely burned Sunday in a grass fire in rural Sioux Falls, authorities said.

Emergency crews were called to the fire around noon Sunday. The Minnehaha County Sheriff's Office said the victim told responders his burn pit was out of control.

The victim was conscious and talking to responders. But he suffered severe burns from head to toe and was taken to a Sioux Falls hospital, the sheriff's office said.

South Dakota tribe set to vote on legalizing marijuana

By STEPHEN GROVES Associated Press

SIOUX FALLS, S.D. (AP) — Members of the Oglala Sioux Tribe will vote this week on legalizing medical and recreational marijuana on South Dakota's Pine Ridge Reservation in an initiative that many hope will bring economic development to one of the most impoverished areas in the country.

Neither South Dakota nor nearby Wyoming and Nebraska have legalized marijuana, and tribal leaders think pot could rake in millions of dollars. If the measure is approved, the Oglala Sioux Tribe would become the only Native American tribe to set up a cannabis market in a state where it's otherwise illegal.

"People will be coming in from all directions to get their medicine," said Ricky Gray Grass, a tribal leader.

After witnessing the growth of the pot industry and the success of the Paiute Indian Tribe selling marijuana near the Las Vegas Strip, tribes across the nation — from the Red Lake Band of Chippewa in Minnesota to the Cherokee Nation in Oklahoma — are considering the economic and medical potential of marijuana. But they also face uncertain policy on marijuana enforcement under President Donald Trump's administration.

Cherokee Nation officials have argued that legalization would threaten some of the federal funding the tribe receives. California tribes have hesitated to set up dispensaries over fears they could lose their gambling licenses, said California Democratic Rep. Lou Correa. He introduced a bill to ensure tribes could sell pot, but it hasn't gained traction.

The Oglala Sioux Tribe is poised to test federal and state policy. Tribal members will vote Tuesday on whether to approve medical marijuana, recreational marijuana, and allowing alcohol at the tribe's casino. The tribal council is then supposed to implement any changes voters approve.

Under the leadership of a new president, Julian Bear Runner, the tribe is arguing its sovereignty gives it the right to cultivate and sell marijuana. His office is pitching it as a "jump-start" to the local economy that would provide jobs and bring in money to fix crumbling roads.

Bear Runner declared a "state of emergency" on the reservation in January over meth addiction, homicides related to drug trafficking and a lack of federal funding to address the problems.

"We need an internal, regenerative, self-sustaining solution," said Chase Iron Eyes, a spokesman for the president.

But those drug problems are the very reason some tribal members are hesitant to legalize pot. In an effort to sway them, Iron Eyes and Gray Grass have pitched marijuana via a weekly "cannabis hour" on the local radio station and community forums on the weekends.

"I think it's going to win by a landslide," said Gray Grass.

One South Dakota tribe has already clashed with state and federal authorities over marijuana. The Flan-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 16 of 47

dreau Santee Sioux Tribe attempted to set up a marijuana resort in the eastern part of the state in 2015, but eventually burned its cannabis crop out of fear of a federal raid. State officials strongly opposed the tribe's plan.

On Pine Ridge, tribal leadership is drawing up plans aimed at appeasing the state, including a prohibition of people taking pot off the reservation.

Scott James, the Oglala Sioux Tribe's attorney general, said state laws still apply to people who aren't members of the tribe, even if they are on tribal land. But it's not clear how — or if — those laws would be enforced.

"Marijuana enforcement is not the federal government's highest priority at this point," James said.

The U.S. attorney's office for South Dakota declined to comment on the Oglala Sioux's plans. Tim Bor-mann, a spokesman for state Attorney General Jason Ravnsborg, said only that the office was watching Tuesday's vote.

Meanwhile, South Dakota's laws could also change, with residents set to vote on whether to legalize medical and recreational marijuana in November.

Native Americans scramble over shutdown of Fargo sweat lodge

By DAVE KOLPACK Associated Press

FARGO, N.D. (AP) — In the decade since Fargo agreed to host a sweat lodge for the many Native Americans who live in the area, the simple structure and its users have suffered a series of indignities: The land set aside for the lodge is in a gritty industrial area, a shirtless user was mistaken for a vagrant and arrested, and police mistook the lodge for a homeless encampment and had it bulldozed.

Now, the city has shuttered the lodge because of concerns over its safety and supervision, and the Na-tive Americans who use it are worried about how they will be able to carry out their sacred healing ritual, even if many of them agree that changes were needed.

"It would be equivalent to the Catholic Church shutting down its location here in the Fargo-Moorhead area because they realized they had issues they needed to fix," Chalsey Snyder, a member of the city's Native American Commission, said recently, referring to Moorhead, Minnesota, which is across the Red River from Fargo. "Our traditions and our ceremonies are extremely revered."

Sweat lodges are typically built low to the ground, with frames made of saplings that are covered with animal hides, blankets or even tarps to keep in the steam. They are common on reservations, but less so in urban areas such as Fargo, which is the biggest city in North Dakota, with slightly more than 100,000 residents.

Snyder, who belongs to the Three Affiliated Tribes, said the shuttering of the Fargo sweat lodge in De-cember has caused an emergency for its diverse users, including some who come from as far away as South Dakota and Canada. The ceremonies, which are often referred to as "sweats," are important rituals that are meant to purify mind and body and that serve various other functions, depending on the tribe. The ceremonies are typically broken into rounds, with singing, praying, talking and drumming.

Whitney Fear, a member of the Oglala Lakota Tribe who serves with Snyder on Fargo's Native American Commission, said time in a sweat lodge — referred to in the Lakota culture as Inipi — "takes us to a place that is reminiscent of the womb." She credits it with helping her mother stave off Stage 4 breast cancer two decades ago when an oncologist told her that her chemotherapy and radiation treatments weren't working.

"The medical professional in me probably could not explain that with science, but the Lakota woman in me can explain that it was the strength of what happens in Inipi that helped save her life," said Fear, a mental health nurse practitioner at a Fargo community health clinic.

When the city decided to close the sweat lodge, Mayor Tim Mahoney, a longtime supporter of the lodge who founded the Native American Commission, cited reports that there had been uncontrolled heat dur-ing ceremonies that could have injured participants. A city memo in January also said some ceremonies lacked a helper and water pourer, as required by the Native American Commission's rules.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 17 of 47

"A variety of people take part in the sweat and we just haven't had a consistent group or committee to manage it," Mahoney said.

The city's fears are not unfounded. In 2009, three people died from heat exposure during a sweat lodge ceremony in Arizona run by a non-Native American self-help author who eventually served nearly two years in prison for negligent homicide. He was criticized by Native American leaders for desecrating a sacred ceremony through carelessness that reflected poorly on sweat ceremonies run safely by experienced lodge leaders.

The Native American Commission requires that each spiritual or lodge leader have proper training and rights from their respective tribes, but both Snyder and Fear said they haven't been comfortable with some of the people participating in ceremonies.

Snyder said that even though she's "in need of ceremony," she hasn't used the lodge because she doesn't know if she would be "physically and spiritually" safe. She quoted her grandfather who told her, "If you don't know what you're doing or who is conducting the ceremony, you have no place there." Fear was turned off by one of the users who offered a prayer urging Native women to stop marrying outside of their race.

Everyone agrees that a fresh start is needed. Snyder and others hope that the Fargo area will get a proposed \$4 million Native American cultural center that would include a more formal sweat lodge. But with that prospect likely years away, they're focused on coming up with a plan to reopen a sweat lodge somewhere else in the near future.

Until then, one suggestion is relocating the lodge to the current site of Prairie St. John's psychiatric hospital, which is building a new facility elsewhere. Hospital officials see it as a way to be more responsive as a treatment center to Native Americans. Democratic state Sen. Tim Mathern of Fargo, an executive at the hospital, said the city needs a center "that honors and respects the indigenous community that actually settled this land." But that, alone, wouldn't solve the problems that led to the lodge's shutdown.

Fear said there needs to be an investigation of lodge operations and some soul-searching within the community before moving forward. She said she's sad that ceremonies can't be held there currently, but any decisions on its future should be "done with such powerful and pure intentions that it will serve as a place of strength for the generations to come."

Associated Press writer Felicia Fonseca in Flagstaff, Arizona, contributed to this report.

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. WHERE CRUISE SHIP HIT WITH VIRUS IS SET TO DOCK Officials in California are preparing to receive thousands of people from a cruise ship that has been idling off the coast of San Francisco with at least 21 people aboard infected with the coronavirus.

2. ITALY'S DRAMATIC ATTEMPT TO SLOW VIRUS SPREAD Italy has locked down much of the country's north and put one fourth of its population in quarantine in an attempt to curb the quick spread of the novel coronavirus.

3. WHAT CAUSED GLOBAL MARKETS TO SINK World markets plunged after global oil prices nosedived on fears the global economy weakened by a virus outbreak might be awash in too much crude.

4. WHO JUUL LABS TRIED TO COURT TO AVOID POTENTIAL INVESTIGATION The nation's largest electronic-cigarette company donated tens of thousands of dollars to the campaigns of state attorneys general to head off legal challenges.

5. WHAT CHINA IS DOING TO RIGHT IMAGE IN VIRUS 'WAR' The ruling Communist Party has turned to its propaganda playbook and portrays President Xi Jinping as firmly in charge, leading an army of health workers in a "people's war" against the disease.

6. NORTH KOREA FIRES THREE SHORT-RANGE PROJECTILES Leader Kim Jong Un had entered the new year with a vow to bolster his nuclear deterrent and not to be bound by a weapons test moratorium amid

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 18 of 47

a deadlock in a U.S.-led diplomacy.

7. WHO IS SAYING TRUMP NEEDS TO SUPPORT THE OUTBREAK House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer say the president say priorities should include paid sick leave for workers impacted by the quarantine orders and enhanced unemployment insurance for workers.

8. WHERE DEMOCRATS ARE LOOKING TO AS PRIMARY TESTING GROUND The largest of six states with Democratic primaries on Tuesday, Michigan could redefine what has become a showdown between Joe Biden and Bernie Sanders.

9. AS SPRING BREAK NEARS WHO'S KEEPING AN EYE ON VIRUS Florida tourism officials say cases of the new coronavirus are having little visible impact on theme parks, the state's biggest industry, so far.

10. INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY MARKED BY PROTESTS Many protests were peaceful celebrations but others were marred by tensions as women protested against gender violence, inequality and exploitation.

Stocks, oil plunge over global fight for crude production

By JOE McDONALD AP Business Writer

BEIJING (AP) — Global stock markets and oil prices plunged Monday after a fight among major crude-producing nations jolted investors who already were on edge about the surging costs of a virus outbreak.

The main stock indexes in London and Frankfurt were down by almost 7%. Tokyo closed down 5.1% while Sydney lost 7.3% and Shanghai was off 3%. Dow futures were down almost 5%.

The benchmark U.S. crude price was down 20% after falling as much as 30%, deepening a rout that began when Saudi Arabia, Russia and other major producers failed to agree on cutting output to prop up prices. A breakdown in their cooperation suggested they will ramp up output just as demand is sliding.

Investors usually welcome lower energy costs for businesses and consumers. But it can also hurt producers, such as oil companies. The last time crude prices fell this low, in 2015, the U.S. saw a raft of bankruptcies by smaller energy companies.

The abrupt plunge in markets added to the anxiety over the coronavirus, rattling markets and sending investors in search of safe havens like bonds.

"A blend of shocks have sent the markets into a frenzy on what may only be described as 'Black Monday,'" said Sebastien Clements, analyst at financial payments platform OFX.

"A combination of a Russia vs. Saudi Arabia oil price war, a crash in equities, and escalations in coronavirus woes have created a killer cocktail to worsen last week's hangover."

In Saudi Arabia, the Riyadh stock exchange suspended trading of state-owned oil giant Saudi Aramco after its share price sank by the daily 10% limit at the opening.

Investors already were on edge about the mounting costs of the coronavirus outbreak that began in China and has disrupted world travel and trade.

Anxiety rose after Italy announced it was isolating cities and towns with some 16 million people, or more than one quarter of its population, in its industrial and financial heartland.

In Europe, London's FTSE 100 tumbled 6.5% to 6,039 after opening down by more than 8%. Frankfurt's DAX shed 6.2% to 10,825 and the CAC 40 in France lost 6.7% to 4,797. Italy's FTSE MIB plunged 9.8% to 18,755.

On Wall Street, the futures for the Dow Jones Industrial Average and the S&P 500 were both down 4.9%.

Companies have been hit by travel and other controls that are spreading worldwide as the global number of coronavirus infections rose past 110,000 worldwide.

Tokyo's Nikkei 225 fell to 19,698.76 after the government reported the economy contracted 7% in the October-December quarter, worse than the original estimate of a 6.3% decline. That was before the viral outbreak slammed tourism and travel but after a sales tax hike dented consumers' appetite for spending.

Hong Kong's Hang Seng sank 4.2% to 25,047.42. The Shanghai Composite Index declined to 2,943.29.

The S&P-ASX 200 in Sydney retreated to 5,760.60. The Kospi in Seoul lost 4.2% to 1,954.77.

India's Sensex retreated 6.2% to 35,255.73. Markets in Taiwan, New Zealand and Southeast Asia also declined.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 19 of 47

Benchmark U.S. crude fell 21.9%, or \$9.03, to \$32.25 per barrel in electronic trading on the New York Mercantile Exchange. Brent crude, the international standard, lost 20.7%, or \$9.32, to \$35.95 per barrel in London.

The International Energy Agency said in a report Monday that oil demand could fall this year for the first time since the global financial crisis in 2009.

"The oil price will stay low" in the \$30s per barrel, IEA chief Fatih Birol said.

The dollar sank to 102.41 yen from Friday's 105.29 yen. Investors in Asia often buy up the Japanese currency and bonds in times of volatility. The euro advanced to \$1.1408 from \$1.1289.

Chinese factories that make the world's smartphones, toys and other consumer goods are gradually reopening but aren't expected to return to normal production until at least April. That weighs on demand for imports of components and raw materials from China's Asian neighbors.

Apple Inc. says slowdowns in manufacturing iPhones in China will hurt its sales totals. An airline industry group says carriers could lose as much as \$113 billion in potential ticket sales.

Adding to pessimism, China reported Saturday that its exports fell 17% and imports were off 4% from a year earlier in January and February after Beijing shut factories, offices and shops in the most severe anti-disease measures ever imposed.

Central banks worldwide have cut interest rates. But economists warn that while that might help to encourage consumer and corporate spending, it cannot reopen factories that are due to quarantines or a lack of workers and raw materials.

Investors are looking ahead to a meeting Thursday of the European Central Bank, which is widely expected to announce new stimulus measures.

Already last week, global stocks were sinking as the spread of the virus prompted governments to follow China's lead by imposing travel controls and canceling public events.

The U.S. Federal Reserve's emergency 0.5% cut in its key lending rate failed to reverse the downturn and the yield on the 10-year Treasury, already at record lows, dipped under 0.40% from 0.7% late Friday.

The yield - the difference between a bond's market price and what investors will receive if they hold it to maturity - is an indicator of the market's outlook on the economy. Rising market prices that cause the yield to narrow indicate investors are shifting money into bonds as a safe haven.

"Global recession risks have risen," Moody's Investors Service said in a report. "A sustained pullback in consumption, coupled with extended closures of businesses, would hurt earnings, drive layoffs and weigh on sentiment."

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Sudan PM says he survived 'terror attack' in capital

By SAMY MAGDY Associated Press

CAIRO (AP) — Sudan's prime minister said Monday he survived a "terror attack" after an explosion and gunfire targeted his motorcade in the capital of Khartoum.

Abdalla Hamdok, a longtime economist, tweeted he was "safe and in good shape" following the explosion. Sudanese state TV said Hamdok had been heading to his office when the attack took place.

Hamdok also tweeted a photo of himself smiling and seated at a large desk, while a TV behind him showed news coverage reporting he'd survived.

The attack highlighted the fragility of Sudan's transition to civilian rule, almost a year after pro-democracy protesters forced the military to remove autocratic President Omar al-Bashir from power and replace him with a joint military-civilian government, which has promised to hold elections in three years.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 20 of 47

However, Sudan's generals remain the de facto rulers of the country and have shown little willingness to hand over power to civilians.

Hamdok, in his brief statement on Twitter, said, "Rest assured that what happened today will not stand in the way of our transition, instead it is an additional push to the wheel of change in Sudan."

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

A statement from the prime minister's office said the attackers used explosives and firearms, and that a security officer was lightly wounded. The statement was read by Faisal Saleh, Sudan's information minister and interim government spokesman.

Footage posted online showed two white, Japanese-made SUVs vehicles typically used by Sudan's top officials parked on a street, damaged with its windows broken. Another vehicle was badly damaged in the blast. Several dozen people were seen at the site of the attack, chanting: "With our blood and soul, we redeem you, Hamdok."

The protest movement that led the uprising against al-Bashir called the blast a "terrorist attack." The statement by the Forces for the Declaration of Freedom and Change called on people to take to the streets to "show our unity and cohesion ... and protect the transitional authority."

After months of negotiations, the military and the pro-democracy movement reached a power-sharing deal in August, at which point Hamdok took office. The deal established a joint military-civilian, 11-member sovereign council to govern Sudan for the next three years.

Prominent activist Khalid Omar, secretary general of the Sudanese Congress Party, said the attempt on Hamdok's life was a "new chapter in the conspiracy against the Sudanese revolution."

The U.S. Embassy in Sudan tweeted: "We continue to support Sudan's civilian led transitional government and stand in solidarity with the Sudanese people."

Irfan Siddiq, the British ambassador in Khartoum, said the blast "is a deeply worrying event must be investigated fully." He tweeted that the Sudanese prime minister's office had confirmed Hamdok and his team "are all fine, with no injuries."

Monday's blast came less than two months after an armed revolt from within Sudan's security forces shut down the capital's airport and left at least two people dead. The tense stand-off between the armed forces and rogue intelligence officers paralyzed street life in several parts of Khartoum, along with another western city.

In 1989, al-Bashir came to power in an Islamist-backed military coup and imposed a strict interpretation of religion on its citizens, limiting personal freedoms. The country was an international pariah for its support of extreme Islamists.

Sudan's transitional authorities announced in February that they agreed to hand over al-Bashir to the International Criminal Court along with other former officials wanted by the ICC.

Hamdok has confirmed the government will cooperate with the court's efforts to prosecute those wanted for war crimes and genocide in connection with the Darfur conflict in the 2000s.

Sudan's transitional government has also been under pressure to end wars with rebel groups as it seeks to rehabilitate the country's battered economy, attract much-needed foreign aid and deliver the democracy it promises.

Nearly a year after al-Bashir's ouster, the country faces a dire economic crisis. Inflation stands at a staggering 60% and the unemployment rate was 22.1% in 2019, according to the International Monetary Fund. The government has said that 30% of Sudan's young people, who make up more than half of the over 42 million population, are without jobs.

Thousands prepare to get off ship hit by virus in California

By **OLGA R. RODRIGUEZ** and **CHRISTOPHER WEBER** Associated Press

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Federal and state officials in California were preparing Monday to receive thousands of people from a cruise ship that has been idling off the coast of San Francisco with at least 21 people aboard infected with the coronavirus.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 21 of 47

Fences were being installed at an 11-acre site at the Port of Oakland, as authorities readied flights and buses to whisk the more than 2,000 passengers aboard the Grand Princess to military bases or their home countries for a 14-day quarantine. More than 3,500 on the ship hail from 54 countries.

"We're making every effort to get them off the ship as safely and quickly as possible," said Dr. John Redd of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, who urged passengers to remain in their rooms.

As the U.S. death toll from the virus reached at least 21 and the number of cases worldwide soared above 110,000, California Gov. Gavin Newsom and the mayor of Oakland sought to reassure the public that none of the Grand Princess passengers would be exposed to the U.S. public before completing the quarantine. The number of infections in the United States climbed above 500 as testing for the virus increased.

The Port of Oakland was chosen for docking because of its proximity to an airport and a military base, Newsom said. U.S. passengers will be transported to military bases in California, Texas and Georgia, where they'll be tested for the COVID-19 virus and quarantined.

About 1,100 crew on the ship, 19 of whom have tested positive for the new virus, will be quarantined and treated aboard the ship, which will dock elsewhere, Newsom said.

"That ship will turn around — and they are currently assessing appropriate places to bring that quarantined ship — but it will not be here in the San Francisco Bay," he said.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the National Institutes of Health's infectious diseases chief, said Sunday that widespread closure of a city or region, as Italy has done, is "possible." U.S. Surgeon General Jerome Adams said communities will need to start thinking about canceling large gatherings, closing schools and letting more employees work from home, as many companies have done in the Seattle, Washington, area amid an outbreak at a care home that has killed 17.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown declared a state of emergency Sunday because of the virus.

On the Grand Princess, passengers Steven and Michele Smith of Paradise, California, said they hope their time spent on the ship in quarantine will count toward the 14 days they are expected to isolate themselves. But they said officials have not yet provided an answer.

"We would love to get credit for the three or four days we've spent in our cabin," Steven Smith said.

The Department of State was working with the home countries of several hundred passengers to arrange their repatriation, including nearly 240 from Canada.

The ship was held off the coast amid evidence it was the breeding ground for a cluster of at least 20 cases from a previous voyage.

Meanwhile, another cruise ship, the Regal Princess, pulled into a Florida port late Sunday night, after being held off the state's coast for hours while awaiting coronavirus test results for two crew members, who did not have symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Another Princess ship, the Diamond Princess, was quarantined for two weeks in Yokohama, Japan, last month because of the virus. Ultimately, about 700 of the 3,700 people aboard became infected in what experts pronounced a public-health failure, with the vessel essentially becoming a floating germ factory.

On Sunday, the U.S. State Department urged U.S. citizens against travel on cruise ships as officials said there was "increased risk of infection of COVID-19 in a cruise ship environment."

Private companies and some public venues in the U.S. have been taking safety measures in an effort to limit the virus' spread. Several universities have begun online-only courses, including the University of Washington, Stanford University and Columbia University. The largest school district in Northern California, with 64,000 students, canceled classes for a week when it was discovered a family in the district was exposed to COVID-19.

Weber reported from Los Angeles. Associated Press writers Juliet Williams in San Francisco and Robert Gillies in Toronto contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Saudi Arabia cuts off travel over virus as markets tumble

By JON GAMBRELL Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) — Saudi Arabia closed off air and sea travel to nine countries affected by the new coronavirus Monday as Mideast stock markets tumbled over fears about the widening outbreak's effect on the global economy.

The state oil giant Saudi Aramco led the financial losses, dropping by 10% on Riyadh's Tadawul stock exchange and forcing a halt to Aramco's trading.

In the Mideast, there have been over 7,600 confirmed cases, with the vast majority in hard-hit Iran. The country's health ministry said the new coronavirus has killed another 43 people, pushing death toll to 237 amid 7,161 confirmed cases. Experts worry Iran may be underreporting its cases.

The drop came as global oil prices suffered their worst losses since the start of the 1991 Gulf War. Other Mideast markets fell as well as the new coronavirus has affected global energy prices and OPEC failed to make a production cut deal with Russia last week.

Earlier Monday, coronavirus concerns led Saudi Arabia to cut off air and sea travel with Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, South Korea, Syria and the United Arab Emirates. The kingdom had earlier closed off its land borders as well.

"Out of concern to protect the health of citizens and residents and ensure their safety, the kingdom's government decided to temporarily suspend the travel," it said in a statement attributed to an unnamed Interior Ministry official.

Abu Dhabi's long-haul carrier Etihad, which operated 12 flights daily to Saudi Arabia, said three flights had been airborne at the time of the announcement. When those planes landed in Dammam, Jiddah and Riyadh, only Saudi citizens could disembark, with others having to return to Abu Dhabi, the airline said.

Saudi Arabia already shut down access to the holiest sites in Islam over concerns about the virus and the COVID-19 illness it causes. The virus usually leaves people with only mild to moderate symptoms, but because it's new, experts can't say for sure how far it will ultimately spread and how much damage it will do, both in terms of health and the global economy.

The tiny, energy-rich neighboring country of Qatar meanwhile has cut off travel to 15 nations including Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Italy, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand. That's affected its long-haul carrier Qatar Airways, which has already been hurting from a yearslong boycott by four Arab nations including Saudi Arabia over a political dispute.

Qatar separately announced via its state-run news agency it would shut down schools and universities beginning Tuesday until further notice.

Worldwide, there are over 110,000 confirmed cases of the new coronavirus with more than 3,800 deaths attributed to it.

The new virus has caused major economic disruptions, including in global aviation, which has helped slow demand for oil. An OPEC meeting with Russia last week failed to see countries agree to a production cut. In response, Saudi Arabia has warned it will increase its production and slash its own prices to claw back market share.

That sent oil prices into a free fall, losing some 25% of their value. Mideast stock markets followed suit.

The Tadawul fell over 7%, with investors particularly selling their stock in Saudi Aramco, formally known as the Saudi Arabian Oil Co. The stock closed at 27 riyals a share (\$7.19), giving the company a valuation of \$1.4 trillion. The company had reached \$2 trillion in early days of trading in December.

The oil company offered only a sliver of its value, 1.7%, on the exchange to help fund Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's redevelopment plans for the kingdom. The rest remains state owned.

Qatar's stock market fell over 9%. The Dubai Financial Market and the Abu Dhabi Securities Exchange dropped by over 8%. Egypt's stock market benchmark index, the EGX 30, fell over 7.5%. Oman's Muscat Securities Market and the Bahrain Bourse each saw over a 5% loss. The Tehran Stock Exchange in Iran fell 2.7%.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 23 of 47

Meanwhile, authorities in Egypt's southern tourist hub of Luxor announced the city would close to tourists Monday until medical experts could examine all hotel guests and cruise ship passengers in the area. Two cruise ships on the Nile River have been quarantined there in recent days, after 45 people on board one of the ships tested positive for the coronavirus. There were no immediate details on the second ship.

Associated Press writers Aya Batrawy and Fay Abuelgasim in Dubai, Nasser Karimi in Tehran, Iran, and Isabel DeBre in Cairo contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Stocks, oil prices plunge as virus closes sites around world

By MATT SEDENSKY AP National Writer

BANGKOK (AP) — The world's largest economies delivered more worrisome cues Monday as anxiety over the virus outbreak sent stock and oil prices plunging and closed sites from the Sistine Chapel to Saudi Arabian schools.

Shares in Asia, the Mideast and Europe, and U.S. futures were down sharply, reports on the health of the economies of Japan and China stirred more unease, and the downturn was being felt by people around the world.

"Our business is one-fifth of what it was before," said Cheng Sheng, who helps run a food stand in Beijing that sells sausages and noodles. "There's much less foot traffic. There are no people."

As the weakening economy was blamed at least in part on the virus that has infected more than 110,000 people, cases were reported in more than half the world's countries and flash points were erupting around the globe.

In the United States, where more than 500 infections have been reported, eyes were fixed on cruise ships on opposite sides of the country that were kept at bay over fears of virus threats.

Passengers were disembarking the Regal Princess early Monday after it received clearance to dock in Florida. Tests of two crew members eyed as possible carriers of the virus came back negative.

The Grand Princess, meantime, was expected to dock in California with 21 people who tested positive for the coronavirus on board. Passengers were to be placed under quarantines.

Global oil prices suffered their worst losses since the start of the 1991 Gulf War. In Saudi Arabia, shares of state oil giant Saudi Aramco dropped by 10%, forcing a halt to trading of the company on Riyadh's stock exchange.

Saudi Arabia cut off air and sea travel to and from Bahrain, Egypt, Iraq, Italy, Kuwait, Lebanon, South Korea, Syria and the United Arab Emirates after earlier closing off its land borders.

All Saudi Arabian schools and universities were closing beginning Monday.

In Italy, the government took a page from China's playbook, issuing a quarantine order attempting to lock down 16 million people across a swath of the country's north. Italy's financial hub of Milan and its popular tourist city of Venice were among the places under the order, and across the country, museums and archaeological sites were closed, weddings were canceled, and restaurants were told to keep patrons a meter (3.3 feet) apart. The country has counted 7,375 cases of COVID-19.

Pope Francis celebrated Mass by himself Monday at the Vatican hotel where he lives, but resumed some meetings.

Countries around the world showed a willingness to take tough steps to try to stop the virus' spread.

The Czech Republic said Monday that visits to hospitals and retirement homes were banned and random checks would begin of vehicles arriving at border crossings, including taking the temperature of occupants.

Qatar cut off travel to 15 countries and announced it would shut down schools and universities beginning Tuesday.

China reported 40 new cases of the virus Monday, its lowest number since Jan. 20. More than three-

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 24 of 47

quarters of the country's surviving virus patients have been released, according to government figures. South Korea reported 165 more cases Monday, bringing its total to 7,478.

Contributing to this report were Ken Moritsugu in Beijing; Tong-hyung Kim in Seoul, South Korea; Carlo Piovano in London; Nicole Winfield in Rome; and Jon Gambrell in Dubai, United Arab Emirates.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Florida theme parks keep eye on virus as spring break nears

By **MIKE SCHNEIDER** and **TAMARA LUSH** Associated Press

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — As Florida's busy spring break season kicked off this month, coronavirus czar Vice President Mike Pence addressed something that's been on the mind of tens of thousands of families preparing to travel to theme parks: Is it safe?

Over the weekend, Pence stressed it is safe for healthy Americans to travel, noting "one of our favorite places to go when my children were young and even before my children came was in Orlando."

"Whether it be Disney World, whether it be other destination, whether it be cruise ships ... those most at risk are seniors with serious or chronic underlying health conditions."

"Otherwise Americans can confidently travel in this country," Pence said at a meeting with cruise industry officials in Fort Lauderdale on Saturday.

Still, as COVID-19 concerns multiply, the issue weighs heavily in the tourism industry.

"There is definitely concern. Particularly how and when it could manifest itself in the U.S.," said Dennis Spiegel, president of International Theme Park Services Inc., an independent industry consultant.

He's been watching the spread of the coronavirus for weeks, as theme parks in Asia have closed. He estimated the temporary closure of Disney parks in Shanghai and Hong Kong will cost the company anywhere from \$175 million to \$300 million dollars.

Florida's coronavirus cases have had a muted effect on the state's biggest industry so far, but that could change at any moment.

Orlando is the nation's most visited tourist destination, bringing vast numbers of people from around the globe to its major theme parks, which also include Universal Orlando and SeaWorld Orlando. The city attracted 75 million visitors in 2018.

As of Sunday, the city was at least 65 miles (105 kilometers) from the nearest person testing positive for coronavirus.

Though some convention business has been canceled because of concerns, individual leisure travel hasn't been affected, local officials said.

Jennifer Morales, a 47-year-old mother from San Antonio, said the outbreak hasn't changed her plans for an eight-day Walt Disney World vacation with her daughter. She's been to Disney World 20-plus times, and her daughter is in a marching band scheduled to be in a park parade. They leave Sunday.

"I don't think it warrants canceling a vacation right now," she said, adding that she's more worried about sitting on a plane with people with colds and the flu. "I'm kind of a germaphobe. We all have our own personal hand sanitizers, We're diligent about handwashing at the parks, especially after rides. Now we'll spending a little extra time washing hands. I already travel with a small can of Lysol and hose everything down in our hotel rooms."

The state draws hordes of college-age students and families with grade-school children during the spring break season, which begins in earnest in mid-March and runs into April. Cancellations could be devastating during one of the busiest times of the year in the Sunshine State.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 25 of 47

"Monitoring all of our visitor information channels, we've only seen a handful of inquiries so far," George Aguel, president and CEO of tourism promotion agency Visit Orlando, said earlier in the week.

Three convention groups have canceled their conferences in Orlando over concerns about the new coronavirus, which Orange County Mayor Jerry Demings said represents a \$154 million impact.

Aguel said a handful of smaller hotels in the Orlando area have had conferences canceled that involved large numbers of international conferees, "and they predicted there would be some challenges with that, so out of an abundance of caution they decided it would be wiser to cancel."

The U.S. Travel Association on Tuesday predicted a 6% decline in international visitors to the U.S. over the next three months as a result of coronavirus. If the prediction holds, it would be the largest decline in international inbound travel since the recession a dozen years ago, the association said.

Coronavirus fears hit Florida this week as Disney World opened a new ride based on Mickey Mouse, a park first. The resort's most anticipated new land in years, Star Wars: Galaxy's Edge, debuted only last August.

If a Disney visitor shows coronavirus symptoms or first responders think they have the flu, both patient and paramedic will get a face mask, said Tim Stromsnes, president of the union local for firefighters at Disney World.

Speigel said parks and attractions likely will undergo "a lot of fumigation, disinfection, right now, not only in the front of the house, but the back of the house."

Officials with Busch Gardens and SeaWorld didn't respond to email inquiries about how the coronavirus had affected them.

Disney officials said in a statement that extra hand sanitizers were being placed throughout its four parks and more than two dozen hotels.

Tom Schroder, a spokesman for Universal Orlando, said it is reinforcing "best-practice health and hygiene procedures" in response to the coronavirus outbreak and adding more hand sanitizer units to its parks.

"We will continue to closely monitor the situation and be ready to act as needed," he said.

Spiegel added that at many parks, deliveries will be scrutinized and workers will be retrained on cleanliness procedures. Parks may also restrict employee travel to higher-risk countries such as China, Italy and South Korea — a measure Legoland has already taken.

On Wednesday, the opening day of Mickey & Minnie's Runaway Railway at Disney's Hollywood Studios, about 1,000 people were waiting to enter the park, said Kurt Schmidt, the owner of Inside the Magic, a massive online community and news site for Disney fans.

No one was wearing a mask, Schmidt said.

"From where I'm sitting, there's absolutely no difference in how things feel," he said. "I can't see anything that is different."

Lush reported from St. Petersburg, Florida.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

Dems look to Michigan primary as testing ground for November

By WILL WEISSERT and KAT STAFFORD Associated Press

DETROIT (AP) — Ask Arlene Williams about President Donald Trump's promises to bring back auto industry jobs that have evaporated across Michigan and she'll point with irony to the Chevy Blazer.

General Motors is now remaking the iconic American SUV after a lengthy hiatus — but building parts of it in Mexico and elsewhere overseas.

"These are some of the staple brands and yes, they're back," said Williams, 49, who works at a GM plant

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 26 of 47

in Romulus, Michigan, southwest of Detroit. "They're just not being made in the U.S."

The largest of six states voting Tuesday, Michigan could redefine a Democratic primary that has become a showdown between former Vice President Joe Biden and Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders. But many voters are already looking ahead to November and whether Trump can again win in the state that perhaps more than any other catapulted him into the White House in 2016.

For Sanders, the stakes could hardly be higher. He defeated Hillary Clinton in Michigan in 2016, emboldening his argument that he could win with a diverse coalition that drew well from young voters, working-class whites and African Americans. But it is the kind of victory he has not been able to replicate this time, and if he does not on Tuesday, any chances at the Democratic nomination may be greatly diminished.

Biden has been emphasizing the Obama administration's bailout of the auto industry, which provided an economic lifeline for GM and Ford, likely saving thousands of jobs. He is also counting on continued strong support among African American voters.

How Michigan votes will also be clarifying for November. Some see Sanders' sweeping promises to cancel student debt and provide health care for all potentially energizing young voters but not older ones wary of his democratic socialist ideology. Centrist and safe, Biden could do exactly the opposite, though.

Others worry that both candidates are taking black Democrats for granted. All that may add up to neither being able to carry the state against Trump.

"There's not a lot of energy, not enough energy, I would say, even for the primary," said Michigan state Rep. Sherry Gay-Dagnogo, whose district includes a large swath of northwest Detroit. She said the Democratic Party continues to use the same playbook of waiting until the last minute to do intensive community outreach — which crippled it in 2016.

Indeed, major party turnout in Wayne County, which encompasses Detroit and is strongly African American, fell by more than 64,000 votes in 2016 as compared to 2012. That's especially important since Trump leveled the Democrats' famed "blue wall" with narrow wins in states that were supposed to comfortably go to Hillary Clinton: Pennsylvania, Wisconsin and Michigan, which he won by just 10,704 votes out more than 4.8 million cast.

Tuesday will be the first test of Democrats' ability to take them back.

They already can point to hopeful signs. Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, who has endorsed Biden and been mentioned as a possible vice presidential pick, won in 2018, as fellow Democrat and Sen. Debbie Stabenow was cruising to re-election.

Veteran Michigan pollster Bernie Porn said the president remains unpopular with independents and Republican women, especially in the suburbs — though he said Trump's standing has recovered some in the wake of impeachment.

"I think Trump is in trouble," Porn said.

Flipping the state back could be built on gains in places like Grand Rapids, childhood home of Gerald Ford and long the epitome of country club Republicans, often most interested in fiscal conservatism but also closely watching social issues. It has begun moving to the left amid an influx of jobs bringing new residents from other parts of the state and the country, Porn said.

Sanders staged a rally Sunday in Grand Rapids and — vowing to grow the Democratic electorate by winning over young, minority and working-class voters — hit the University of Michigan and blue-collar Flint and Dearborn, home to a large concentration of Arab Americans. It is a promise he has made in other states during the primaries, but so far has largely failed to deliver.

"I am more than aware that Trump in 2016 won the state of Michigan by a small vote," Sanders said. "I do believe the people of Michigan aren't going to make that mistake again."

Sanders canceled a planned trip to Mississippi to spend more time in the state this past weekend. But he has struggled to broaden his appeal with black voters, as evidenced by Biden's wipe-out win in South Carolina and across many other Southern states on Super Tuesday.

Activist Monica Lewis-Patrick, president and CEO of We the People Detroit, said the eventual nominee will need a strong ground game in Detroit to prevent the same mistakes the party made in 2016, when the black community felt largely unseen and ignored. She has endorsed Sanders.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 27 of 47

Citing the ongoing water crisis in Flint and Detroit's aggressive water shutoff campaign that has disrupted service for 100,000-plus residential accounts across the city since 2014, Lewis-Patrick said the party needs to speak to issues that are impacting lives on a daily basis.

"We've told every candidate before we got down to the final two that we noticed in the debates when they came to Detroit that was missing from the conversation," she said, referring to when the city hosted Democratic presidential debates last summer. "What we're seeing is that many campaigns are treating black and brown communities as sort of a drive-by vote."

Sanders has spoken to Flint's water problems and the shutoff issue, asking with exasperation, "How is it possible" that people in parts of the state "don't have water coming out of the tap?"

In an attempt to shore up its position no matter who wins the nomination, the Michigan Democratic Party has had staff on the ground since 2017 in "pivot" counties that supported Obama in 2012 but went to Trump last presidential cycle. It also has led campaigns highlighting Trump's "broken promises" when it comes to issues like restoring lost manufacturing jobs.

Still, Gay-Dagnogo said that, though the state Democratic Party opened 15 offices around Michigan, "it's no secret" Trump's reelection campaign has stood up its own operations in the same areas.

"I think sometimes we just wait for something magical to happen, opposed to making sure that there are financial resources in the community to get people out," she said.

Trump, meanwhile, has visited Michigan several times as president and points to a strong national economy as proof he kept his promises to restore the state's lost jobs.

Manufacturing jobs in Michigan grew from 616,800 when Trump took office to 628,900 last December, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics. But some counties that Trump won have experienced job losses, and the state faces the prospect of further downturns as coronavirus reverberates through the economy.

While top union leaders have lined up to support either Biden or Sanders, many of their rank-and-file members continue to back Trump because of his views on social issues like guns and abortion.

"A number of union households who voted for Trump and voted against their own economic interests, I think, may do that again," said Matt Vitiote, Democratic Party chairman in Monroe County near the Michigan-Ohio border, which twice supported Obama but voted for Trump in 2016.

Williams, who noted the Chevy Blazer's international flavor, is backing Sanders and his promise to strengthen union membership nationwide. She concedes that Michigan's economy has grown under Trump but hopes it won't be enough for him to win the state again.

"I don't see that there has been real growth in higher-paying jobs," Williams said. "There have been jobs created, but they're low-paying jobs and you've got to have two or three of them in order to raise your family."

Associated Press writer David Eggert in Lansing, Mich., contributed to this report.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

China turns to propaganda to right image in virus 'war'

By KEN MORITSUGU Associated Press

BEIJING (AP) — As the rest of the world grapples with a burgeoning virus outbreak, China's ruling Communist Party has deployed its propaganda playbook to portray its leader as firmly in charge, leading an army of health workers in a "people's war" against the disease.

The main evening news on state TV regularly shows President Xi Jinping and his underlings giving instructions on the outbreak or touring related facilities. Coverage then segues to doctors and nurses on the front lines, drawing on a tradition of upholding model workers and the importance of sacrifice on behalf of the people and the party.

For the Communist Party, the epidemic is both a risk and an opportunity. It seeks to avoid blame for any mishandling of the outbreak, notably a slow initial response that allowed the virus to take hold. Conversely,

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 28 of 47

it seeks credit for overcoming the crisis, enhancing the legitimacy of its rule.

State media, a tightly controlled internet and mass mobilization campaigns have all been harnessed for the effort.

"Upbeat, if emotional, state messaging leaves the impression that self-sacrificing citizens, national unity, and enlightened leadership will inevitably triumph in China, as the fight against the virus shifts beyond the country's borders," said Ashley Esarey, a specialist on the Chinese media at the University of Alberta.

The tried and true formula appears to remain effective at promulgating the party's version of events, though the rise of social media is an ever-present challenge. A growing minority has long questioned the party line, but even many of them accept it out of habit or a lack of alternatives.

Most passively embrace a narrative that is repeated over and over, said Steve Tsang, director of the China Institute at the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies.

Li Desheng, a 22-year-old student who said news webcasts are his main source of information, commended the response of the party and the government, saying they had proven effective at stopping the spread of the virus.

"There is a Chinese idiom that says, 'Point to a deer, call it a horse,'" the philosophy major said in an interview conducted via instant message. "If you say a deer is a horse, then that is a distortion of fact. When watching a news webcast ... at least at present, I think a deer is still called a deer, and a horse is called a horse, so I believe the report."

It's not just a matter of what's shown, though — it's also what's omitted. State media trumpeted the throwing up of new medical facilities in a fortnight without reporting on the woes of people unable to find a hospital bed that necessitated the Herculean effort.

It touted crackdowns on wild animal markets and plans to shut them down, without questioning why they hadn't been sufficiently regulated since SARS, a similar virus outbreak in 2002-03.

June Teufel Dreyer, a China expert at the University of Miami, said the party may have lost credibility with what she called "engaged public opinion," but that it's difficult to know what portion of China's 1.4 billion people that represents.

Zhou Songyi, another 22-year-old student, said she doesn't find any useful information on the epidemic from the official People's Daily newspaper or state broadcaster CCTV, citing stories that, even if true, have a PR agenda rather than seeking to inform the public.

Social media has given her digital-savvy generation almost instant feedback on some state-media reports, though critical comments are often removed by the country's internet censorship.

"The battle for truth-telling on the internet is another sign that people do not simply trust in the government," said Elizabeth Economy, director of Asia studies at the Council on Foreign Relations in New York. She added, though, that the propaganda works on those who believe in the party and want to be comforted and persuaded.

The core of the approach is to stifle any criticism while providing positive role models and showing the party as China's only real hope.

China has barred citizen journalists from popular social media platforms after they reported on overcrowded hospitals and other problems. Non-state media outlets such as the magazine Caixin have done some independent reporting but stopped short of criticizing the leadership.

"The medics are portrayed as heroes not because of their dedication as health professionals, but because they are party members," said Anthony Saich, a China expert at Harvard University. He believes the crisis has damaged confidence in Xi's leadership to a degree but won't have a lasting impact.

The health workers form the basis of the people's war, a term adopted early on by Xi. A recent CCTV evening news broadcast showed him visiting military health units. Everyone maintained a safe distance from each other, following the government-ordered protocol, their mouths and noses covered by protective masks.

"Wars invite people to cast aside their squabbles and dissent and to come together," said David Bandurski of the China Media Project at the University of Hong Kong. "Wars make heroes — and heroes are the

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 29 of 47

stuff propaganda thrives upon.”

Nationalist campaigns have worked before, channeling anger away from the party in the SARS outbreak, territorial disputes with Japan, last year’s Hong Kong protests and the ongoing trade war with the U.S.

This time, the official coverage of the virus may help blunt any lasting political damage to Xi and the party’s authority, even as the social and economic costs of the outbreak exact a rising toll. More than 3,000 people have died in China from the virus.

“The leadership has been very eager to write the happy ending to this story before anyone really knows what the world is dealing with,” Bandurski said.

Associated Press researcher Chen Si in Shanghai contributed to this report.

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute’s Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Dutch trial opens for 4 suspects in downing of flight MH17

By **MIKE CORDER** Associated Press

SCHIPHOL, Netherlands (AP) — As the trial of three Russians and a Ukrainian charged with multiple counts of murder for their alleged involvement in the 2014 downing of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 got underway Monday, a Dutch prosecutor solemnly read out the names of all 298 people killed in the attack.

As expected, the suspects didn’t appear for trial and weren’t in the courtroom as prosecutor Dedy Woei-a-Tsoi read out the victims’ names.

It took 18 minutes.

Some of the relatives of the dead who were in the courtroom bowed their heads and closed their eyes as they listened to the names.

“The silence in this room when the names were being read out of all those people who lost their lives makes abundantly clear that everybody is sitting here lost in their thoughts,” Presiding Judge Hendrik Steenhuis said before adjourning the hearing for a lunch break.

The trial began with Steenhuis explaining the intricacies of Dutch criminal proceedings to families monitoring the trial in the Netherlands and around the world and outlining efforts to summon the four suspects to attend.

None of them did and only one appointed lawyers to represent him in the case. Steenhuis ruled that the trial would continue in their absence.

It’s a day that has been a long time coming for family and friends of those killed on July 17, 2014, when a Buk missile blew MH17 out of the sky above conflict-torn eastern Ukraine.

Five black-robed judges — three who will hear the case and two alternates — filed silently into a packed courtroom on the edge of Schiphol, the airport from which the doomed flight took off, heading for Malaysian capital Kuala Lumpur. A small number of family members of victims were in court, others watched proceedings via a video link from a conference center in the central Netherlands.

Among those in court was Piet Ploeg, who lost his brother, Alex, his sister-in-law and his nephew. Ploeg sat in court, his hands folded in front of him, listening attentively as the case started.

“Next of kin want justice, simple as that,” he said. “We want justice for the fact that 298 people are murdered, and this court and the hearings (that) will start today will give us more clarity about what happened, why it happened and who was responsible for it.”

Steenhuis said the criminal file in the case contains some 36,000 pages and “an enormous amount of multimedia files.” Examining it at trial “will be a very painful and emotional period. There are many victims and of course because of that there are many next of kin,” he said.

Jon and Meryn O’Brien flew all the way from Sydney to witness the start of the unprecedented Dutch trial, hoping for justice for their son Jack.

“The trial is important because the truth still matters,” Jon said on the eve of the trial. “You shouldn’t

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 30 of 47

be able to murder 298 people and for there to be no consequences, regardless of who you are. So it's important the truth about that is told."

The O'Briens were among families who arranged 298 white chairs in rows resembling aircraft seating outside the Russian Embassy in The Hague on Sunday to protest what they see as Moscow's deliberate attempts to obscure the truth about what happened.

After a painstaking investigation spanning years, an international team of investigators and prosecutors last year named four suspects: Russians Igor Girkin, Sergey Dubinskiy and Oleg Pulatov as well as Ukrainian Leonid Kharchenko. More suspects could face charges as the investigations continue.

Pulatov hired a firm of Dutch lawyers to represent him. He also had a Russian lawyer in court, Steenhuis said. The lawyers will be allowed to raise preliminary objections such as challenging the court's jurisdiction at later hearings, if they want to.

Russia has consistently denied involvement in the downing, even after prosecutors alleged that the Buk missile system which destroyed the passenger plane was transported into Ukraine from the Russian 53rd Anti-Aircraft Missile Brigade's base in Kursk and the launching system was then returned to Russia.

In Moscow last week, Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova accused investigators of presuming Russia's guilt.

In a statement, British Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab called the trial "an important milestone towards accountability for the shooting down of MH17" and the deaths of 298 people, including 10 Britons.

The case is a regular Dutch criminal trial with an unprecedented number of victims.

Legal expert Marieke de Hoon of Amsterdam's Vrije University characterized the case as "both ordinary and extraordinary at the same time."

Under Dutch law, family members are allowed to make victim impact statements and seek compensation. That will likely happen some time later this year.

"For me, the most important thing (is) will there be enough evidence that the judge can make a conclusion: Guilty," said Anton Kotte, who lost three family members. "If that's the case, then I will be satisfied, because I know at that moment another level will be attacked — a political level will be attacked worldwide in the direction of Russia."

N. Korea fires weapons after threatening 'momentous' action

By HYUNG-JIN KIM Associated Press

SEOUL, South Korea (AP) — North Korea fired three short-range projectiles off its east coast on Monday, South Korea's military said, two days after the North threatened to take "momentous" action to protest outside condemnation over its earlier live-fire exercises.

Seoul's Joint Chiefs of Staff said the multiple kinds of projectiles fired from the eastern coastal town of Sondok flew as far as 200 kilometers (125 miles) at a maximum altitude of 50 kilometers (30 miles) before landing in the waters between the Korean Peninsula and Japan.

A JCS statement said South Korea expressed "strong regret" over the launches that it said violate a past inter-Korean agreement aimed at lowering military animosities. South Korea's national security director, defense minister and spy chief held an emergency video conference and agreed the North Korean action were not helpful to efforts to establish a peace on the Korean Peninsula, according to South Korea's presidential Blue House.

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga said North Korea fired suspected ballistic missiles. He said the multiple North Korean projectiles traveled 100 to 200 kilometers (62 to 125 miles) but none landed inside Japan's exclusive economic zone.

"North Korea's latest action, on top of its repeated firings of ballistic missiles, is a serious threat to the peace and safety of Japan and ... a grave problem for the entire international society," Suga said.

In the past 10 days, North Korea has said leader Kim Jong Un supervised two rounds of live-fire artillery exercises in its first weapons tests since late November. Kim had entered the new year with a vow to bolster his nuclear deterrent and not to be bound by a major weapons test moratorium amid a deadlock

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 31 of 47

in a U.S.-led diplomacy aimed at convincing Kim to abandon his nuclear program in return for economic and political benefits.

South Korea and some European countries protested against the second North Korea drills on March 2, which they believe involved ballistic missile launches in a violation of U.N. Security Council resolutions.

North Korea insists it has the right to conduct military drills in the face of U.S. and South Korean forces on its doorstep.

The U.N. Security Council didn't issue any statement after discussing North Korea's March 2 drills, but five European members condemned what they called "provocative actions." Belgium, Estonia, France, Germany and the United Kingdom said afterward that the tests undermine regional and international peace, security and stability.

The North's Foreign Ministry on Saturday accused the five European countries of "repeating an absurd argument of condemnation and violation resolutions of the U.N. whenever we conducted military drills."

"The reckless behavior of these countries instigated by the U.S. will become a fuse that will trigger our yet another momentous reaction," a ministry statement said.

Last week, Kim Jong Un's younger sister leveled diatribes and crude insults against South Korea for criticizing its earlier live-fire exercises, but her statement was followed by Kim sending a letter to South Korean President Moon Jae-in expressing condolences over its coronavirus outbreak.

Some experts say North Korea may intend to catch South Korea off balance before seeking help in reviving its dilapidated economy, since the U.S. has said sanctions on North Korea will stay in place unless it takes significant steps toward denuclearization.

"The coronavirus is likely exceeding North Korea's public health capacity, so Kim Jong Un is playing a two-level game. At the domestic level, his regime claims to protect the people with drastic quarantine measures and military exercises against external threats," said Leif-Eric Easley, associate professor at Seoul's Ewha Womans University. "Pyongyang may be seeking international assistance, but remains obsessed with not appearing in an inferior position to Seoul."

Nuclear talks between Pyongyang and Washington remain stalled since the breakdown of a second summit between Kim and President Donald Trump in Vietnam in early 2019.

Subsequent talks between the two countries failed to produce much progress amid disputes over how much sanctions relief should be given in return for a limited step to move away from nuclear weapons by North Korea.

Sudan's youth protesters await justice amid frail transition

By SAM MAGDY Associated Press

KHARTOUM, Sudan (AP) — When Youssef al-Sewahly took to the streets in Sudan late in 2018, he and the other protesters had one goal: to remove the autocratic regime of Omar al-Bashir and replace it with a civilian-led government. They've achieved the former, but the latter still hangs in the balance.

Now, he and other young protesters find themselves with their futures on hold, suspended with the uncertainty of the post-uprising transition.

Nearly a year after al-Bashir's ouster, the country faces a dire economic crisis. Inflation stands at a staggering 60% and the unemployment rate was 22.1% in 2019, according to the International Monetary Fund. The government has said that 30% of Sudan's young people, who make up more than half of the over 42 million population, are without jobs.

Farida, 26, graduated from the University of Khartoum in 2017 with a degree in education. Since then, she has not been able to find work as a teacher. She helps her mother who works as a tea street vendor in the capital. She, like many young people, predicts the return of protests if things don't improve.

"The situation is deteriorating, and prices are skyrocketing," she said, asking that she be identified by only her first name for fear of being targeted for speaking out against the interim authorities. "If they cannot find a solution, people will take to the streets again."

Generals remain the de facto rulers of the country and have shown little willingness to hand over power

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 32 of 47

to a civilian-led administration. Youth activists like al-Sewahly face arrest and intimidation and are still reeling from a ferocious crackdown by security forces last summer that broke up their sit-in and killed dozens.

"Our trust in the military is zero, we do not expect anything from them," said al-Sewahly, 19, who stopped attending high school when the protests started.

Al-Sewahly and other activists have found a refuge at a charity center just blocks away from the former location of the sit-in in the center of Khartoum. It sprang up as a central point where family members could come for help as they searched for protesters missing and feared dead in the June 3 crackdown. It has since come to serve as a sort of community center.

Al-Sewahly and his friends sleep there most nights. They risk being targeted by security forces if they draw too much attention to themselves. Al-Sewahly was arrested early this year while walking near the sit-in location. He was kept for several days before being released.

On the walls outside the center, a mural with faces of dead protesters reads, "Shame on us if the blood of the martyrs was shed for naught."

In some ways, the center is a small re-creation of the sit-in, which over the course of months had burgeoned into a tent city where protesters welcomed the homeless, street vendors and the poor.

It was high bread prices that had finally motivated many Sudanese people to take to the streets after years of oppression. At first, they were a motley crew of young men like al-Sewahly. But their numbers grew, and the scattered marches in the dusty alleys of the suburbs morphed into the permanent sit-in outside the military's headquarters. Women and people of all ages and classes joined.

Al-Sewahly said that's when he began to think they had a chance.

"We came to the conclusion that we would continue on the path to overthrow the al-Bashir regime and build a new free country," al-Sewahly said.

Online and on television, he and other young people grew up seeing a wider world that didn't match their homeland.

Al-Sewahly had known no other leader but al-Bashir, who ruled since coming to power in an Islamist-backed military coup in 1989. Al-Sewahly grew up in a Sudan that imposed a strict interpretation of religion on its citizens, limiting personal freedoms, and was an international pariah for its support of extreme Islamists.

Throughout his life and longer, Sudan had been at war with itself, with Khartoum fighting multiple rebel movements. Sudan was cut in half when South Sudan seceded in 2011. Al-Bashir continued ruling the north with an iron fist, as the economy started a slow nosedive without the south's oil resources.

One of the clearest symptoms of the dysfunction was a lack of opportunity for youth.

They had watched youth-led protest movements in 2011 remove other autocrats throughout the region, only to see al-Bashir's infamous security forces crush the stirrings of demonstrations on Sudan's streets. In 2013, a spike in fuel prices sparked protests that were brutally squashed, with about 200 demonstrators killed, according to rights groups.

Last year's marches proved different. They turned into the most sustainable protest movement since Sudan's independence from its Egyptian and British overlords in 1950s. Pressured by demonstrators camped outside its headquarters, the military in April overthrew al-Bashir.

There were celebrations, at first. People cheered and waved Sudanese flags out of car windows. Al-Sewahly now remembers them as premature. To see the transition through, he and other demonstrators decided to continue their sit-in until civilian officials were appointed.

But the military soon showed it would brook no further dissent. Security forces stormed the protest camp on June 3.

"They fired live ammunition randomly," al-Sewahly said. "They meant to kill us, humiliate us."

He was one of hundreds who were rounded up and beaten in the crackdown. Up until then, he had worn his hair long, covering it in a Rastafarian-style knit cap. On that day, one of the soldiers shaved it with a knife. He remembers watching paramilitaries beat a mother and her child and feeling helpless to stop it.

More than 120 people were killed, and hundreds injured during the dispersal and the subsequent

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 33 of 47

crackdown, according to the protesters. The dead include more than 40 bodies which were pulled from the Nile River afterwards by fellow demonstrators. The official death toll stands at 87 people, including security forces.

It was a reminder of how little had changed from al-Bashir's era. Al-Sewahly says his support of the interim government hinges on whether they prosecute those responsible for the violence.

The crackdown shocked but reenergized the protest movement. After months of negotiations, the military and the pro-democracy movement reached a power-sharing deal in August. The deal established a joint military-civilian, 11-member sovereign council that will govern Sudan for the next three years.

After that, if all goes according to plan, elections will be held. According to the deal, the interim government also created a commission to look into the events of June 3.

But it remains to be seen if they will get justice for those killed. In an ironic twist, the office leading the investigation is located in a complex where security forces were accused of beating and sexually assaulting protesters.

Rights lawyer Nabil Adib was named to lead the investigation. He admits that he can't even guarantee protection of witnesses who have given testimonies on crimes committed during the crackdown. Adib said his commission did not have "resources and capabilities to provide such protection."

For some young people, the lack of progress has transformed glimmerings of hope into disillusion.

Al-Amin Ali, 30, trained as a civilian air pilot, but has been working as a taxi driver since his return from South Africa in 2017.

A year after al-Bashir's overthrow, he said he is looking to again leave the country. He says the interim government is far from meeting the basic demands of the uprising — justice for previous crimes, and a decent standard of living.

"Emigration is the only chance of success," he said.

Juul Labs sought to court AGs as teen vaping surged

By **MATTHEW PERRONE** and **RICHARD LARDNER** Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — It was a blunt warning about the dangers of youth vaping: Georgia Attorney General Chris Carr announced late last month that his state had joined 38 others to investigate whether Juul Labs, the nation's largest electronic cigarette company, promoted and sold its nicotine-heavy products to teens.

It was a moment Juul had worked to avoid.

Ten months earlier, a team of Juul representatives met with Carr and his senior staff. They delivered a 17-page presentation laden with information about the public health potential of Juul's combustion-free vaping devices for adult smokers and the company's "commitment to ending youth use," a pledge that included more rigorous retail and online sales controls.

Juul had access, but it did not pay off. In that way, the company's experience in Georgia was typical. Again and again, the company met with Carr and other state attorneys general, in many cases giving money to their campaign funds. But again and again, it was stymied in its efforts to forestall legal action.

The session in Carr's Atlanta offices and meetings with other state AGs haven't been previously reported. The Associated Press uncovered the influence campaign by reviewing Juul's political donations and obtaining internal emails, meeting minutes and company records through open records requests to more than a dozen state attorneys general offices.

The documents shed new light on the unusual connection Juul forged with Iowa's Tom Miller, the longest-serving state attorney general in U.S. history. The records show that Miller served as a behind-the-scenes adviser, helping the company respond to media requests and inquiries from government officials. Miller did not receive campaign contributions from Juul.

The documents also provide new details about the advocacy roles that the former attorneys general of Massachusetts and Rhode Island have played for the company, including lobbying state officials. All three would become important messengers as Juul stressed its efforts to keep its products away from minors while simultaneously pitching its technology as an anti-smoking tool.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 34 of 47

Juul's political action committee made thousands of dollars in campaign contributions to individual state attorneys general, several of whom like Carr later met with the company's representatives, according to the records. Katie Byrd, Carr's spokeswoman, said a \$3,000 contribution Juul's PAC made to Carr's 2018 reelection campaign wasn't a factor in his decision to accept the meeting.

The company also donated \$50,000 each to the Republican and Democratic fundraising committees that support the election of attorneys general candidates. Those donations won Juul corporate membership in both groups, a status that came with invitations to semiannual retreats and conferences attended by attorneys general and their staff. These events provide opportunities for companies to lobby state officials.

The face time with state officials hasn't prevented scrutiny, however. So far nine states have filed lawsuits against Juul and more may come in the wake of the 39-state investigation, which also is examining whether the company made misleading claims about the nicotine content in its devices.

In an emailed response to written questions, a Juul spokesman declined to say how many state attorneys general company representatives have met with. Juul, the spokesman said, is working to earn "the trust of society by working cooperatively with attorneys general, regulators" and other officials to combat teen vaping and to steer adult smokers away from cigarettes.

The spokesman said Juul reached out to Miller and donated to other attorneys general to "listen and learn" from them on a range of issues, including cracking down on counterfeit vaping products.

Teen use of e-cigarettes has skyrocketed more than 70% since Juul's launch in 2015, leading the Food and Drug Administration to declare an epidemic of underage vaping among teenagers. Health experts fear this unprecedented increase has hooked a generation of young people on nicotine, a highly addictive drug that is harmful to the developing brain. More than 1 in 4 high schoolers now reports vaping and Juul is the top brand, preferred by 60 percent of students, according to the latest government data.

"Juul really created this crisis," said Dr. Scott Gottlieb, the former Food and Drug Administration commissioner. "Juul created the pool of nicotine-addicted teens and I think they popularized the idea of vaping among kids."

During Gottlieb's tenure, the FDA raided Juul's San Francisco headquarters, seizing more than 1,000 documents related to the company's early sales and marketing efforts, including online promotions featuring young models and celebrities on social media sites like Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Juul's meteoric rise has been followed by a hasty retreat in recent months, amid a nationwide backlash over vaping. Although Juul remains the dominant player in the multibillion-dollar e-cigarette market, the company has made several concessions such as pulling its mint, fruit and creme flavors from the market. The company currently sells only menthol and tobacco nicotine pods. Juul also has shuttered its social media presence and halted all U.S. advertising.

The FDA and a congressional oversight panel continue to investigate whether the company targeted young people with the flavors, design and advertising of its products.

Yet Juul may face an even bigger threat from state attorneys general, most of whom are elected independently and have broad discretion to investigate and litigate. They're especially formidable when they band together. Dozens of them did in the 1990s with litigation against tobacco companies that led to an historic \$206 billion settlement and new marketing rules that continue to govern how the industry operates. More recently, nearly all states have sued opioid drugmakers and distributors for their alleged role in the addiction epidemic tied to prescription painkillers.

"It means they're in a world of hurt," James Tierney, a former attorney general of Maine who now teaches at Harvard Law School, said of the multistate investigation. "The states are not buying what Juul is selling, and they're saying, 'We need to go deeper.'"

The latest of the nine state lawsuits against Juul was filed last month by Massachusetts' chief legal officer, Maura Healey. Citing company records, she alleges that Juul bought advertisements on seventeen.com, nickjr.com, the cartoonnetwork.com and other websites designed for teens and children.

Most of the state lawsuits similarly allege that Juul adopted the playbook of Big Tobacco by luring teens with colorful, youth-oriented ads, "launch parties" and product giveaways. But to date, Juul hasn't faced the same type of coordinated, multi-state lawsuit previously used to target tobacco, pharmaceutical and

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 35 of 47

financial companies.

A TOBACCO WARRIOR IN JUUL'S CORNER

Juul's unlikely partnership with Miller, the Iowa attorney general, began in spring 2018 as federal and state health officials grappled with the surging popularity of teen vaping.

A Democrat with more than 37 years in office, Miller frequently mentions his leadership role in forging the 1998 settlement with the tobacco industry. He's championed vaping's potential to "save the lives of adult smokers."

The company sought Miller's counsel on how to respond to inquiries from government officials and media outlets. And even as more and more teens were vaping, he urged the public not to "overreact." Portions of Juul's interactions with Miller were previously reported by Politico and Vice News.

By April 2018, Miller's staff was working to set up a call between the attorney general and Juul's then-chief administrative officer, Ashley Gould.

"He wants a time scheduled with her and put on his calendar," wrote Miller's executive secretary, in an email to fellow staffers.

Two weeks later Miller's office issued a press release titled "Juul offers opportunity to reduce smoking rates" highlighting the company's potential to shift smokers away from cigarettes.

Days after that, Miller announced a more concrete relationship, saying he would advise Juul on how to keep its product away from young people.

In a press statement, Miller said underage vaping was a "cause for concern," but had "not reached panic or epidemic stages."

Miller's new role involved organizing a group of experts to advise the company on underage use. Of the 13 experts Miller assembled for the group, more than half were former attorneys general, including ex-officials from Illinois and Arizona, both states that had recently requested documents from the company. Other members of the group included several researchers and one of Miller's assistants, who would later leave his job to work as a vice president for Juul.

The advisory group would hold several conference calls with Juul executives. But one former state official was not sympathetic to Juul's desire to keep its flavors readily available in stores.

"I would support banning the product if you can't do a better job of keeping it out of the hands of children," said former Arizona attorney general, Grant Woods, according to meeting minutes from an August call. The group held its last meeting in October 2018, according to Miller's office.

Throughout the summer, Juul frequently reached out to Miller as negative press accounts of teenagers addicted to Juul's flavored nicotine pods began to appear.

In one email to Miller's secretary, a Juul executive requested time to discuss interview requests from "three top-tier reporters" who had contacted the company. "I'd love to involve AG Miller but wanted to get your thoughts before I sent the reporters your way," wrote Juul spokeswoman Victoria Davis.

In the following weeks, Juul would seek Miller's input or encourage him to field inquiries from The New York Times, CBS' "60 Minutes" and NBC.

In April 2019, a positive profile of Juul co-founders James Monsees and Adam Bowen penned by Miller appeared in Time magazine's annual list of the 100 most influential people.

In an interview with AP, Miller said he became involved with the company to help "bring them into compliance" by stopping underage sales of their products and to reduce the toll of smoking on adults.

"If you were going to deal with the question of kids and e-cigarettes, you had to deal with Juul," Miller said.

Miller rejected any suggestions that Juul benefited from its association with him and said he wouldn't hesitate to take legal action against the company if evidence shows wrongdoing.

Miller's office hasn't joined the multistate investigation of Juul.

Anthony Johnstone, a former assistant attorney general for Montana, said there is little precedent for such a close partnership.

"That depth of involvement by an AG with a single corporation at the center of a public health issue is

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 36 of 47

uncharacteristic," he said.

MONEY AND MEETINGS

In mid-2018, as other states began to eye Juul more critically, the company gave \$50,000 each to the Democratic Attorneys General Association and its GOP counterpart, the Republican Attorneys General Association, according to financial reports both groups filed with the IRS. The organizations raise money and back candidates from their respective parties that are running for the office. Neither of the groups discloses how they disperse corporate donations to candidates.

Those contributions and others would be followed by meetings with at least five state attorney generals, documents obtained through open records requests show.

One of those meetings came in September 2018, when Juul representatives met with Pennsylvania's Josh Shapiro and four of his staffers for nearly two hours to discuss how to stop young people from using the company's products.

Shapiro's office had called for Juul to pull its fruit and dessert flavors from the market and reduce the high nicotine levels of its e-cigarettes. Yet the company declared these weren't bugs, but features that adult smokers wanted, according to an eight-page memo written by a Juul executive that recounted the conversation.

A spokeswoman for Shapiro said members of his staff "meet with companies to discuss potential violations of the laws" and to see if they will correct them. Last month Shapiro announced that Pennsylvania would sue Juul for allegedly misleading the public about the addictiveness of its e-cigarettes.

In late October 2018, Juul's political action committee donated more than \$38,000 to incumbent state attorneys general and one first-time candidate for the office, according to a review of campaign finance records. By then, Juul was squarely in the crosshairs of FDA regulators, who were sounding the alarm on teen vaping after survey data showed e-cigarette use among high school students had jumped nearly 80% in the past year.

Not everyone wanted Juul's money. Kwame Raoul, a Democrat elected in November 2018 to his first term as Illinois' attorney general, rebuffed a \$3,000 gift from Juul. Hanah Jubeh, a spokeswoman for Raoul's campaign, said the contribution conflicted with his professional responsibilities and personal views. Raoul's office announced in December it was suing Juul.

South Carolina Attorney General Alan Wilson announced last month that he'd joined the 39-state probe of Juul to examine whether the company "is following the law and not misleading people with false or misleading claims." Previously, Wilson's reelection campaign had accepted a \$3,000 donation from Juul's PAC and he'd met with company representatives in February 2019.

Wilson spokesman Robert Kittle said Juul's contribution had no bearing on the decision to grant the meeting.

HIRE HANDS

Juul enlisted two former state attorneys general, Patrick Lynch and Martha Coakley, as the company stepped up its outreach to current occupants of the office. Lynch was Rhode Island's chief legal officer from 2003 to 2010 while Coakley was the attorney general of Massachusetts from 2007 to 2015.

Lynch runs a consulting firm that promotes its ability to help clients like Juul "build relationships and tailor communications" with state attorneys general around the country.

When Juul executives agreed to allow Marlboro cigarette-maker Altria to buy a 35% stake in their company for nearly \$13 billion, Lynch sent a letter on Juul's behalf to state attorneys general explaining that his client would "remain fully independent and entirely focused" on its mission to help smokers, despite the investment from the nation's biggest cigarette maker.

Lynch's office did not return repeated calls and emails seeking comment.

Juul hired Coakley to be its vice president of government affairs in April 2019. A month later she was among the Juul representatives that met with Chris Carr, the Georgia attorney general.

While in office, Coakley joined more than three dozen other attorneys general in writing a letter to the FDA that called for the "immediate regulatory oversight of e-cigarettes, an increasingly widespread, addictive product."

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 37 of 47

She has a very different role now. Coakley helps to “educate state officials, regulators and organizations on Juul’s commitment to combating underage use and transitioning adult smokers from combustible cigarettes,” the company said.

Her replacement as Massachusetts attorney general, Maura Healey, has a very different opinion of Juul. “We are going to make them pay for the public health crisis they caused in Massachusetts,” Healey said upon announcing her lawsuit against the company last month.

Follow the reporters on Twitter: Matthew Perrone @AP_FDAAwriter and Richard Lardner @rplardner

Despite virus risk, 2020 hopefuls keep up campaigns for now

By HOPE YEN and WILL WEISSERT Associated Press

GRAND RAPIDS, Mich. (AP) — As the coronavirus hits more states, Democratic presidential candidate Bernie Sanders said Sunday his campaign is gauging when it may become necessary to cancel the large campaign rallies that public health experts say could be breeding grounds to spread the potentially deadly illness.

“Obviously what is most important to us is to protect the health of the American people,” Sanders said as he appeared in a series of TV interviews. “And what I will tell you, we are talking to public health officials all over this country.”

“This is an issue that every organization, every candidate has got to deal with,” he said.

Federal health authorities have been advising older people and those with medical conditions, in particular, to avoid crowded spaces, prompting the cancellation of music and arts festivals and other events around the country. On Sunday, Surgeon General Jerome Adams noted that the average age of death for people from the coronavirus is 80, while for those needing medical attention, it is 60.

But that so far hasn’t led President Donald Trump or his two remaining major Democratic rivals, Sanders and Joe Biden, to cut back on big campaign events. Each man is in his 70s.

Sanders said “in the best of all possible worlds” the three candidates should probably limit their travel and avoid crowds, “but right now, we’re running as hard as we can.” Sanders planned a meeting Monday in Detroit with public health experts and others to discuss the outbreak.

The Biden campaign said Sunday the former vice president was following the guidance of state and federal health experts on the outbreak, but there were no planned changes to his campaign activities.

Trump on Saturday said he wasn’t worried about the coronavirus getting closer to the White House after the first case in the nation’s capital was confirmed over the weekend. Officials also said an attendee of a recent political conference where Trump himself had spoken also tested positive for the virus.

“No, I’m not concerned at all. No, I’m not. We’ve done a great job,” Trump said.

Trump campaign communications director Tim Murtaugh said Sunday the campaign is proceeding as normal. “We announce rallies when we are ready to announce rallies,” he said. “The consideration is always the president’s schedule and what states the president wants to target.”

Adams, acknowledging Trump’s busy public schedule, said for many Americans “life can’t stop” and that ultimately the goal was to minimize risk the best as possible.

“But speaking of being at risk, the president, he sleeps less than I do, and he’s healthier than what I am,” he said. “And so that’s the other reason that this messaging is hard, because there are 70-year-olds who run marathons and are healthier than some 30-year-olds.”

“If people are going to go out there, we want them to be extra cautious — we want them to wash their hands frequently,” Adams said.

The U.S. death toll from the virus has climbed to at least 21, with all but three victims in Washington state. The number of infections swelled to more than 500, scattered across the U.S.

Still, concerns about the spreading virus haven’t stopped thousands from thronging campaign rallies in recent days.

At a Trump rally last week in Charlotte, North Carolina, the virus threat didn’t deter enthusiastic fans

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 38 of 47

who shared buckets of chicken fingers in the stands and dunked their hands into shared vats of popcorn while they awaited the president's arrival.

Sanders drew more than 7,000 to a convention hall in downtown Detroit on Friday night and his campaign said 15,000 people attended his rally in Chicago's Grant Park on Saturday.

Mercedes Lopez, a 56-year-old who owns a restaurant in Grand Rapids and attended an open-air Sanders rally in the city's downtown on Sunday, said she's not afraid of the virus. She said she sees the government's increased concern as a plot to distract the electorate from other, negative things that are occurring, such as increasing petty crime and official corruption.

"There's a virus but it's not at the level they are saying. It's to distract people," Lopez said.

Lopez added that she wasn't worried about attending an event with such a large group, saying, "I'm calm. I'm not going to worry about it because the more you think about, 'I'm going to protect myself against this one thing or this other thing,' it becomes impossible. You can't protect yourself from everything."

Sanders appeared on CNN's "State of the Union," NBC's "Meet the Press," and ABC's "This Week," and Adams spoke on CNN and CBS' "Face the Nation."

Yen reported from Washington. Associated Press writer Zeke Miller contributed to this report.

Italy quarantines north in drastic bid to slow virus spread

By **FRANCES D'EMILIO** and **ANGELA CHARLTON** Associated Press

ROME (AP) — Italy took a page from China's playbook Sunday, attempting to lock down 16 million people — more than a quarter of its population — for nearly a month to halt the relentless march of the new coronavirus across Europe.

Weddings and museums, movie theaters and shopping malls are all affected by the new restrictions, which focus on a swath of northern Italy but are disrupting daily life around the country. Confusion reigned after the quarantine was announced, with residents and tourists from Venice to Milan trying to figure out how and when the new measures would take effect. Travelers crammed aboard standing-room-only trains, tucking their faces into scarves and sharing sanitizing gel.

After mass testing uncovered more than 7,300 infections, Italy's outbreak surged to nearly equal South Korea's, which had been tapering off, and trailing China, where COVID-19 is in retreat. Italy's death toll rose to 366.

Around the globe, more and more events were canceled or hidden behind closed doors, from the pope's Sunday service to a Formula One car race in Bahrain to a sumo competition in Japan, where wrestlers arrived at the arena in face masks and were required to use hand sanitizer before entering. In Saudi Arabia, all schools and universities were to close starting Monday, following similar moves in central China, Japan and other Gulf countries. Questions grew about whether to maintain U.S. presidential campaign rallies and other potential "super-spreading" gatherings of people, as the virus entered new U.S. states.

Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte signed a quarantine decree early Sunday for the country's prosperous north. Areas under lockdown include Milan, Italy's financial hub and the main city in Lombardy, and Venice, the main city in the neighboring Veneto region. The extraordinary measures will be in place until April 3.

Tourists in the region, including those from abroad, were free to head home, the Italian transport ministry said, noting that airports and train stations remained open.

The pope, who has been ill, held his Sunday blessing by video instead of in person, even though he was not directly affected by the lockdown. He described feeling like he was "in a cage."

It's a feeling familiar in China, where the government locked down about 60 million people in central Hubei province in late January. Six weeks later, they are still effectively stuck.

The World Health Organization has said China's move helped the rest of the world prepare for the virus to arrive, and WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus tweeted his support Sunday for Italians and their "bold, courageous steps aimed at slowing the speed of the coronavirus."

China has suffered about three-fourths of the world's 110,000 coronavirus infections and most of its

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 39 of 47

3,800 deaths. New infections in China have leveled off, however, and most of those infected, in China and globally, have already recovered.

Infections increased in other epicenters -- South Korea, Iran and especially Italy. And with a nose-dive in tourist traffic and major disruptions to supply chains worldwide, stocks struggled Sunday. Mideast indexes fell 4% to 10%.

Italy is closing all museums and archaeological sites, even those far from the lockdown zone. It suspended all weddings until April 3. The northern regions concerned by Sunday's decree are closing cinemas and ski slopes.

Eateries all around Italy are expected, somehow, to keep patrons a meter (3 feet) away from each other.

The Vatican Museums are now closed, including the Sistine Chapel, in yet another blow to Italy's all-important tourism industry. Alitalia, the Italian airline that was already financially ailing before the virus, suspended all flights from Milan's Malpensa airport starting Monday.

Lombardy's governor, who is in quarantine himself, sought to calm the public, discouraging hoarding and insisting "we're not going to war."

Chaos erupted in the hours before Conte signed the decree, as word leaked about the planned quarantine.

In a reversal of the stereotypical north-south tensions in Italy, the governor of Puglia urged northerners to stay away and not bring virus infections down south.

"Get off at the first railway station. Don't take planes," Gov. Michele Emiliano said in his dramatic appeal. "Turn around in your cars, get off the pullman buses at the next stop."

By Sunday afternoon, residents of northern Italy remained confused.

Factory worker Luca Codazzi was set to come out of a two-week quarantine but instead was facing new limits on his freedom. And he said the decree was confusing. "In theory, the cordon should go down at midnight," Codazzi said. He still doesn't know whether his factory will be open Monday.

Governments across Europe tightened their rules. Bulgaria banned all indoor public events. France's president and Germany's governing parties held emergency security meetings as the number of cases in each country surpassed 1,000.

In waters around the world, the virus has left the cruise ship industry in disarray.

The Grand Princess cruise ship, where 21 people have tested positive for the virus, has idled for San Francisco for days but was to dock in Oakland on Monday. Americans will be sent to facilities around the country for testing and isolation, but it's not yet clear what will happen to international passengers. Canada planned to pick up more than 200 of its citizens.

The Grand Princess had a cluster of almost 20 infections during an earlier voyage that has led to one death.

Another cruise ship is in quarantine on the Nile River in Egypt with 45 confirmed virus cases. Two other ships with no confirmed cases were turned away this weekend from Malaysia and Malta amid virus fears.

Advice to the public continues to vary. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention urged older adults and people with severe medical conditions to "stay home as much as possible" and avoid crowds. A federal official told The Associated Press that the White House had overruled health officials who wanted to recommend that elderly and sick Americans not fly on commercial airlines too. A spokesman for U.S. Vice President Mike Pence denied that.

The U.S. death toll from the virus climbed to 21, with all but three victims in Washington state. Infections exceed 500, including the first case in the nation's capital. Two members of Congress, Sen. Ted Cruz and congressman Paul Gosar, were self-quarantining after meeting a man who was infected. Cruz said he had brief contact with the man. Gosar said he had sustained contact and his office would be closed for week.

China on Monday reported 40 new cases over the past 24 hours, the lowest level since it began publishing nationwide figures on Jan 20, and 22 new fatalities. China now has now recorded 80,735 total cases, among which 19,016 remain in treatment and 58,600 have been released.

China has had 3,119 deaths from COVID-19, with Italy's 366 deaths the second worst in the world.

South Korea reported 69 more cases, raising its total to 7,382, slightly surpassing Italy's 7,375 as the

second-worst outbreak.

North Korea, which hasn't reported a single case but has put thousands in quarantine and nearly closed its borders, flew dozens of diplomats and other foreigners out of the country Monday morning.

Angela Charlton reported from Paris. Nicole Winfield and Trish Thomas in Rome, Aya Batrawy in Dubai, Ken Moritsugu in Beijing, Yuri Kageyama in Tokyo, Chris Blake in Bangkok, Adam Geller and Maria Sanminiatelli in New York, Hyung-jin Kim in Seoul, Ashok Sharma in New Delhi, Anna Johnson in London, David Rising in Berlin and Jonathan Poet in Philadelphia contributed to this report.

Follow AP coverage of the virus outbreak at <https://apnews.com/VirusOutbreak> and <https://apnews.com/UnderstandingtheOutbreak>

The Associated Press receives support for health and science coverage from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute's Department of Science Education. The AP is solely responsible for all content.

Women fill streets of world's cities with call for justice

By AMY GUTHRIE Associated Press

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Women filled the streets of the world's largest cities Sunday to protest gender violence and inequality on International Women's Day, with the mothers of murdered girls leading a march in Mexico City and participants in Paris inveighing against the "virus of the patriarchy."

While many protests were peaceful celebrations others were marred by tension, with security forces arresting demonstrators at a rally in Kyrgyzstan and police reportedly using tear gas to break up a demonstration by thousands of women in Turkey.

"In many different ways or forms, women are being exploited and taken advantage of," Arlene Brosas, the representative of a Filipino advocacy group said during a rally that drew hundreds to the area near the Philippine presidential palace. Protesters called for higher pay and job security, and demanded that President Rodrigo Duterte respect women's rights.

Turkish riot police fired tear gas to disperse thousands of demonstrators who, in defiance of a government ban, tried to march along Istanbul's main pedestrian street to mark International Women's Day, media reports said.

Turkish authorities declared Istiklal street, near Istanbul's main Taksim square, off-limits, and said the planned march down the avenue was unauthorized. Thousands of demonstrators, most of them women, gathered near Istiklal regardless and tried to break through police barricades to reach it, according to the opposition Cumhuriyet newspaper and other media.

The independent T24 news website said police also fired blanks to disperse the crowd.

In Pakistan, however, women managed to rally in cities across the country, despite petitions filed in court seeking to stop them. The opposition was stirred in part by controversy over a slogan used in last year's march: "My Body, My Choice."

Some conservative groups had threatened to stop this year's marches by force. But Pakistani officials pledged to protect the marchers. The rallies are notable in a conservative country where women often do not feel safe in public places because of open harassment. The main Islamic political party, Jamaat-e-Islami, organized its own rallies to counter the march.

Tens of thousands of women filled the streets of Mexico's capital to protest rampant femicides and impunity for the killers. The country has recently seen a series of rowdy protests by women who have vandalized monuments and metro stations to express their anger in one of the world's most dangerous countries to be a woman.

On average, more than 10 women are slain each day in Mexico, often by their male partners.

The mothers of slain women and girls led Sunday's march, with people cheering them on, chanting: "You're not alone!" They were followed by homemakers, students and mothers with small children wearing

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 41 of 47

purple shirts, bandannas and hats.

"I don't want to be the next one, and I don't want my mother to be the next one," said Ana Paula Santos, a 21-year-old public university student.

María de la Luz Estrada, coordinator of the National Citizen's Observatory on Femicide, said more Mexican women have taken to the streets in recent years because the assaults and killings are "increasingly more alarming."

Earlier, activists had painted the names of many of the thousands of women killed each year in Mexico on the ground of the capital's iconic Zocalo plaza.

One of the largest demonstrations occurred in Chile, where thousands flooded the streets of the capital with dancing, music and angry demands for gender equality and an end to violence against women.

"They kill us, they rape us and nobody does anything," some chanted.

National police estimated 125,000 took part in the capital and nearly 35,000 in other cities, but organizers said the crowds were far larger. Scattered clashes broke out at points when demonstrators threw rocks at police, who responded with water cannon.

Many protesters demanded that a proposed new constitution strengthen rights for women and thousands wore green scarves in a show of support for activists in neighboring Argentina, which is considering a proposal to legalize elective abortion.

Tens of thousands of women also marched through Paris, inveighing against the patriarchy.

"Enough impunity!" chanted some activists, who focused on France's unusually high rate of women killed by their husbands. Last year, one woman was killed every two or three days by a current or former partner, and the government is increasing efforts to crack down on domestic violence.

"They should provide resources for shelters for women, victims of violence, real resources, human resources, also prevention programs for violent men," union activist Julia Parbotin said.

Tens of thousands of women also marched in Madrid and other Spanish cities, despite concern over the spread of the new coronavirus.

A massive banner reading, "With rights, without barriers. Feminists without frontiers" in Spanish was carried at the front of the march in the capital.

Spanish health authorities did not put any restrictions on the march, but recommended that anyone with symptoms similar to those of the new coronavirus stay home. Authorities said 120,000 people participated in Madrid's march, down from 350,000 last year.

At a school in East London, meanwhile, the duchess of Sussex, Meghan Markle, joined students in listening to speeches about women labor activists, and urged both girls and boys to respect the contributions of women every day of the year.

"For young men ... you have your mothers, sisters, girlfriends, friends in your life — protect them. Make sure they are feeling valued and safe," she told the students.

But safety was in short supply at some events to mark the day.

The detonation of explosives triggered panic at a ceremony in Bamenda, an English-speaking town in the northwest of Cameroon. Suspicions focused on separatists who had vowed to disrupt the events. No one was killed or wounded.

Police in Bishkek, the capital city of Kyrgyzstan, detained about 60 people after a group of unidentified men broke up what authorities called an unauthorized rally. About 10 women were released with charges of resisting police, the Akipress news agency reported, citing an attorney.

In Brazil, protests took a political turn, with many of the tens of thousands of protesters in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Brasilia denouncing the administration of far-right President Jair Bolsonaro, who has made comments seen by many as offensive to women.

In Mexico, where activists plan to hold a "Day Without Women" on Monday, Natalia Olalde said she marched because she's fed up with the lack of justice for women in the country.

Government data shows that 3,825 women in Mexico met violent deaths last year, 7% more than in 2018. Authorities seem incapable of preventing or properly investigating the crimes, very few of which

result in convictions.

The 18-year-old university student studying business administration worries she'll face sexual harassment once in the workforce.

"We want to be free and safe," said Olalde.

That's why she plans to join the women's strike as well on Monday. She vows to stay indoors, not even leaving for a coffee.

Pelosi, Schumer: Trump needs to support help for outbreak

WASHINGTON (AP) — The two top Democratic leaders in Congress are calling on President Donald Trump to support a series of steps to help Americans deal with the coronavirus outbreak — from paid sick leave to widespread and free testing and other moves.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Democratic leader Chuck Schumer said Sunday that Trump should put the health and safety of the public first and such steps should take priority over moves to help companies deal with financial losses — like tax cuts for corporations.

"We are demanding that the administration prioritize the health and safety of American workers and their families over corporate interests," they said in a statement.

Among the steps they are pushing: paid sick leave for workers impacted by the quarantine orders or those responsible for caring for children in case of school closures; enhanced unemployment insurance for workers who may lose their jobs because of the outbreak; expansion of food programs to people impacted by coronavirus; and adequate protection for front-line workers in contact with those exposed.

Other steps they want are widespread, free coronavirus testing, affordable treatment for all; protections from price gouging; and increased resources in the medical system to respond to increased demands.

"The administration must move more quickly and seriously to address the severe impacts of the coronavirus on the financial security of America's families," they said.

Nashville church worships in the rubble after deadly tornado

By KRISTIN M. HALL Associated Press

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Bobbie Harris, 79, lost her rental home, her job and her church when a deadly tornado struck her community in North Nashville. But all she could think about was her blessings.

"Through it all, God is good," Harris said.

Harris joined other members of Mount Bethel Missionary Baptist Church on Sunday to worship just outside the ruins of the church, which has been in the community for 135 years. The roofs of their two church buildings are gone, ripped away by strong winds early Tuesday.

The church pitched a tent in the parking lot and the congregants gathered to sing, pray and hold hands in what the church called "worship in the rubble." Even contractors who were busily trying to replace downed power lines paused and took off their hard hats as Pastor Jacques Boyd led the congregation in prayer on the sunny, windy morning.

The National Weather Service has said at least six tornadoes hit middle Tennessee during last week's storms that killed 24 people and caused massive damage in parts of Middle Tennessee.

Harris lived only blocks away from the church, where she also worked as a cook. When the tornado hit her home, the powerful winds grabbed her air conditioning unit and flung it into a fence across the street. Her granddaughter's car was destroyed.

"God is good. He was the conductor on that train and he went around me," Harris said. "He saved me."

Boyd told his congregation that the storm was a challenge from God and had brought everyone closer together in the recovery efforts. Behind him, bits of insulation blew around in the breeze and the wooden beams that once held up the roof of the chapel were exposed. Many of the neighboring homes were still without power Sunday and blue tarps covered roofs nearby. But under the white tent, there were smiles on people's faces as they greeted each other, danced to the music and sung hymns.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 43 of 47

"Nashville is now primed to show the world what we're made of," said Boyd, in blue suit, as people responded "Amen."

The church, with a congregation of about 300 people, held before- and after-school care for children, had a gymnasium where kids from the neighborhood could go, put on summer camps for children and provided computer literacy classes for its older congregants.

"We must trust in the savior who does not deliver us from storms, but through storms," he told the clapping congregation.

But Boyd said the church was more than the red brick building behind him. "Now that the brick and mortar is gone, do you still love this community?" he asked as his choir raised their hands and voices in response.

Boyd said the church will continue to hold its services inside the tent. In the meantime, they are hoping other institutions will help the church continue to provide their community services.

Tennessee Gov. Bill Lee and his wife, Maria, sat in the front row of the folding chairs, shook hands with the church members and bowed their heads in prayer.

"There was a lot of hope here," Lee said. "God uses people like this in this environment to bring hope to this community, and it was great to see."

Boyd said that as soon as he saw the demolished buildings, he prayed for guidance.

"I asked God, 'What do I say in moments like this?'" Boyd said. "And God spoke clearly, as I am speaking to you now. You have to help while hurting."

Mount Bethel Missionary Baptist Church: <http://www.mountbethel1885.org/>

Follow Kristin M. Hall at <http://twitter.com/kmhall>

No fans, no fun: Athletes uneasy over empty-arena solutions

By JAKE SEINER AP Sports Writer

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz. (AP) — As U.S. sports leagues weigh whether to bar fans from ballparks and stadiums to help stall the coronavirus outbreak, San Francisco Giants pitcher Jeff Samardzija is one of the few players who can tell them exactly what that feels like.

"It's not very fun," he said.

Samardzija pitched for the Chicago White Sox in a 2015 game played without fans in Baltimore due to civil unrest in the city. It was a bizarre scene at Camden Yards — a sun-drenched stadium, empty except for the teams — but something that has already become common internationally and could happen in the U.S. if there's no slowdown to the spread of the COVID-19 strain that has infected more than 100,000 people worldwide.

The global virus outbreak has caused concern about cramming tens of thousands of fans in for games that technically can go on without them.

Sports leagues in Europe, Asia and the Middle East have already locked supporters out of venues, and the NBA sent a memo to its franchises Friday warning them to prepare for the possibility that it may have to host games without fans.

While U.S. sports leagues have been in regular contact with each other regarding the outbreak, MLB and the NHL have not yet issued similar notices.

Baseball Commissioner Rob Manfred plans to discuss the coronavirus with team owners in a conference call Monday — the first league-wide call between clubs and the commissioner about the outbreak. But at this stage, the league plans to open the season in 2 1/2 weeks as planned.

With the situation evolving quickly, athletes in the U.S. are becoming aware — and concerned — about the possibility of playing behind closed doors.

Los Angeles Lakers star LeBron James said Friday he "ain't playing if I ain't got the fans in the crowd," and other players also said they'd be disappointed to suit up for empty seats.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 44 of 47

"Boring. Boring," Chicago White Sox shortstop Tim Anderson said. "We get the energy from our fans. It would suck, man."

Virus concerns are greater in some pockets of the country — like in Washington state, which has reported 16 deaths and more than 100 people diagnosed.

Fears around the outbreak have already affected sports attendance there. The Seattle Sounders drew 33,080 fans Saturday night, the smallest crowd for an MLS regular season match in the soccer-crazed city since the club's inaugural season in 2009.

"That would be an odd one to play in an empty stadium," Sounders coach Brian Schmetzer said. "It'd be like 'OK, we're playing, but something is missing.'"

Washington officials are already cautioning residents to avoid large gatherings — and one of the biggest on the schedule is when the Mariners host the Texas Rangers for opening day March 26.

Seattle, like all other big league clubs, has been monitoring the situation in conjunction with MLB and taken precautions around its spring training complex in Peoria, Arizona. But Mariners vice president of communications Tim Hevly said that at this stage, "we have no specific concerns or precautions based on what is happening in Washington."

"These decisions will be made by Major League Baseball with the Mariner people that sit in a higher chair than I'm in," Seattle manager Scott Servais said. "It is serious, it is really serious. Something that we do not look lightly at. ... But hopefully it gets calmed down a little bit."

Spring training routines have been gently adjusted — hand-washing has gone up, autograph meet-and-greets with fans have been tweaked, and Servais said the Mariners have re-jiggered some dugout handshakes — but overwhelmingly, players have said they and their families have been unaffected.

All of which makes it hard to fathom that fans could be barred at some point.

"It would be weird," said Mariners pitcher Taijuan Walker, who said he hadn't played baseball without at least a few thousand fans in attendance since he was in the minor leagues.

"Certainly you want to make the right decision for our fans, everybody that's close to the game," Servais said. "We still need to play our games, if we can, but that's not for me to decide. We'll adhere to the decisions that are made. We are planning on playing a complete season this year, and I'm sure we will."

The International Ice Hockey Federation said Saturday it was canceling the women's world hockey championships in Canada, and Division III NCAA basketball tournament games were held at an empty venue at Johns Hopkins this weekend.

The sports calendar is loaded with major events in the next few months that may also be forced to adjust, including the NCAA basketball tournament and the Masters.

Golf star Rory McIlroy said he'd understand if officials kept fans away from Augusta National.

"I think people would see a lot more of the golf course," he said. "It would be kind of cool. But obviously, I'd rather play the Masters with people there than without.

"It would be just like having an early tee time on the PGA Tour, anyway," he added. "I guess for a few guys, it wouldn't be that much different."

For many athletes, there's also skepticism that leagues might go to such extremes.

"I heard (LeBron's) comment on that," Atlanta Hawks guard Trae Young said. "Not playing with fans is going to be weird. Honestly, I don't see that happening. I couldn't play."

Of course, it's happened before. White Sox pitcher Carlos Rodon watched most of the locked-down 2015 game in Baltimore from the bullpen, and he remembered it being so quiet, he could hear every word said by Orioles center fielder Adam Jones.

"There was like only scouts and us, so you could just hear people talking in the dugout," Rodon said. "It was just odd because it almost echoed because there was no one in there."

That was believed to be the first big league game played without fans, and it was a one-off — a scheduling necessity to get the game in after rioting in Baltimore prompted by the death of Freddie Gray, a 25-year-old black man who died in police custody.

"A completely different situation," Samardzija said.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 45 of 47

If virus-related lockouts prove necessary, it's hard to see them being so isolated. If the spread slows, the sports schedule likely will go on as planned. If not, millions of ticket holders might be forced to stay away in cities all over the country.

"Obviously health is first and playing games is second, so we just need to make sure everything's taken care of and wrapped up so people can come enjoy these games," Samardzija said. "But I wouldn't recommend playing them in empty stadiums."

AP Sports Writers Jay Cohen in Glendale, Arizona; Tim Booth in Seattle; and Doug Ferguson in Orlando, Florida; and freelancer Clay Bailey in Memphis, Tennessee, contributed to this story.

Follow Jake Seiner: https://twitter.com/Jake_Seiner

More AP MLB: <https://apnews.com/MLB> and https://twitter.com/AP_Sports

Harris endorses Biden; Jesse Jackson backs Sanders

WASHINGTON (AP) — Kamala Harris endorsed Joe Biden on Sunday and said she would "do everything in my power" to help elect him, becoming the latest dropout from the Democratic race for president to line up behind the former vice president in his battle with Bernie Sanders for the nomination.

The decision by the California senator who was one of three black candidates seeking to challenge President Donald Trump further solidifies the Democratic establishment's move to close circles around Biden after his Super Tuesday success. Her endorsements comes before the next round of primaries, with six states voting Tuesday, including Michigan and Mississippi.

Sanders, a Vermont senator, countered with his own major endorsement on Sunday, announcing that civil rights icon Jesse Jackson was formally backing him.

Jackson appeared with Sanders during a campaign stop in Grand Rapids, Michigan. In a statement released by Sanders' campaign, Jackson said Biden had not reached out to him for endorsement and Sanders had. He also said he chose Sanders after the senator's campaign offered responses on 13 issues Jackson raised, including protecting voting rights, increasing funding for historically black colleges and universities and committing to putting African Americans on the Supreme Court.

In a statement on Biden, meanwhile, Harris said, "There is no one better prepared than Joe to steer our nation through these turbulent times, and restore truth, honor, and decency to the Oval Office."

"He is kind and endlessly caring, and he truly listens to the American people," her statement added.

Harris said the United States "is at an inflection point. And the decision voters make this November will shape the country and the world our children and grandchildren will grow up in. I believe in Joe Biden."

Among Biden's former rivals, Amy Klobuchar, Pete Buttigieg, Beto O'Rourke, Mike Bloomberg, Tim Ryan, Deval Patrick and John Delaney have endorsed him. Sanders has gotten the endorsement of Marianne Williamson and Bill de Blasio.

Also coming out for Biden on Sunday were two prominent Mississippi Democrats, former Gov. Ray Mabus and Mike Espy, agriculture secretary under President Bill Clinton. Espy is also on the ballot Tuesday as he seeks the party's Senate nomination for the chance to face the Republican incumbent, Cindy Hyde-Smith, in November.

Harris withdrew from the race in December, ending a candidacy with the historic potential of becoming the first black woman elected president. The former California attorney general was seen as a candidate poised to attract the multiracial coalition of voters that sent Barack Obama to the White House. But she ultimately could not craft a message that resonated with voters or secure the money to continue her run.

Biden and Sanders, two white men in their 70s, are now the front-runners for the nomination in what was once a field of candidates that included several woman and much younger politicians.

Harris said in her statement that "like many women, I watched with sadness as women exited the race one by one." Four years after Hillary Clinton was the party's nominee, "we find ourselves without any

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 46 of 47

woman on a path to be the Democratic nominee for president."

"This is something we must reckon with and it is something I will have more to say about in the future," she said. "But we must rise to unite the party and country behind a candidate who reflects the decency and dignity of the American people and who can ultimately defeat Donald Trump."

Biden on Friday won the endorsement of former Massachusetts Gov. Deval Patrick, who was one of the black candidates for the nomination. New Jersey Sen. Cory Booker hasn't made a public endorsement yet.

Black voters have anchored Biden's comeback since disappointing finishes in overwhelmingly white Iowa and New Hampshire in early contests that put his campaign on the brink of collapse.

Catch up on the 2020 election campaign with AP experts on our weekly politics podcast, "Ground Game."

Today in History

By The Associated Press undefined

Today in History

Today is Monday, March 9, the 69th day of 2020. There are 297 days left in the year.

Today's Highlight in History:

On March 9, 1945, during World War II, U.S. B-29 bombers began launching incendiary bomb attacks against Tokyo, resulting in an estimated 100,000 deaths.

On this date:

In 1841, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *United States v. The Amistad*, ruled 7-1 in favor of a group of illegally enslaved Africans who were captured off the U.S. coast after seizing control of a Spanish schooner, *La Amistad*; the justices ruled that the Africans should be set free.

In 1916, more than 400 Mexican raiders led by Pancho Villa (VEE'-uh) attacked Columbus, New Mexico, killing 18 Americans. During the First World War, Germany declared war on Portugal.

In 1933, Congress, called into special session by President Franklin D. Roosevelt, began its "hundred days" of enacting New Deal legislation.

In 1959, Mattel's Barbie doll, created by Ruth Handler, made its public debut at the American International Toy Fair in New York.

In 1964, the U.S. Supreme Court, in *New York Times Co. v. Sullivan*, raised the standard for public officials to prove they'd been libeled in their official capacity by news organizations.

In 1976, a cable car in the Italian ski resort of Cavalese fell some 700 feet to the ground when a supporting line snapped, killing 43 people.

In 1981, Dan Rather made his debut as principal anchorman of "The CBS Evening News."

In 1987, Chrysler Corp. announced it had agreed to buy the financially ailing American Motors Corp.

In 1989, the Senate rejected President George H.W. Bush's nomination of John Tower to be defense secretary by a vote of 53-47. (The next day, Bush tapped Wyoming Rep. Dick Cheney, who went on to win unanimous Senate approval.)

In 1997, gangsta rapper The Notorious B.I.G. (Christopher Wallace) was killed in a still-unsolved drive-by shooting in Los Angeles; he was 24.

In 2005, Dan Rather signed off for the last time as principal anchorman of "The CBS Evening News."

In 2009, President Barack Obama lifted George W. Bush-era limits on using federal dollars for embryonic stem cell research.

Ten years ago: Vice President Joe Biden, visiting Israel, condemned an Israeli plan to build hundreds of homes in east Jerusalem. Former television producer Robert "Joe" Halderman pleaded guilty in New York to attempted grand larceny for trying to blackmail talk show host David Letterman. (Halderman was sentenced to six months in jail; he actually served four.) Doris "Granny D" Haddock, a New Hampshire woman who'd walked across the country at age 89 to promote campaign finance reform, died at age 100.

Five years ago: In northwestern Argentina, two helicopters collided and burst into flames shortly after taking off near the remote settlement of Villa Castelli, killing both pilots and eight French nationals.

Groton Daily Independent

Monday, March 9, 2020 ~ Vol. 28 - No. 251 ~ 47 of 47

(Among the victims were Olympic champion swimmer Camille Muffat (moo-FAY'), Olympic bronze-medalist boxer Alexis Vastine and pioneering sailor Florence Arthaud, who were contestants on a European reality TV show which was being shot in the sparsely populated region.) Solar Impulse 2, a Swiss-made solar-powered aircraft, took off from Abu Dhabi just after daybreak in a historic first attempt to fly around the world without a drop of fossil fuel (however, overheated batteries grounded the plane in Hawaii). Apple CEO Tim Cook unveiled the Apple Watch in San Francisco.

One year ago: R&B singer R. Kelly walked out of a Chicago jail after someone who officials said did not want to be publicly identified paid \$161,000 that Kelly owed in back child support. (Kelly would be arrested in July and ordered held without bond as he awaited sex-related charges in Chicago and New York.) Julia Ruth Stevens, the last surviving daughter of Hall of Fame baseball slugger Babe Ruth, died at an assisted living facility in Nevada at the age of 102; she had been a decades-long champion of Ruth's legacy.

Today's Birthdays: Former Sen. James L. Buckley, Conservative-N.Y., is 97. Singer Lloyd Price is 87. Actress Joyce Van Patten is 86. Country singer Mickey Gilley is 84. Actress Trish Van Devere is 79. Singer-musician John Cale (The Velvet Underground) is 78. Singer Mark Lindsay (Paul Revere and the Raiders) is 78. Former ABC anchorman Charles Gibson is 77. Rock musician Robin Trower is 75. Singer Jeffrey Osborne is 72. Country musician Jimmie Fadden (The Nitty Gritty Dirt Band) is 72. Actress Jaime Lyn Bauer is 71. Magazine editor Michael Kinsley is 69. TV newscaster Faith Daniels is 63. Actress Linda Fiorentino is 62. Actor Tom Amandes is 61. Actor-director Lonny Price is 61. Country musician Rusty Hendrix (Confederate Railroad) is 60. Actress Juliette Binoche is 56. Rock musician Robert Sledge (Ben Folds Five) is 52. Rock musician Shannon Leto (30 Seconds to Mars) is 50. Rapper C-Murder (AKA C-Miller) is 49. Actor Emmanuel Lewis is 49. Actress Jean Louisa Kelly is 48. Actor Kerr Smith is 48. Actor Oscar Isaac is 41. Comedian Jordan Klepper (TV: "The Daily Show") is 41. Rapper Chingy is 40. Actor Matthew Gray Gubler is 40. Rock musician Chad Gilbert (New Found Glory) is 39. Roots rock musician Ben Tanner (Alabama Shakes) is 37. NHL defenseman Brent Burns is 35. Actress Brittany Snow is 34. Rapper Bow Wow is 33. Rapper YG is 30. Actor Luis Armand Garcia is 28. Actress Cierra Ramirez is 25.

Thought for Today: "Anybody who wants the presidency so much that he'll spend two years organizing and campaigning for it is not to be trusted with the office." — David Broder (1929-2011).

Copyright 2020, The Associated Press. All rights reserved.