

## Heading north on the southbound bridge

Drivers are getting used to Gold Star's crossover pattern

By **KIMBERLY DRELICH**  
Day Staff Writer

Groton resident George Abad, who works the night shift in the emergency room of Lawrence + Memorial Hospital in New London, drives over the Gold Star Memorial Bridge multiple times a day.

He drove the new crossover lanes driving north on Sunday and the existing northbound bridge on Monday. He thought the crews did a really good job, though there could be more signage on the northbound bridge, but he thinks that is coming.

"I think they did a great job with all the lanes, but we just have to remember to go slow," Abad said. "We have to go slow for a mile and a half for the next four years, and it'll work out."

Abad was among the residents on Monday getting used to a new traffic crossover on the bridge, which will be in place for four years.

The \$900 million repair project for the northbound span includes installing a new deck, repairing concrete and strengthening steel.

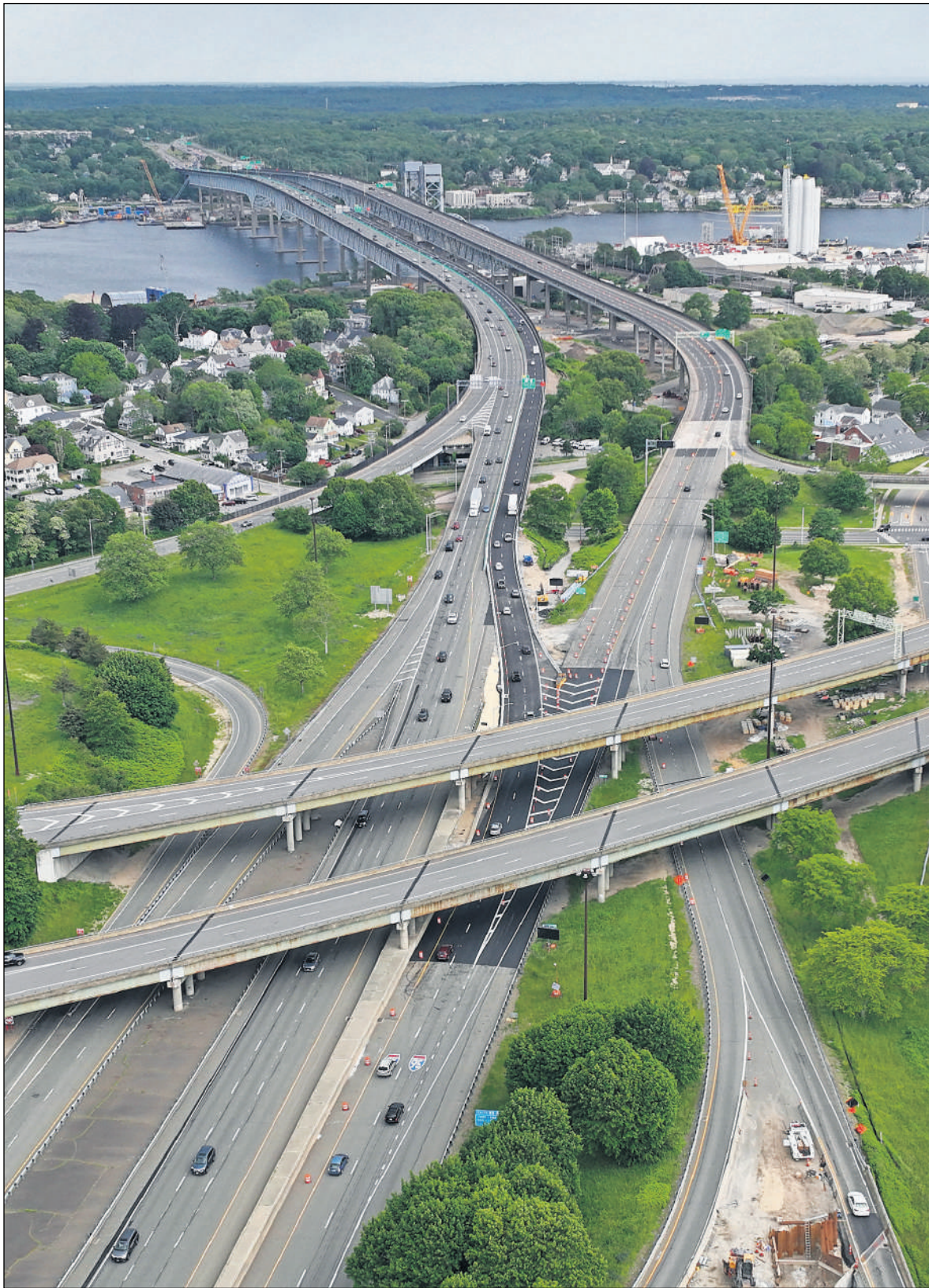
The "crossover" of two northbound lanes onto a section of the southbound bridge — separated by a barrier from the regular southbound lanes — was installed overnight Saturday. Exit 86 is accessible through the crossover.

The existing northbound bridge was reduced to two lanes, with the right lane as an Exit 85 only lane.

Mystic resident Gina Cary said she knows the project needs to be done. But she said the area gets a lot of traffic this time of the year, and she's a little leery about traveling back from New London to Groton on the new section of the bridge.

"I'm not sure how the traffic's going to be — especially starting in July, it's going to be very, very busy," she said. "I'm hoping that everybody drives slower, so we don't have any accidents."

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An aerial view of the new crossover on Interstate 95 in New London just before the Gold Star Memorial Bridge on Sunday.

PETER HUOPPI/THE DAY

## Victims of fire taking stock

A day after blaze at apartment building, residents look ahead

By **GREG SMITH**  
and **KIMBERLY DRELICH**  
Day Staff Writers

**Groton** — Despite being among the more than 50 people displaced from her home by a fire on Sunday at The Ledges, Ebony Reece said she counts herself blessed.

"Things can be replaced. I'm alive. I'm healthy," she said.

Reece, who has spent 18 years in the Navy, joined a group of others outside the burned four-story apartment building Monday morning, waiting to be escorted back in to assess the damage to her home from Sunday's blaze.

There hadn't been a lot of time to think of what to grab at 2:55 a.m. Sunday when the alarms sounded throughout the 44 units at Building 10 of the 135 Ledgewood Road complex, she said.

"My cat was my only concern," Reece said.

Her cat, Lukah, is safe. Reece said she was back on Monday to pick up belongings and continues to make plans for accommodations in the days to come since no one expects the building will be ready to be occupied anytime in the near future. Others included several Electric Boat employees who came to retrieve security badges, among other items.

Fire officials said the structure is condemned as a result of the fire that made its way into as many 10

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## Norwich City Council adopts \$167.8 million '26-'27 budget

By **DANIEL DRAINVILLE**  
Day Staff Writer

**Norwich** — The City Council voted Monday night to adopt a \$167.8 million budget for 2026-27, which represents a 2.08% increase over the current budget — but which, combined with the state's promise of additional funding for the city, brings the tax rate down from the current year.

The council also set the tax rate for property owners in the paid central city fire district at 39.38 mills, down 1.09 mills from the current year. Tax-payers in the five volunteer districts will have a tax rate of 34.44, down 0.37 mills.

Comptroller Joshua Pothier on Monday said owners with an assessed median home value of \$164,080 in the central city fire district would see their tax bills decrease by \$178.85. He

calculated that the decrease in taxes on a home of the same value in one of the volunteer districts would be about \$60.70.

"I'm very proud of this budget," said Mayor Swarnjit Singh. "First of all, we are all voting together on something, nicely ... (and) we have fully funded schools, are lowering taxes and are giving some relief to the taxpayers."

Last month, the city learned it was expected to receive an additional \$9 million in one-time state aid as the result of the state budget. But from then until the Monday meeting, city officials had held off on discussing how the extra money would be allocated, as Gov. Ned Lamont had not yet signed off on the budget.

Lamont finally signed the budget last week. So at Monday's meeting — prior to the adoption of the budget

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**NORWICH MAYOR SWARNJIT SINGH**

and setting of the tax rate — councilors voted unanimously on several resolutions related to allocating the \$9 million in state aid, \$5.9 million of which comes through the state's Education Cost Sharing grant, and is reserved for the school system. The other \$3.1 million of the state aid is municipal funding through the Mashantucket Pequot/Mohegan Fund grant.

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## Norwich now evaluating two potential sites for boat launch

By **DANIEL DRAINVILLE**  
Day Staff Writer

**Norwich** — City officials are now evaluating two potential sites to move the boat launch from Howard T. Brown Park, after determining the site that was initially proposed — the city-owned Viaduct Parking Lot — poses costly engineering challenges.

The second option being evaluated would be to build the launch at the corner of Shipping Street and Terminal Way, where a piece of city-owned property would have to be combined with another that it would have to acquire from the Castle family.

Norwich Community Development Corp. President Kevin Brown said the two parcels together "could make for a very effective boat launch."

The Shipping Street site is more than a quarter-mile up the Thames

River from the Viaduct site, which was the original option identified by Public Works Director Brian Long. A launch at the Viaduct site would place boaters in the Shetucket River, just around a bend in the river from where it converges with the Thames in front of Howard T. Brown Park.

But officials, including Long, have since noted there would be engineering challenges with the Viaduct site. The main issue is that there is a 14-foot differential in elevation from the parking lot, where the launch would have to be built, to the water.

Brown said as the city began to assess the viability of the Viaduct, "it was clear that dropping 14 feet in grade to get down to the water's edge was going to require an

SEE BOAT PAGE A6

### WEATHER

Today, partly sunny and comfortable. High 73. Wednesday, sunny and delightful. High 76. **A6**

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## METEOR OVER MASS. WAS AS HEAVY AS AN ELEPHANT, NASA SAYS

When the double boom rang out in New England over the weekend, shaking homes and sending pets fleeing, questions started flooding social media.

"Did anyone else hear that boom?" "Anyone feel that?"

NASA let people know over the weekend that the cause of the commotion was a meteor, but on Monday they revealed even more stunning details.

The fireball was as heavy as an elephant and 5 feet wide and was going 42,000 mph when it entered Earth's atmosphere. It broke up miles above New England on Saturday and the energy released was equivalent to about 230 tons of TNT, the agency estimated, accounting for the booms.

NASA revealed the jaw-dropping details in a social media post Monday along with other statistics.

The meteor was made up of natural material — not a satellite or space debris — and traveled through the atmosphere for about 26 miles, according to NASA, before falling into Cape Cod Bay, which sits along southeastern Massachusetts.

The agency was quick to point out that meteors are very common, but typically don't have as big of an audience as this one. "They often occur over the ocean or unpopulated areas with no witnesses, or during the daytime, making them difficult to spot," according to NASA.

The event prompted widespread speculation initially. The rattling boom had some people in Massachusetts and Rhode Island thinking there had been an earthquake or that a tree had fallen.

— Associated Press

## Fancy footwork



JON CHOL JIN/AP PHOTO

Children take part in a game during the 76th anniversary of the June 1 International Children's Day at the Taesongsan Pleasure Park in Pyongyang, North Korea, on Monday.