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FLORIDA TODAY
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Court: Pentagon can't kick out transgender military members
NEWS, 2A
WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 2026
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MANATEE MEET AND GREET

It's like a scene from a nature documentary, Indian River Lagoon-style, as manatees, unconcerned with spectators, cameras or live streamers, gather in the water at Dixon Boulevard and Indian River Drive in Cocoa. They typically mate in herds, with multiple males pursuing the female. Manatees are currently listed as "threatened" in Florida, but their numbers have been improving as seagrass recovers in some areas of the IRL.



A manatee is ready for a close-up in the lagoon.
TOP: Manatees – who typically mate in herds, with multiple males pursuing the female – are pictured in the Indian River Lagoon in Cocoa. PHOTOS BY TIM SHORTT/ FLORIDA TODAY

FL ocean launch platform proposed

Seagate Space receives Space Florida funding

Rick Neale
Florida Today
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Within days, prototype construction work should begin on Seagate Space's floating platforms that may someday launch Firefly Aerospace and Vaya Space rockets skyward off the Florida coastline. While SpaceX and Blue Origin deploy ships that serve as offshore landing platforms for rocket boosters, Seagate Space aims to launch rockets from sea. Co-founder and CEO Michael Anderson said his early-stage company's strategy will serve as a "pressure relief valve" of Florida-shored alternative launch sites as Cape Canaveral rocket traffic continues to increase. On Tuesday, June 2, the Space Florida board of directors approved a \$270,000 Seagate Space equipment purchase agreement to help construct a prototype module at Port Tampa Bay. This "building block" of a launch-ship ballast system will help lead to a full-scale "proof of concept" mission, per the board presentation. Founded in 2025, Seagate Space is based out of spARK Labs by ARK Invest in St. Petersburg. Anderson said this module is a test-bed version of a ballast unit that will lie underwater in one of the pontoons, housing pumps and electrical controls engineered to offset wave motion during launch. He said he hopes Tampa crews start cutting steel within a week or two, See PLATFORM, Page 5A

Orlando Health planning to bring a new hospital to Viera

Tyler Vazquez
Florida Today
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA
Orlando Health this week released the details of its planned hospital coming to Viera, with the emergency department expected to open as soon as fall of 2027. Groundbreaking on the project is ex-

pected to begin this month. The hospital will serve the central Brevard community that lost Rockledge Regional Medical Center, which closed last year after Orlando Health purchased the distressed asset from Steward Health Care. Orlando Health officials say the project will include a seven-story hospital
See HOSPITAL, Page 4A



An artist's rendering shows a planned Orlando Health Viera hospital expected to break ground in June. PROVIDED BY ORLANDO HEALTH

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