

The Free Lance-Star

Season preview

Washington Nationals enter 2026 with a new coach, a new GM, and a clean slate. **SPORTS, PAGE B1**

Hippity-hoppity

Let the Easter egg hunts and more, begin. **WEEKENDER, PAGE A10**



Thursday, March 26, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

Fredericksburg.com • \$3

DHS SHUTDOWN



MICHAEL WYKE PHOTOS, ASSOCIATED PRESS

Air travelers endure long lines and two-hour wait times at the TSA checkpoint at Terminal E at the George Bush Intercontinental Airport on Friday in Houston.

MIDDLE EAST

More attacks launched on Israel

JON GAMBRELL, DAVID RISING, MUNIR AHMED AND AAMER MADHANI
Associated Press

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Iran dismissed an American plan to pause the war in the Middle East on Wednesday and launched more attacks on Israel and Gulf Arab countries, including an assault that sparked a huge fire at Kuwait International Airport.

Iran's defiance came as Israel launched airstrikes on Tehran and as the United States deployed paratroopers and more Marines to the region.

In an interview with Iranian state TV, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said his government hasn't engaged in talks to end the war, "and we do not plan on any negotiations."

Earlier, two officials from Pakistan described the 15-point U.S. proposal broadly, saying it addressed sanctions relief, a rollback of Iran's nuclear program, limits on missiles and reopening the Strait of Hormuz, through which a fifth of the world's oil is shipped.

An Egyptian official involved in the mediation efforts said the proposal also includes restrictions on Iran's support for armed groups. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss details not yet released.

White House press secretary Karoline Levitt claimed the U.S. and Iran are in ongoing talks even as Iranian officials deny it.

"Talks continue. They are productive, as the president said on Monday, and they continue to be," Levitt said at a White House briefing on Wednesday.

Some of those points were nonstarters in negotiations before the war: Iran insisted it won't discuss its ballistic missile program or its support of regional militias, which it views as key to its security. Its ability to control passage through the Strait of Hormuz represents one of its biggest strategic advantages.

Iran's attacks on regional energy infrastructure along with its restrictions on the strait sent oil prices skyrocketing and sparked fears of a global energy crisis, in turn putting pressure on the U.S. to find a way to end the chokehold and calm markets.

More troops deployed

At least 1,000 troops from the 82nd Airborne Division will be sent to the Mideast in the coming days, three people with knowledge of the plans told The Associated Press. They spoke on condition of anonymity.

The paratroopers are trained to jump into hostile or contested areas to secure key territory and airfields.

Va. airports spared the worst

TSA officers will miss second full paycheck after shutdown began

MICHAEL MARTZ
Richmond Times-Dispatch

The passenger lines generally aren't long at Richmond International Airport, and no ICE agents are patrolling the baggage claim. However, federal transportation security workers say Virginia travelers shouldn't be fooled into thinking the airport has been spared from the turmoil that has engulfed the nation's airports during a government funding shutdown that reached its 39th day Tuesday.

Transportation Security Administration officers will miss their second full paycheck Friday — in addition to losing half of a paycheck after the shutdown began on Valentine's Day. They are caught between congressional Democrats who want new controls on Immigration and Border Patrol agents and President Donald Trump as he demands tougher voting requirements in exchange for a deal on funding the beleaguered homeland security agency, now enduring its second extended shutdown in the past six months.

"Just because you don't see a long wait time at one particular airport doesn't mean those officers aren't struggling," said Aaron Barker, president of the union local for TSA workers at



Air travelers wait Friday at the TSA checkpoint at Terminal E at the George Bush Intercontinental Airport in Houston.

Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport, the nation's busiest airport and among those where agents for Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) are now patrolling at Trump's direction.

Barker was among a dozen representatives of the American Federation of Government Employees on a conference call with news media Tuesday, speaking about the difficulties their members face in an escalating political crisis that has

forced them to work without pay. The union represents almost all of the federal agency's more than 50,000 workers.

More than 400 TSA employees have quit their jobs nationwide during the prolonged shutdown, and others are weighing the cost of rising gasoline prices for commuting to work as they face household bills they can't pay.

Please see **TSA**, Page A3

Please see **IRAN**, Page A14

Culpeper names board clerk

Following interviews, board appoints Shane McCrum to position

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

Culpeper County has hired its first-ever "clerk to the board," dividing a role previously filled by the county administrator, who was recently fired.

Following several hours of interviewing three candidates in a closed session on Thursday, the board appointed Shane McCrum, 29, of Amissville, to the position, earning \$150,000 annually.

He most recently worked as a senior military sales analyst

with government contractor Cydecor Inc. in Arlington and is a 2019 graduate of Christendom College in Front Royal with a bachelor's degree in history.

McCrum is working toward getting a master's degree next year in global commerce and policy from George Mason University, according to a county release Saturday night.

Originally from Fairfax County, McCrum previously interned with the right-wing Heritage Foundation and for Congressman Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican,



McCrum

according to his 2019 profile at America's Future, another conservative group based in Washington, D.C., with which he was associated.

Catalpa Supervisor Paul Bates voted against hiring him.

"Based on the candidate's starting salary for that position advertised and his experience, I am not going to be able to support the motion," Bates said.

West Fairfax Supervisor Gary Deal, who recently announced he would end his local government career next year due to all the recent changes on the board, made the motion to hire McCrum to the position of clerk to the board.

Please see **BOARD CLERK**, Page A5

Stafford teen who shot father could serve 2 years

KEITH EPPS
The Free Lance-Star

A Stafford teenager who shot and killed his father during a domestic dispute in 2024 could be free in less than two years.

Christian Cruz Juarez, 19, was sentenced Wednesday in Stafford Circuit Court to a combination juvenile/adult sentence that calls for him to be held in the Department of Juvenile Justice until he turns 21. Cruz Juarez was 17 when the slaying took place late Sept. 4, 2024, outside the family home on Hulls Chapel Road.

Judge Robert Reibach also gave Cruz Juarez 13 years in the adult system, but suspended



Cruz Juarez

all 13 years. That means that as long as he remains out of trouble, Cruz Juarez won't have to serve any time in the adult system. Prosecutors

Teresa Polinske and Ryan Frank had asked the judge to impose an active 13-year adult sentence on Cruz Juarez.

According to the evidence, Cruz Juarez's parents returned from a party that night intoxicated and arguing.

Please see **SENTENCE**, Page A3

For more on the forecast, see our daily online videos. **FREDERICKSBURG.COM**

Weather
Warmer with some sun
High 79 • Low 65
Forecast • B6

Inside	
ADVICE	A11
CLASSIFIEDS	A8
COMICS	A13
HOROSCOPE	A11
MARKETS	A7
OBITUARIES	A5
OPINION	A4
SPORTS	B1
SUDOKU	A13
TV PAGE	A12
WEATHER	B6
WEEKENDER	A10

