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No-confidence votes for mail-in ballots

Lapses in USPS deliveries have some residents in Boston rethinking how they'll cast their choices

By Tiana Woodard
GLOBE STAFF

Given the trouble Paula Witten has had getting her utility bills and prescriptions delivered from the United States Postal Service, the long-time Jamaica Plain resident is worried about mail service for something even more sacrosanct: her vote.

"It was rain, sleet, or snow, and everything would get delivered," she joked, referencing the agency's unofficial motto. "But it's not their motto anymore."

With Witten and many other Boston residents reporting consistent problems with de-

layed or undelivered mail, some are now worried they cannot trust the postal service to get their mail-in ballots delivered in time to be counted.

But, officials with USPS insist that voters casting their ballots by mail should not be worried, as there are protocols in place to ensure votes aren't lost in the system.

"We are employing robust and proven processes to ensure proper handling and delivery of all Election Mail, including ballots," Steve Doherty, spokesperson for USPS Northeast region, said in a statement.

MAIL-IN BALLOTS, Page A7

"The mail doesn't always come, so I may not get [a mail-in ballot]. It's not OK, but that's the reality."

PAULA WITTEN, of
Jamaica Plain

US to send Israel troops, defense system

Pledge of deepening commitment comes as Hezbollah strike kills four

By Helene Cooper,
Matthew Mpoke Bigg,
and Aaron Boxerman
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The United States is sending an advanced missile defense system to Israel, along with about 100 US troops to operate it, the Pentagon announced Sunday on the same day a drone strike on an Israeli military base killed four soldiers and wounded dozens of other people.

President Biden directed Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin to deploy the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense system, or THAAD, and its crew, said Major General Patrick Ryder, the Pentagon press secretary, in a state-

ment Sunday. It is the first deployment of US forces to Israel since the Hamas-led attacks there on Oct. 7, 2023.

The move will put US troops operating the ground-based interceptor, which is designed to defend against ballistic missiles, closer to the widening war in the Middle East. It comes after Iran launched about 200 missiles at Israel on Oct. 1 and as Israel plans its retaliatory attack.

The THAAD battery, a mobile defense system, will give the Israeli military another layer of protection to defend cities, troops, and installations from short- and intermediate-range ballistic missiles like those de-

MIDEAST, Page A5



BARRY CHIN/GLOBE STAFF

Drake Maye scrambled for a first down in the Patriots game against the Houston Texans. Maye led the team not only in passing but in rushing in their 41-21 loss Sunday in Foxborough.

Flawless? Hardly. But Maye tosses hope to Patriots fans

We have seen Patriots Future and its name is Drake Maye.

Fifty years ago, The Real Paper's Jon Landau famously wrote something like this about Bruce Springsteen and the future of rock and roll.

So let's give it a shot now. Barring injury to Maye, or other unforeseen catastrophe, those of you who filled rainy, raw Gillette Sunday are going to be able to say you were there for the beginning of the next Patriots playoff run.

We are natural-born cynics here in New England. We have standards. We are not yahoos.

So why does a 41-21 home-field beatdown at the hands of the Houston

DAN SHAUGHNESSY

Texans feel so good? (Yikes, who gave Rochie my laptop?)

Seriously, folks. The last-place Patriots are 1-5. They are 7-23 since November 2022. They have lost eight consecutive games at Gillette. Bob Kraft is needier than ever (CBS, please stop with shots of the owner high-fiving after TDs!) and there is little to indicate that rookie head coach Jerod Mayo or retread offensive coordinator Alex Van Pelt know what they are doing.

Swell.

We knew the Pats were going to be bad this year and they have lived down

to expectations. But finally, there is a sign of life. After five games of boring offensive football (and we mean, *offensive!*), they finally removed rookie bauble Maye from the glass menagerie and we saw more than enough to give us hope.

"I thought Drake made some good decisions out there," said Mayo. "He did a good job extending plays with his legs and picking up first downs . . . I feel like we let him down. For a rookie quarterback to go out there and do some good things, we could have done a better job supporting him."

Maye was far from great. He turned the ball over three times all by himself

SHAUGHNESSY, Page C6

This MCAS question is for the parents

In referendum, some see peril, others fairness

By James Vaznis
GLOBE STAFF

When Mei Lu moved to Massachusetts two years ago, she had deep concerns about a state mandate requiring students to pass the MCAS standardized tests to receive their diplomas because she thought it would be too difficult for students such as her son, who is autistic and has other disabilities, to score high enough to pass.

But now as she prepares to vote on a ballot question in November that would do away with the requirement, she is starting to change her mind.

Some education advocates have warned her that if the bal-

Tipping points

Workers and owners of restaurants offer thoughts on ballot Question 5, which would substantially raise the minimum wage for tipped workers. **D1.**

lot question passes, some schools might take students with disabilities less seriously because they will have less at stake. Then a few weeks ago, she found out her son, a junior at Cambridge Rindge and Latin, passed one of his MCAS exams, giving her hope that he could pass the other two.

"What is the check and balance if there is no MCAS graduation requirement?" said Lu, who is still researching the issue but is teetering toward a no vote.

Question 2 is presenting parents with a unique opportunity to weigh in on the MCAS exams

MCAS, Page A10

Unhoused and uneasy in Davis Square

Drug use, violence near Somerville hub stir debate among neighbors

By Spencer Buell
GLOBE STAFF

SOMERVILLE — There have long been homeless people in Davis Square. But this summer, neighbors with and without homes agree, something was different.

A rise in unsheltered homelessness there, mainly in two parks near the MBTA stop, was hard to ignore, as were reports of open drug use and drug dealing, discarded needles, and violence — notably, two back-to-back stabbings in September in which four people were injured. Some neighbors felt newly uneasy running errands after dark or about the growing crowd of people injecting drugs near two day-care centers.

As the state's shelter system overflows and amid a statewide spike in homelessness, the issue has fueled a roiling debate among residents of the progressive city about how to address the sudden surge in the heart of a busy neighborhood without simply pushing a vulnerable population



PAT GREENHOUSE/ GLOBE STAFF

A police officer picked up a man in Statue Park in Somerville's Davis Square, where residents have expressed concerns about a rise in the homeless population.

elsewhere.

People who have spent time in Davis Square, including those who have been unhoused themselves, have noticed the shift.

"Big change," said Peter Clancy, 63, who

said he's been homeless on and off for 30 years, mostly in Davis, and still hangs out there after moving to an apartment three years ago. He rested his legs by leaning

HOMELESS, Page A10

Police arrested a man with guns and fake passports at a checkpoint for Donald Trump's rally in California. **A7.**

The Pine Street Inn is working to help the homeless population participate in next month's election. **B1.**

In a remarkable snatch, engineers for SpaceX managed to guide a spent rocket booster back to a launch site and grab it with mechanical arms. **A2.**

Providence city councilors are seeking to ban new gas stations, part of a bid to help the city meet its climate change goals. **B1.**

Cat lovers unite: Hundreds gathered for the "CATstravaganza" in the South End. **B1.**

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A lazy beam

Monday: Rain early, breezy. High 61-66, low 41-46.

Tuesday: Some clearing, windy. High 55-60, low 40-45.

High tide: 8:54, 9:14.

Sunrise: 6:56. Sunset: 6:03.

Weather and comics, **D4-5.**

Obituaries, **B6.**

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