

A step, but just a step, on climate

Nations OK deal calling for transition from fossil fuels; critics say it's far from enough

By Sabrina Shankman
GLOBE STAFF

Nearly 30 years after the United Nations began convening countries to address the effects of climate change, nearly 200 took a crucial step on Wednesday, agreeing to move away from planet-warming fossil fuels — naming, for the first time in the climate talks' formal agreement, the long-accepted cause of the crisis. “Humanity has finally done what is

long, long, long overdue,” Wopke Hoekstra, European Union commissioner for climate action, said as the climate talks known as COP28 wrapped up.

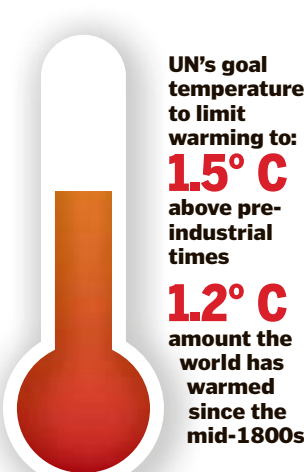
The agreement marked a major step forward, yet many critics warned that the deal still had significant shortcomings, including a failure to call for an outright phasing-out of oil, gas, and coal, while giving nations too much wiggle room in their transitions to

clean energy.

Within minutes of opening Wednesday's session in Dubai, COP28 president Sultan al-Jaber gavelled in approval of the central document — an evaluation of how off-track the world is on climate and how to get back on — without giving critics a chance to comment. He hailed it as a “historic package to accelerate climate action.”

The UN's goal is to limit warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial times, and al-Jaber repeatedly called that his “north star.” So far the world

CLIMATE, Page A6



Court to hear challenge on access to abortion pill

FDA's authority at stake; decision expected in June

By Abbie VanSickle
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Supreme Court announced Wednesday that it will decide on the availability of a commonly used abortion pill, the first major case involving abortion on its docket since it overturned the constitutional right to the procedure more than a year ago.

The Biden administration had asked the justices to intervene after a three-judge panel of the Fifth US Circuit Court of Appeals favored curbing distribution of the drug, mifepristone, appearing skeptical of the Food and Drug Administration's regulation of the pill in recent years. In its ruling, the panel said that the pill would remain legal, but with significant restrictions on patients' access, including prohibiting the medication from being sent by mail or prescribed by telemedicine.

The move sets up a high-stakes fight over the drug that could sharply curtail access to the medication, even in states where abortion remains legal. It could also have implications for the regulatory authority of the FDA, which approved the pill more than two decades ago.

The Supreme Court is now in the unusual position of ruling on abortion access even after its conservative majority declared that it would leave that question to elected officials. Until the court issues a decision, the FDA's approval of the drug remains

ABORTION, Page A8

Court to rule on Jan. 6 issue

The Supreme Court agreed to decide a question at the heart of the federal election interference case against Donald Trump and hundreds of prosecutions arising from Jan. 6. A2.

Impeachment inquiries may be the future

As House targets Biden, concerns that process will become just a partisan tool

By Jess Bidgood
GLOBE STAFF

WASHINGTON — When Representative Hal Rogers of Kentucky first took his House seat in 1981, there had been just one formal presidential impeachment — Andrew Johnson, 1868 — and one near-impeachment — Richard Nixon, 1974 — in the country's first two centuries.

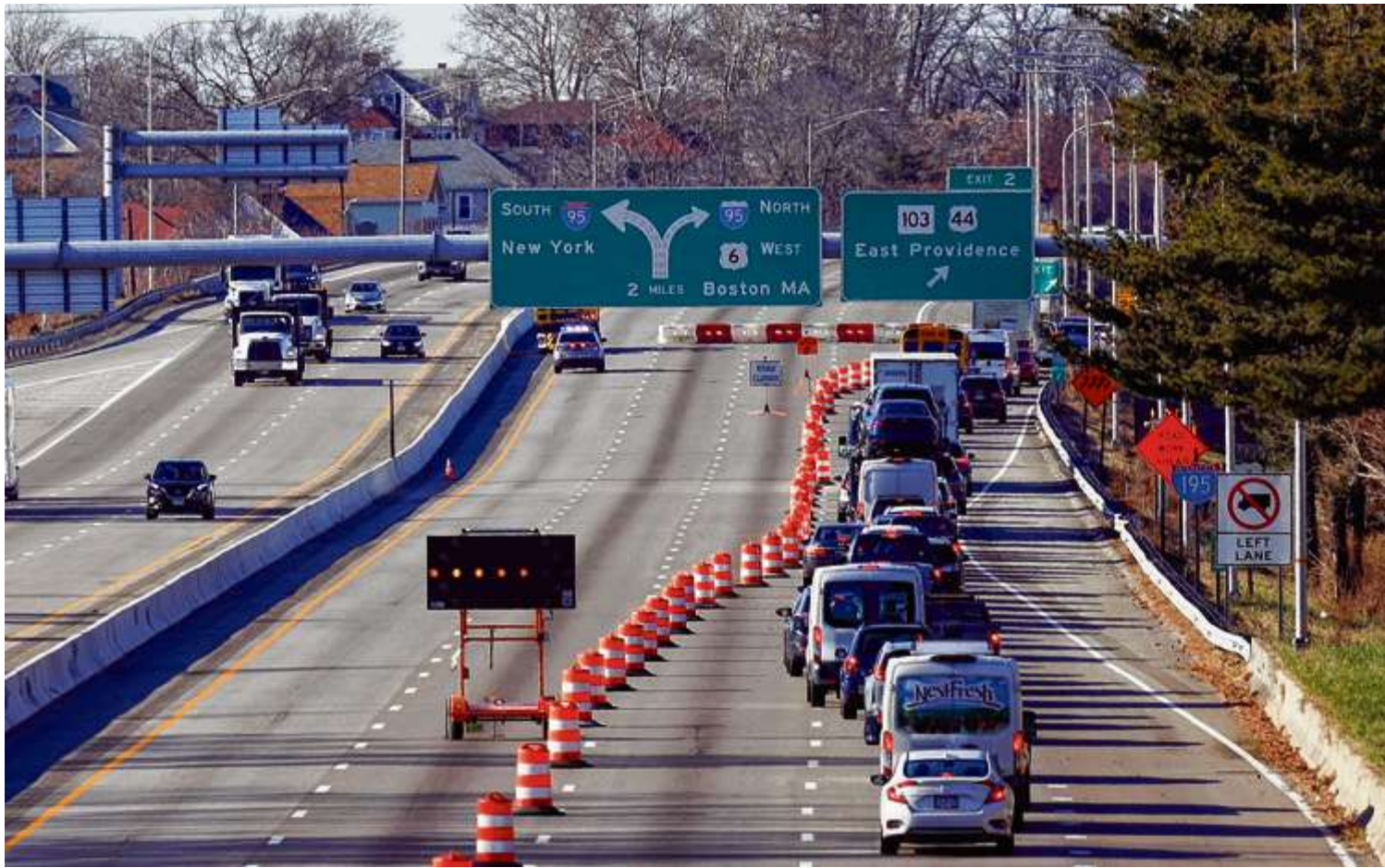
So did the Republican expect he would see quite so many impeachment inquiries during his tenure in Congress?

“No,” said Rogers, 85, one of the two longest-serving current members of the House. “Not really.”

With their narrow vote Wednesday evening in favor of formalizing their impeachment inquiry into President Biden, House Republicans have steered the country into unprecedented territory. It is the fourth formal impeachment inquiry in a quarter-century, and the first without a clear map at the outset toward proof of “high crimes and misdemeanors” potentially committed by the president.

The move, which received no Democratic support, gives Republicans enhanced investigative

IMPEACHMENT, Page A8



PHOTOS BY DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

With westbound lanes on Interstate 195 closed, drivers were diverted in East Providence on Wednesday.

Drivers are forced to wait it out after sudden R.I. bridge closure

Gridlock ‘just like the Blizzard of ’78’ to some; state aims to open a few lanes soon

By Travis Andersen
GLOBE STAFF

EAST PROVIDENCE, R.I. — With students here attending class remotely and some 90,000 drivers facing a traffic nightmare after the sudden closure of the westbound side of the Washington Bridge, officials said Wednesday that they expect to open lanes this weekend on the eastbound side to allow traffic in both directions.

Officials also plan to start running a 500-seat ferry between Bristol and Providence in the next week or two, the state's transportation director, Peter Alviti Jr., said at a news briefing.

Governor Dan McKee said fixing the bridge, a section of Interstate 195 that is the primary link between East Providence and Providence, is the “top priority in the state of Rhode Island right



Governor Dan McKee said fixing the Washington Bridge is the “top priority in the state of Rhode Island right now.”

now.”

McKee and Alviti showed photos of steel rods on the bridge that were recently found to be severed, beside photos showing those rods intact in July, when the bridge was last inspected.

“I hope that this dispels the rumors and fearmongering that's going on, that goes to the issue of whether or not we're hiding something or things should have been known,” Alviti said. “The fact of the matter is our inspection reports in July showed these as being stable structures, and something catastrophic happened between July and now. Don't know whether it was a large load that may have driven over it that imposed a shear force. But that's the result of that, that we found on Monday.”

Asked if he planned to make

BRIDGE, Page A9

IVF pioneer accused of using own sperm in procedure

Woman sues after 42-year-old daughter's genetic test

By Felice J. Freyer
GLOBE STAFF

A Maine woman has accused a retired Boston doctor and pioneer in fertility treatment, Dr. Merle Berger, of impregnating her with his own sperm when she expected to receive an anonymous donor sperm during an artificial insemination procedure decades ago. In a lawsuit filed Wednesday



Dr. Merle Berger is now retired.

in US District Court, Boston, Sarah Depoian states that in 1980 she went to Berger's office, which was in Dedham, for an intrauterine insemination and that he told her she would receive sperm from “a medical resident who resembled her husband, who did not know her, and whom she did not know.” Instead, the suit alleges, he “inserted his own sperm into her body.”

Late last year, Depoian's daughter, 42-year-old Carolyn Bester, took a home DNA test that, the suit alleges, led her to suspect that Berger was her biological father. Confronted by the mother recently, according

to the suit, Berger didn't deny that he had used his own sperm.


Berger's lawyer, Ian J. Pinta of Todd & Weld, said in a statement: “The allegations, which have changed repeatedly in the six months since the plaintiff's attorney first contacted Dr. Berger, have no legal or factual merit, and will be disproven in court.” (The plaintiff's lawyer denied that the allegations have changed.)

The case is one of many such instances that have come to light in recent years as people research their ancestry through mail-order genetic

IVF, Page A12



Sarah Depoian had her daughter, Carolyn Bester, through artificial insemination in 1980. She said she expected to receive sperm from an anonymous donor.



Dry, run

Thursday: Seasonable. High 35-40. Low 29-34.


Friday: Warming up. High 47-52. Low 37-42.

Sunrise: 7:05 Sunset: 4:12

Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C10-11.

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BPS Superintendent Mary Skipper proposed a major change to exam school admissions. B1.

Federal Reserve officials left interest rates unchanged and forecast that they will cut borrowing costs three times in the next year. D1.

Palestinian militants carried out one of the deadliest attacks on Israeli soldiers since the Gaza invasion began, killing nine. A4.