

The Boston Globe

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FRIDAY, MAY 24, 2024

T promises an easier way to pay coming soon

Long-delayed system will allow tap with phones, credit cards by the fall

By Taylor Dolven
GLOBE STAFF

Forgot your Charlie Card? No problem. By the end of summer, bus and subway riders will be able to tap their smartphones or credit cards to pay MBTA subway and bus fares, the agency said Thursday. The announcement marks the first step in the long-awaited rollout of a new fare system that is years behind schedule and hundreds of millions over budget. After more than six years of starts and stops, T staff told the agency's board of directors on Thursday that the new fare system will be fully functional by the spring of 2026, including new Charlie Cards, new vending machines, and contactless payment on commuter rail and ferries. "It's that type of thing not only for our regular riders but for visitors that make it so much better to use our system, and we're excited about it," said T general manager Phillip Eng in an interview.

In 2018, the T chose San Diego-based Cubic Corp. and United Kingdom-based financier John Laing to overhaul the T's fare collection system for more than \$700 million. The new system was supposed to fully replace the old system by 2021, but technological glitches with the Cubic fare readers and other problems, in 2020, pushed back implementation and raised the cost of the project to nearly \$1 billion.

The total amount the T owes for the system
MBTA, Page A6

Loss of TV voice leaves hole in Black community

By Aidan Ryan
GLOBE STAFF

One segment aired the challenges of businesses owned by people of color during the pandemic. Another episode was devoted to breast cancer being harder to treat in Black women. One show was about "quiet quitting," and whether people of color can afford to do the bare minimum on the job.

Those and other compelling discussions of issues that showcased the concerns and intellectual debates in Boston's communities of color were the staples of "Basic Black" on public television station GBH, which described itself as "Putting the soul in public media since 1968."

But after GBH suspended the TV program on Wednesday as part of cost-cutting measures, longtime viewers and contributors worry that its audience won't find that type of programming anywhere else.

"We relied on 'Basic Black' for years to have our perspective," said Michael Curry, chief executive of the Massachusetts League of Community Health Centers who served as president of the Boston branch of the NAACP. Curry, a frequent guest on "Basic Black," added it gave experts and influencers who weren't often seen in mainstream media "an opportunity to share their perspectives."

TV SHOW, Page A10



DAVID L. RYAN/GLOBE STAFF

Pro-Palestinian students marched down Massachusetts Avenue to the Harvard-Epworth United Methodist Church on Thursday.

Hundreds walk out of graduation over Harvard's punishment of 13

Ceremony is marked by reminders of continued campus turmoil over war

By Hilary Burns
GLOBE STAFF
and Alexa Coultoff
and Lila Hempel-Edgers
GLOBE CORRESPONDENTS

CAMBRIDGE — Some 30,000 graduates, family, and friends filled Harvard Yard Thursday for the university's 373rd commencement, but the ceremony, steeped in tradition and pageantry, was disrupted when hundreds of stu-

dents walked out about halfway through it in solidarity with 13 classmates who were barred from receiving diplomas because of their involvement in an unauthorized protest of Israel's military campaign in the Gaza Strip.

The ceremony capped an academic year marked by upheaval and extraordinary unrest over the Israel-Hamas war, most recently with Harvard's decision to pre-

vent the 13 graduates from receiving their degrees during commencement for violating university rules during their three-week pro-Palestinian encampment in Harvard Yard. That decision contributed to the dramatic demonstration Thursday, which was far larger and louder than protests at any other college commencement in the region thus far this spring.

The 13 students were allowed to join their peers in caps and gowns, but did not receive their diplomas at separate ceremonies

later Thursday. All should get them after their term of suspension or probationary period is up, assuming they've met academic requirements and have returned to good standing with the university, according to Harvard. They can also appeal their penalties.

"Let them walk," the protesters chanted before leaving about one hour into the program, meaning the 13 should be allowed to receive their diplomas. Many wore keffiyehs, waved Palestinian flags, and chanted or held signs and

HARVARD, Page A7

Critics say BPS must stop dragging its feet on school closings

Lack of plan hurts students, they contend

By Deanna Pan and
Christopher Huffaker
GLOBE STAFF

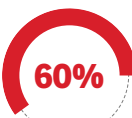
To hear Boston school officials describe it, they're caught in a Catch-22, with too few students for too many school buildings. They need to close some to free up money to improve the quality of education at the remaining schools, yet they can't close underutilized schools until they can offer families better options.

That apparent paradox helps explain the kind of paralysis that was on display earlier this week, in which a long-awaited plan for school closures in 2025-26 called for an extremely modest reduction in classroom seats. Critics say this slow-walking approach that delays the hard choices of closing multiple schools comes at the expense of students.

"We're kicking the can down the road for another year," said City Councilor Liz Breardon at a meeting Thursday where she and other councilors questioned Superintendent Mary Skipper's ten-

SCHOOLS, Page A10

According to the Justice Department, Live Nation controls around



of concert promotions at major venues around the United States and roughly



of primary ticketing at major concert venues.

US sues Ticketmaster owner to try to break up monopoly

Live Nation dominates concert business

By David McCabe
and Ben Sisario
NEW YORK TIMES

WASHINGTON — The Justice Department on Thursday sued Live Nation Entertainment, the concert giant that owns Ticketmaster, asking a court to break up the company over claims it illegally maintained a monopoly in the live entertainment industry.

In the lawsuit, which is joined by 29 states and the District of Columbia, the government accuses Live Nation of dominating the industry by locking venues into exclusive ticketing contracts, pressuring artists to use its services, and threatening its rivals with financial retribution.

Those tactics, the govern-

ment argues, have resulted in higher ticket prices for consumers and have stifled innovation and competition throughout the industry. The suit asks the US District Court for the Southern District of New York to order "the divestiture of, at minimum, Ticketmaster," and to prevent Live Nation from engaging in anticompetitive practices.

"It is time for fans and artists to stop paying the price for Live Nation's monopoly," Attorney General Merrick Garland said Thursday. "It is time to break up Live Nation-Ticketmaster. The American people are ready for it."

The suit is part of a broader push by US regulators to rein in
LIVE NATION, Page A7



DANIELLE PARHIZKARAN/GLOBE STAFF

CELTICS IN CONTROL

After struggling to get past the Pacers in overtime in Game 1 of the conference finals, the Celtics had a much easier time Thursday in Game 2 at TD Garden, cruising to a 126-110 win behind Jaylen Brown's 40 points. Game 3 will be in Indiana on Saturday night. **C1.**

NOAA warned that the United States could face one of its worst hurricane seasons in two decades as the agency issued its most aggressive outlook ever. **A2.**

A patient with a history of violence briefly fled Tewksbury Hospital for the fourth time, the latest lapse at a state facility facing growing criticism. **B1.**

The Supreme Court cleared the way for South Carolina to keep using a congressional map that a lower court had deemed an unconstitutional racial gerrymander. **A2.**

Boston Calling will have a new twist this weekend — Tyler Childers will be the first country artist to headline a day. **G1.**



Hammock it up

Friday: Beautiful. High 82-87. Low 56-61.
Saturday: Cooler but pleasant. High 69-74. Low 56-61.
Sunrise: 5:14 Sunset: 8:08
Weather and Comics, G8-9. Obituaries, C9.

VOL. 305, NO. 145

Suggested retail price \$4.00

