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Deadline nearing, unfinished business

Legislature tackles major bills at the end of the session in a mad rush, as usual

By Matt Stout, Samantha J. Gross, and Anjali Huynh
GLOBE STAFF

As the hours quickly slipped closer to midnight, Massachusetts lawmakers on Wednesday were still negotiating a host of major bills on their final day of formal

session, leaving in limbo billions of dollars tabbed for housing, life sciences, and more.

Lawmakers entered the day with at least nine major bills bottled up in closed-door negotiations before teeing up even more for talks by Wednesday night. Such a

late-session crunch has become the norm on Beacon Hill, but the routine makes the 11th-hour dash no less chaotic.

On the line was a housing bill that would allow the state to borrow billions of dollars to help address the housing crisis and that also offered policy solutions such as legalizing accessory dwelling units — so-called granny flats — in Massachusetts. Legislative leaders were

also still in talks over a multibillion-dollar economic development bill, including a measure already passed by the Senate that would allow the Kraft Group to build a new home for the New England Revolution in Everett.

That was far from all: Deals on a clean energy bill, a plan to add more than 200 liquor licenses in Boston, and a proposal to tighten

LEGISLATURE, Page A7



PHOTOS BY SUZANNE KREITER/GLOBE STAFF

Dairy farmer Paul Miller fed his pregnant cows at Fairvue Farms in Woodstock, Conn. “We’re more concerned that people are going to associate a disease with drinking milk,” than the effects of the disease itself, he said of bird flu. Below, milk at Elm Farm.

As dairy farms fight to survive, another threat

Bird flu is a low priority now for most in New England, but that could change

By Adam Piore
GLOBE STAFF

Paul Miller can think of countless ways for a dairy farm to fail. And over more than six decades raising milk cows in Woodstock, Conn., he has seen his neighbors succumb to most of them. With margins tighter than they have ever been, anything from an ill-timed decision to finance an expensive piece of equipment to a bad tractor accident can prove ruinous.

“You have to be thinking six steps ahead,” Miller said. “The least little things can make the biggest differences.”

In recent months, an ominous new threat has emerged. A highly contagious strain of bird flu is infecting the nation’s dairy cattle. First detected in Texas and Kansas in March, the virus has spread to 168 herds in 13 states, and traces of the virus have made their way into the milk supply. Many worry especially about farm workers, who can contract bird flu by handling or inhaling milk from infected animals and contaminated equipment.

At least four dairy workers and six poultry workers have been sickened with bird flu this year. The vast majority of dairy workers on the front lines, many of whom are undocumented immigrants, remain either unaware of

DAIRY FARMS, Page A10



168 herds
in
13 states
infected by a highly
contagious strain of bird
flu since it was first
detected in Texas and
Kansas in March.

4
dairy workers and
6
poultry workers have
been sickened

‘From the
bird flu
standpoint,
is it a
concern?
We keep an
eye on it.
It’s on the
back burner.’

PAUL MILLER,
dairy farmer

Hamas, Iran vow to avenge killing

Israel defiant; hopes for Gaza cease-fire upended

By Patrick Kingsley, Adam Rasgon, Farnaz Fassihi, and Ronen Bergman
NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — The predawn killing of a top Hamas leader in Tehran on Wednesday left the entire Middle East on edge, bringing vows of revenge from Iran’s leaders and threatening to derail fragile negotiations for a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip.

The Hamas leader, Ismail Haniyeh, 62, a top negotiator in the cease-fire talks who had led the militant group’s political office in Qatar, was killed after he and other leaders of Iranian-backed militant groups had attended the inauguration of Iran’s new president.

Israeli leaders would not confirm or deny whether their country was behind the brazen breach of Iran’s defenses. But Iranian leaders and Hamas officials immediately blamed Israel and vowed to avenge the death of Haniyeh, heightening fears of a broader regional war.

Iran’s supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, issued an order for Iran to strike Israel directly, according to three Iranian officials briefed on the order.

And Iran’s new president, Masoud Pezeshkian, said in a statement Wednesday, a day after he was sworn into office with Haniyeh seated in the front row: “We will make the occupying terrorist re-

MIDEAST, Page A6

Trump attacks Harris over racial identity

Tells Black journalists she was Indian, ‘made a turn’

By Jonathan Weisman and Maya King
NEW YORK TIMES

CHICAGO — Former president Donald Trump questioned Vice President Kamala Harris’s identity as a Black woman Wednesday in front of an audience of Black journalists, suggesting his opponent for the presidency adopted her racial profile as a way to gain a political advantage.

“She was Indian all the way, and then all of a sudden she made a turn and she became a Black person,” he said of Harris, whose mother was Indian American, whose father is Black, and who has always identified as a Black woman.

Harris has long embraced both her Black and South Asian identity. She attended Howard University, a historically Black institution, and pledged Alpha Kappa Alpha, the nation’s first sorority established for Black college women. Headlines from her earliest political victories dating back to the early 2000s highlighted both identities.

Trump’s remarks prompted gasps and jeers from the audience at the National Association of Black Journalists in Chicago. The former presi-

TRUMP, Page A10

2024 PARIS OLYMPICS



DAVID J. PHILLIP/ASSOCIATED PRESS

DOMINATION — American swimmer Katie Ledecky added to her legend on Wednesday, winning her seventh individual Olympic gold medal and 12th medal overall with a runaway victory in the 1,500-meter freestyle. She’s now tied for the most medals ever by a female swimmer. **More on the day, C1-3.**

Judge clears way for closing of two Steward hospitals

By Robert Weisman
GLOBE STAFF

Steward Health Care can proceed with its plan to shut two of its Massachusetts hospitals by the end of the month, a federal judge overseeing its bankruptcy ruled Wednesday. But its efforts to sell its six other hospitals in the state remain hung up in stalled talks between Steward and its creditors.

With Carney Hospital in Dorchester and Nashoba Valley Medical Center in Ayer now set to close by Aug. 31, Massachusetts officials have been pushing for a quick resolution of the current impasse over the remaining Steward hospitals, said Hugh McDonald, an attorney who’s been representing the state in bankruptcy proceedings.

“Every step of the way we’ve been stymied” by “infighting and brinksmanship” among Steward and its many creditors, McDonald told Judge **HOSPITALS, Page A7**

Accused 9/11 plotter to plead guilty

Khalid Sheikh Mohammed and two accomplices will get a life sentence instead of a death penalty trial at Guantanamo. **A4.**

Federal Reserve officials left interest rates unchanged, but the head of the central bank made it clear that recent progress in lowering inflation could bring a cut in September. **D1.**

MBTA officials hope to leverage Alewife’s crumbling garage into one of the country’s largest transit developments. **D1.**

The Red Sox won their first series since the All-Star break. **C1.**



Medium fries

Thursday: Hot, T-storms. High 90-95. Low 73-77.

Friday: More of the same. High 85-90. Low 73-77.

High tide: 9:40 a.m., 9:50 p.m.

Sunrise: 5:37. Sunset: 8:03

Weather and Comics, D5-6. Obituaries, C9.

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