

# The Boston Globe

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TUESDAY, AUGUST 26, 2025

## In Somerville, neighbors, church feud over shelter

One side sees a religious duty, the other sees blight; a court will decide fate

By Spencer Buell  
GLOBE STAFF

SOMERVILLE — As a light rain fell over Davis Square on Wednesday, a judge, teams of lawyers, a pastor, a nonprofit director, and a few others quietly toured the basement of the First Church of Somerville and inspected each of the space's rooms.

They saw mattresses still wrapped in plastic piled up next to empty lockers and unassembled bed frames, a large kitchen, and a newly remodeled bathroom — components of what was supposed to be the city's newest homeless shelter.

The tour, which included a walk to nearby Davis Square, where there has been increased concern about violence and open drug use, was a legal formality. It came before a trial set to begin in Land Court on Tuesday that will decide the fate of the shelter the church wants to open here and served as a reminder for the supporters of the shelter of the time lost as the lawsuit winds on.

"It's difficult for me to understand," said Brett Smith, who lives three doors down from the church and is its treasurer, of what has some of his neighbors so concerned about a population that so clearly needs help. "Everybody is very quick to talk about the problems, and I don't know how those problems are helped by maintaining the status quo."

Built last year but never used, the shelter is at the center of a case that is testing both the state's religious freedom protections and the lengths people will go to push back when they feel quality-of-

SHELTER, Page A10

## Judge rules nonprofit broke lending laws

BlueHub plans to appeal; Healey championed firm

By Samantha J. Gross  
GLOBE STAFF

After a nearly five-year legal battle, a Massachusetts Superior Court judge has ruled that BlueHub Capital, a Roxbury nonprofit, violated predatory lending statutes and other lending laws in its mission to help distressed homeowners stay in their homes.

In a statement, BlueHub wrote it "strongly disagrees with the Court's ruling" the nonprofit violated the law, and that it "plans to appeal on those issues at the appropriate time."

The ruling resolved central arguments in the case, but left the resolution of relief and damages, among other questions, for a trial at a yet-to-be-determined date.

The 58-page ruling, filed in Suffolk Superior Court Friday, presents a difficult political question for Governor Maura Healey, who has defended BlueHub and her friend and donor chief executive Elyse Cherry. In 2024, Healey signed a bill that exempts BlueHub from the state's consumer protection laws — legislation that Chief Justice of the Superior Court Michael D. Ricciuti also ruled was not retroactive and did not apply to this case.

BLUE HUB, Page A10

## 20 killed in Gaza hospital strikes



AFP VIA GETTY IMAGES

The five journalists killed worked for news outlets that included Reuters, the Associated Press, and Al Jazeera.

5 journalists, medical staff, and patients among victims; Netanyahu calls attacks 'tragic mishap'

By Isabel Kershner, Aaron Boxerman, and Ameera Harouda  
NEW YORK TIMES

JERUSALEM — Shortly after 10 a.m. Monday, when an Israeli military strike hit the facade of a hospital building in the southern Gaza Strip, emergency responders who were already nearby rushed to the scene. So did journalists.

But just minutes later, according to witnesses, hospital officials, and video footage that captured the immediate aftermath of that first blast, a second strike hit the same part of the hospital, enveloping it in a thick cloud of smoke and dust.

Once the air cleared, the full extent of the horror at Nasser Hospital was revealed.

Four Palestinian journalists had been killed on the spot, and a fifth would later die of his wounds. At least 15 more people were killed, including members of the medical staff, rescue workers, and patients, according to the Gaza Health Ministry. Dozens more were injured, it said.

The Israeli military provided no immediate explanation for the attack, one of the deadliest for members of the news media, who have already died in

MIDEAST, Page A4

## TEARS FALL AS SCHOOL BELLS RING



PAT GREENHOUSE/GLOBE STAFF

After being signed in by teacher Megan Joinville (center), Deyby Diaz, 8, clung to mom Deyby Pancan as students were welcomed to Heard Street Discovery Academy in Worcester. The third-grader said, "I'm going to miss my mom." Another student gave Joinville the flowers. Worcester is among several school districts in the state that reopened on Monday. **B1.**

## For state prisons, a unique pact with ICE

'When people are getting out of jail, prison here in Massachusetts, and they are here unlawfully, notice goes to ICE.'

GOVERNOR MAURA HEALEY

Alerts ID inmates for possible deportation

By Danny McDonald, Matt Stout, and Laura Crimaldi  
GLOBE STAFF

Massachusetts has emerged as a leader in the resistance to President Trump's immigration policies, with some local communities limiting cooperation with US Immigration and Customs Enforcement. But one state agency has one of the oldest agreements of its kind with that federal agency in the country.

The controversial pact, between ICE and the Massachusetts Department of Correction, which oversees the state's

prison system, is known as a 287(g) agreement. It greenlights local law enforcement to act as immigration agents.

The purpose of the collaboration, according to the agreement, is to identify and process undocumented immigrants who have been incarcerated in the state's correctional system, and could be eligible for deportation.

As the Trump administration looks to expand such programs across the country, including in New England, the agreement in Massachusetts continues to spark debate over whether it's an appropriate law enforcement tool to aid the immigration system, or simply an accomplice in the federal government's push to carry out mass deportations.

ICE PRISONS, Page A7

President Trump said he fired Lisa Cook as a Federal Reserve governor, a move that could undermine the independence of the nation's central bank. **D2.**

The fight over redeveloping the state's highway service plazas heated up, as a lawyer for an Irish retailer sent a cease and desist letter to its rival. **D1.**

Coronavirus levels in Massachusetts wastewater have reached their highest point since the end of March. **B1.**

The Trump administration has reversed much of the progress made in disaster response and recovery in the last 20 years, FEMA workers warn. **A2.**

## In tight times, colleges turn to AI to ease staff demands

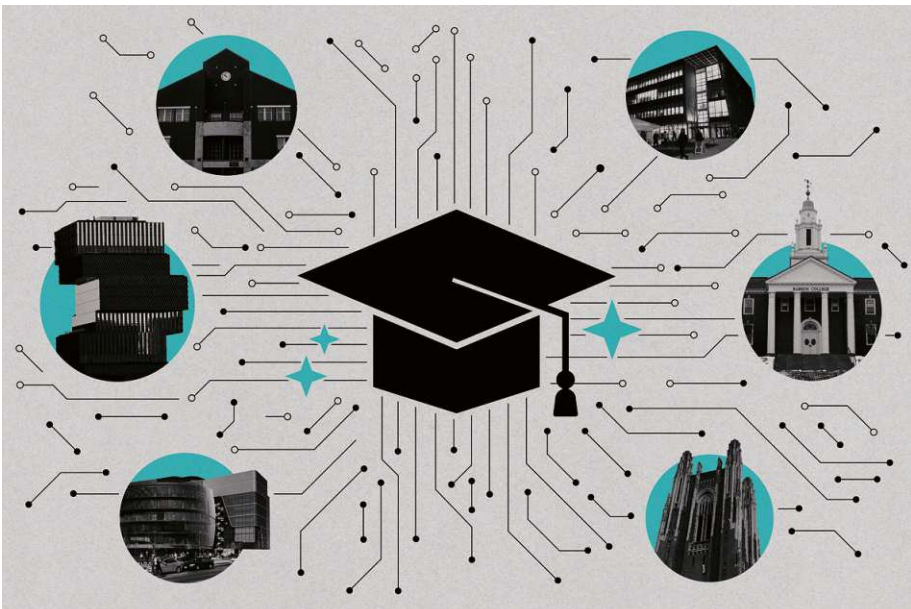


ILLUSTRATION BY CAMILLE MACMILLIN FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

By Diti Kohli  
GLOBE STAFF

By this fall, students and staff at Roxbury Community College will be given a simple, one-word answer to inquiries about day-to-day life on campus: AskRoxie. Need to reset a password? AskRoxie. Questions about financial aid? AskRoxie. Figure out paid time off? AskRoxie.

AskRoxie is, of course, a chatbot.

The bot is not replacing staff in student services or IT at the fast-growing community college, but it will spare them from easy-to-answer queries that eat up their time, an administrator said.

It's just one example of how artificial intelligence has found a home at many New England colleges and universities. Administrators are using the technology to write content, run surveys, crunch data, and fill out repetitive paperwork.

Admissions officers are predicting future enrollment with AI. Money-minded executives lean on it to analyze tuition prices. IT employees use it to fight cybersecurity attacks, and on and on.

It marks a radical shift from the AI skepticism that pervaded higher education when ChatGPT first launched. Professors raged about a rise in cheating and worried AI would sap students' critical thinking skills. (To be fair, many still worry about this.)

Today, many colleges want to show "AI native" students that they can address those concerns and adopt the technology at the same time. Institutions are rapidly creating artificial intelligence courses. Even traditional liberal arts schools such as Bowdoin College in Maine are courting professors to research AI to "help bend its trajectory to-

AI, Page A7



Great, outdoors!

Tuesday: Sunny and pleasant.

High 79-84, low 59-64.

Wednesday: Another beauty.

High 75-80, low 58-63.

Sunrise: 6:03. Sunset: 7:28.

Comics and Weather, **D5-6.**

Obituaries, **C9.**

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