

The Boston Globe

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2019

GAS BLAST CONVULSES TOWN



JACOB GAGE

Moments after an administrative building had been evacuated Monday morning in Farmington, Maine, a blast leveled the site, spewing debris for blocks. One fire official was killed and seven other people were injured. **B1.**

Broken axle blamed for Red Line derailment

MBTA says damaged ring caused metal to weaken

By Michael Levenson
GLOBE STAFF

The derailment of a Red Line train in June that disrupted life for thousands of commuters on the region's busiest subway line was caused by a broken axle, an investigation by the MBTA has determined.

T officials revealed the finding Monday, as they acknowledged that a routine inspection of the Red Line car conducted in May, just one month before the derailment, failed to uncover the problem.

"It is our obligation and our responsibility to make sure this never happens again," Jeffrey D. Gonneville, the deputy general manager of the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority, told reporters.

The agency ordered a new inspection of all subway cars and stricter maintenance rules.

Gonneville said engineers traced the cause of the broken axle to poor electrical connectivity between two metal pieces that allow excess electricity to flow from the motor through the

axle and into the wheels and rails.

Those pieces — called the ground brush and ground ring — are made of smooth metal, allowing current to flow without any sparking. But engineers discovered that the ground ring on the derailed train was badly pitted, which caused electricity to zap the axle.

That electrical discharge heated and cooled the steel axle over an approximately six-month period, causing it become brittle.

The fracture — on the front axle of the third car — derailed the Red Line train on the morning of June 11 near the JFK-UMass Station.

No one was injured, but the train smashed into equipment sheds that house electronic signals and switches, forcing the T to run trains at reduced speeds while workers managed train traffic manually.

The slowdown — coming just before the T increased fares on July 1 — inflamed public frustration with the region's aging system.

Service has improved in recent months but is not expected to return to normal until next month.

Currently, it takes about 35 minutes for the

RED LINE, Page A9



MASSACHUSETTS BAY TRANSIT AUTHORITY

Engineers traced the cause of the broken axle to poor electrical connectivity between two metal pieces that allow excess electricity to flow from the motor through the axle.

Kennedy builds national network with sweat, brand

By Victoria McGrane
GLOBE STAFF

As the 2018 midterm elections approached, Democratic candidates around the country wanted Representative Joseph P. Kennedy III's help.

Looking through a stack of requests for the last weekend of the campaign, Kennedy singled out one from Talley Sergent, a former Senate and State Department aide, running a long-shot bid for Congress in West Virginia against a Republican incumbent.

Kennedy's staffers tried to gently persuade him to travel instead to a place where the Democratic candidate was with-in striking distance. But Kennedy stood firm, arguing that Democrats need to show up everywhere, recalled one campaign aide. So the Friday before Election Day, the

KENNEDY, Page A9

ON THE FENWAY LAWN, A FAMILIAR NAME

DAN
SHAUGHNESSY

In the old days, it would have been Sherm Feller, Fenway's voice of God, making the majestic announcement from upstairs in the PA booth.

Now batting . . . Number 8, Carl Yastrzemski. Left field. Yastrzemski.

Tuesday night at Fenway Park, Henry Mahegan will do the honors when Giants outfielder Mike Yastrzemski (No. 5 in your program) steps into the same batter's box where his grandfather, Carl, stood all those years ago.

"It will be the first time since 1983 that the name 'Yastrzemski' will be announced,"



GETTY IMAGES

says Grandpa Yaz, now 80. "It's definitely going to be emotional. To see him come into Fenway Park where I played for 23

SHAUGHNESSY, Page C2

"It's definitely going to be emotional," says Sox legend Carl Yastrzemski of seeing his grandson Mike play.

Hynes sale could let S. Boston hall grow

Baker revives plan for bigger main convention center

By Jon Chesto
GLOBE STAFF

Governor Charlie Baker has revived plans to expand the massive Boston Convention & Exhibition Center in South Boston and wants to help pay for it by selling the state-owned Hynes Convention Center in the Back Bay.

The governor's move, endorsed by Convention Center Authority board members Monday, could have a dramatic impact on development in two already hot Boston neighborhoods. But it also could face a backlash from Back Bay hoteliers and others who depend on the visitors who attend shows at the Hynes.

Baker's plan calls for a \$500 million, slimmed-down version of a South Boston expansion approved by the Legislature in the last year of the Patrick administration. If the Hynes is no longer in the mix, the authority's total exhibit, meeting room, and ballroom space in the city would actually shrink by 8 percent under Baker's plan.

But selling the Hynes could open up 5.6 acres to development.

The authority's executive director, David Gibbons, described the Hynes as a "black hole" for money during an executive committee meeting on Monday. He said it didn't make sense for the authority to run two facilities that often compete with each other.

"It's the only way we could have one great building instead of having two buildings that are com-

CONVENTION, Page A8

As suicides rise, colleges face concerns over response

Asian-Americans acutely at risk, support groups say

By Jenifer McKim

THE NEW ENGLAND CENTER FOR INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING

Luke Tang was heading into the spring of freshman year at Harvard College in 2015 when he attempted to take his own life.

The youngest son of Chinese immigrants survived the attempt and was quickly sent by Harvard to a psychiatric facility. To return to his studies, the 19-year-old was required by school officials to sign a contract promising to follow his doctors' treatment plan.

But Tang did not keep up with mental health services after going away for the summer. And Harvard officials apparently did not check up with him in the fall. About two weeks after arriving on campus, Tang killed himself in the basement of his dormitory.

Since then, his parents, Christina Tang and Wendell Tang, have been searching for an-

"We thought he was fine," Christina Tang said in a phone interview from her home in New Orleans. "We thought when he got out of the hospital, he got his help."

Between 2007 and 2017, at least nine Harvard undergraduates in Massachusetts took their own lives, according to an investigation by the New England Center for Investigative Reporting. Six of



LUCY WANG

Sophomore Luke Tang killed himself at Harvard College.

SUICIDE, Page A8

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In the news

A second incident of alleged sexual misconduct by Antonio Brown, the Patriots new wide receiver, has surfaced. **C1.**

Florida officials signaled they still want to prosecute Patriots owner Robert Kraft on two misdemeanor counts of soliciting prostitution. **B1.**

New York prosecutors reportedly subpoenaed President Trump's accounting firm to demand personal and corporate tax returns, opening a new front in the bid to obtain the documents. **A2.**

Attorney General Maura Healey pledged to continue to pursue action against Purdue Pharma after the opioid maker filed for bankruptcy protection. **D1.**

The Encore casino had its best revenues yet in August, but slot machine action lagged. **D1.**

Cornell's medical school said it would make the cost of attendance free for students who qualify for financial aid. **A3.**

The number of patients believed to have a lung illness related to vaping has increased to 38, state officials said. **B1.**

POINT OF VIEW: STEVE MORSE



masses." **B8.**

'Ric Ocasek preferred to be seen as neither a poet nor a philosopher, but rather as "a stenographer of the



Bright back at you

Tuesday: Lots of sun. High 67-72, low 54-59.

Wednesday: Breezy, cooler. High 62-67, low 49-54.

Comics and weather, **C10-11.**