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That’s Fit to Print”

The New York Times



VINCENT ALBAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Blurry in a Hurry

When the fastest humans in the world are racing, professional photographers do their best to keep up. Olympics coverage, Page D1.

NEWS ANALYSIS

A Superman, Jedi and Pope

Trump’s Relentless Bid to Mythologize Himself

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — The racist online video that President Trump recently shared and then deleted generated a bipartisan furor because of its portrayal of Barack and Michelle Obama as apes. What was little remarked on was how it presented Mr. Trump himself — as the “King of the Jungle.”

After a year back in the White House, Mr. Trump’s efforts to promote himself as the singularly dominant figure in the world have become so commonplace that they no longer seem surprising. He regularly depicts himself in a heroic, almost godly fashion, as a monarch, as a Superman, as a Jedi knight, as a military hero, even as a pope in a white cassock.

While Mr. Trump has spent a lifetime promoting his personal brand, slapping his name on hotels, casinos, airplanes, even steaks, neckties and bottled water, what he is doing in his second term as president comes closer to building a cult of personality the likes of which has never been seen in American history. Other presidents sought to cultivate their reputations, but none went as far as Mr. Trump has to create a mythologized, superhuman and omnipresent persona leading to idolatry.

His picture has been splashed all over the White House, on multistory banners on the side of federal buildings, on annual passes to national parks and maybe even soon on a one-dollar coin. His name has been etched on the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts; on the U.S. Institute of Peace; on federal investment accounts, special visas and a discount drug program; and, if he has his way, on Washington Dulles International Airport, Penn Station in New York and the future stadium of the Washington Commanders.

His White House is pressuring the Smithsonian Institution’s National Portrait Gallery to display portraits of Mr. Trump by his supporters. A group of cryptocurrency investors has shelled

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Stricter Law May Empty Shelves of CBD Stores

By JAN HOFFMAN

Millions of Americans who rely on the cannabis compound CBD to ease arthritis, anxiety, sleep problems or plain old boredom could soon be in for a shock. By November, many CBD creams, tinctures, gummies and beverages are to be swept from shelves nationwide, under a provision of the legislation that reopened the U.S. government last fall.

Some states are already curtailing sales. New Jersey’s ban goes into effect in April.

The law is the latest contortion in a yearslong effort by policymakers to figure out how to regulate an array of CBD products

Caps on THC Inclusion Fought by Those Who Say Mixtures Help

made from the hemp plant, a legal variety of cannabis. They are sold in gas stations, convenience stores and smoke shops, as well as in boutique pet food stores, spas and, of course, online. Analysts have projected sales for wellness and recreational products with CBD, or cannabidiol, to range somewhere between \$8.5 and \$13 billion this year.

The pending restrictions have ignited a furious backlash by con-

sumers, small-business owners, manufacturers and growers, culminating in a flurry of bipartisan bills sponsored by some odd political bedfellows, attempting to scale back what many characterize as the law’s extreme overcorrection.

Under the new law, hemp-derived products must contain almost no detectable trace of THC, or tetrahydrocannabinol, the best-known psychoactive compound in cannabis. Industry insiders predict that the requirement will extinguish much of the CBD market, because so many products include at least some THC.

In preparation, this month the Food and Drug Administration must list all synthetic and natu-

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SAIYNA BASHIR FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

A Kite Festival Returns to Troubled Skies

The party delighted Lahore, Pakistan, which is battling air pollution and political strife. Page A7.

State Lawmakers Strip Power From Regulators

By DAVID W. CHEN

COLUMBIA, S.C. — The state of South Carolina is facing daunting challenges far beyond its growing population. As artificial intelligence advances, data centers are proliferating to support it, and the governor is pushing small nuclear reactors and the revival of a half-built nuclear plant to power those data centers.

Electricity costs could rise, environments could be stressed.

A Conservative Push to Remove Controls

But in the state capital of Columbia, Republicans who dominate the South Carolina Legislature are pressing to restrict the agencies that would regulate such changes, arguing for a different imperative — economic growth. “We do not want to have un-

elected bureaucrats making rules and laws that are forced upon people,” State Representative G. Murrell Smith Jr., the Republican speaker of the House, said in an interview.

South Carolina’s Small Business Regulatory Freedom Act is in the vanguard of a push by conservative state lawmakers to pass laws this year that would remove state-level controls on business, work places and the environment.

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Videos Expose Truth, but A.I. Can Distort It

Paradox of a Prevailing Tool for Debunking

By CHARLES HOMANS

Is seeing still believing? Based on the evidence of the past week, it is hard to say.

Consider Exhibit A: Rauiri Robinson, an Irish filmmaker and visual effects artist in Los Angeles, posted two short A.I.-generated videos on X, a hyper-realistic action-movie sequence depicting Tom Cruise and Brad Pitt fighting on a rooftop while arguing about Jeffrey Epstein. The clips were created, Mr. Robinson explained, by feeding a two-sentence prompt into Seedance 2.0, an A.I. video-creation tool newly released by the Chinese company ByteDance.

Its convincing imitation of an actual film incited horror and outrage in Hollywood. “I hate to say it,” Rhett Reese, a screenwriter whose credits include the “Deadpool” films, wrote on X. “It’s likely over for us.”

But consider Exhibit B: The announcement on Thursday morning by Tom Homan, Donald Trump’s border czar, that federal immigration agents would soon withdraw from Minnesota. Although Mr. Homan declared the operation a success, the decision seemed a tacit acknowledgment of the political damage inflicted by bystanders’ videos of two fatal shootings of Minneapolis residents by federal agents last month.

The videos immediately undercut the administration’s false and derogatory claims about the victims, drawing rebukes from even some Republican politicians and conservative commentators. “Escalating the rhetoric doesn’t help, and it actually loses credibility,” Ted Cruz, the Republican senator from Texas, said on his podcast in late January.

It is a paradoxical moment, in which documentary evidence is still able to land a few punches, even as new technologies threaten its credibility like never before.

“It feels deeply contradictory,” said Sam Gregory, the executive director of Witness, a human-rights organization focused on gathering video evidence.

Mr. Gregory’s organization has

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PROTESTS Texas officials threaten to punish schools where students have staged walkouts. PAGE A13

SHUTDOWN The debate over masked federal agents has become a sticking point. PAGE A12

Where’s My Olympic Medal? Right Here in the Sock Drawer.

By ANDREW KEH

MILAN — Olympic medals are among the most coveted prizes in sports. Athletes can spend decades in their pursuit, and only the greatest in the world succeed.

So it might be surprising to learn that after the sweat and tears, the triumph and glory, so many of these treasures tend to end up in the same unremarkable place: a sock drawer.

“My parents wanted me to get a safe for it, but that sounded ridiculous,” said Alex Hall, 27, a slopestyle skier, who stores his hard-won gold medal from the 2022 Games beneath a pile of socks and thermal underwear. “It hasn’t seen sunlight in a long time,” added Mr. Hall, who now needs to find space for the silver medal he won last week.

Mikaela Shiffrin, one of the greatest Alpine skiers of all time and the owner of three Olympic medals, is a sock drawer person.

THE WEATHER

Today, clouds giving way to some sun, high 41. **Tonight**, cloudy, low 34. **Tomorrow**, mixture of sunshine and clouds, not as cold as recent days, high 48. Weather map is on Page B6.

COMPLAINTS RISE OF SHODDY CARE AT ICE FACILITIES

CONTRACTOR FAULTED

Measles Outbreaks Only Tip of the Iceberg in Detention Centers

This article is by *Katie Thomas, Jessica Silver-Greenberg and Melena Ryzik.*

Cases of measles — a highly contagious virus that spreads in close quarters — cropped up in two centers for unauthorized immigrants in Arizona and Texas last month.

The centers are almost 1,000 miles apart, yet they have one thing in common: They are operated by CoreCivic. The publicly traded detention company has secured contracts worth hundreds of millions of dollars since President Trump took office last year, but it has a checkered track record of providing medical care to the people in its facilities.

In recent years, it has been accused of falsifying records to disguise unsafe conditions, failing to provide lifesaving medications, and being slow to take critically ill people to the hospital, according to court records, government audits, sworn declarations and interviews with lawyers and people who were detained.

CoreCivic disputes those accusations and says it provides quality medical care at Central Arizona Florence Correctional Center in Florence and at the Dilley Immigration Processing Center in Texas. Health officials said last week that the spread of measles was limited and appears to have stopped.

But aside from the outbreaks, more than a dozen detainees and immigration lawyers in both states detailed unsanitary conditions and lax care.

They described hourslong waits to see a nurse, only to be turned away and told they were not sick enough to receive care. People with injuries often wait days or weeks to receive X-rays, diabetes patients lack regular access to insulin and people hoping to see outside specialists such as cancer doctors or dentists are frequently denied, many of the detainees and their lawyers said. Those lucky enough to see a doctor and get prescription drugs sometimes must wait days or weeks before the medication arrives, they said.

Illnesses spread rapidly throughout the facilities, the de-

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CASSIDY ARAIZA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Matt Antoine’s bronze medal at least gets a cloth pouch.

So is Ryan Lochte, whose 12 medals make him the second most decorated male swimmer in the history of the Games. The IKEA dresser drawer where Christopher Mazdzer keeps his 2018 silver medal holds not only assorted hosiery but also other important

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INTERNATIONAL A4-8

On Netflix, His Way

The Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk fought to bring a celebrated novel to the screen, but he had conditions. PAGE A4

Munich Security Conference

European leaders were talking about “de-risking” from the U.S., citing President Trump’s unpredictability. PAGE A5

NATIONAL A9-15

L.A. Executive to Sell Agency

Casey Wasserman lost dozens of high-profile clients after the public release of flirtatious email exchanges with Ghislaine Maxwell. PAGE A15

A City Left to Shiver

In Youngstown, Ohio, a broken heating system and an insolvent utility have taken a toll on residents trying to get through a bitterly cold winter. PAGE A9

Impasse Over River Water

The seven Western states that rely on supplies from the Colorado River have run out of time to reach a deal on a plan to guide use of the river. PAGE A10

BUSINESS B1-5

Blame for a Factory Closure

Few people in a Kentucky county where Ford closed a battery plant have found fault with Republicans, despite their gutting of aid for electric vehicles. Instead, they blame the company. PAGE B1

Face ID Coming to Glasses

Meta plans to add a feature as soon as this year that would let wearers of smart glasses identify people and get information about them via an artificial intelligence assistant. PAGE B1

OPINION A18-19

The Editorial Board

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ARTS C1-6

On Humans and Birds

Gathering varied works of art, Simon Schama curated an exhibition exploring ties to our feathered friends. PAGE C6

C-SPAN Showdown

“Kramer/Fauci” captures a powerful moment in the debate over the government’s approach to AIDS. PAGE C1

SPORTS D1-10

Quiet End for a Big Career

A master on the court, Chris Paul’s two-decade N.B.A. career should be remembered for much more than its unceremonious end. PAGE D3

OBITUARIES A16-17

Historian of the Soviet Era

Roy Medvedev’s books and essays documented Stalinist executions, repression and the transition to post-Soviet Russia. He was 100. PAGE A17

