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SAHER ALGHORRA FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

First Palestinians Return

The Rafah crossing between Egypt and Gaza opened after two years, but just 12 Gazans were allowed entry on the first night. Page A6.

TRUMP SIGNS BILL TO HALT IMPASSE

Funding for ICE Tied to
Talks on Restrictions

By CATIE EDMONDSON

WASHINGTON — A partial government shutdown ended Tuesday as President Trump signed a spending package to reopen major parts of the government as well as fund the Department of Homeland Security during his negotiations with Democrats over restrictions on the administration's immigration crackdown.

The package passed the House on a bipartisan 217 to 214 vote, and lawmakers from both chambers gathered in the Oval Office to applaud the shutdown's end. But under the deal, the money for the Department of Homeland Security lasts just through the end of next week.

The vote in the House capped an extraordinary spending fight that erupted 11 days ago, when the fatal shooting of an American citizen by federal immigration agents in Minneapolis torpedoed what had been a bipartisan deal to keep federal funding flowing and touched off a fevered round of negotiations. Senate Democrats demanded that any new homeland security money be tied to limits on Mr. Trump's deportation campaign.

But even though the president endorsed the deal, which he reached with Senator Chuck Schumer of New York, the Democratic leader, conservative Republicans were dissatisfied with the concessions it included nearly thwarted it in the House.

Speaker Mike Johnson struggled until the last moment to muster the votes to bring it up on Tuesday, haggling with an animated group of hard-line holdouts on the House floor for nearly an hour before he managed to cobble together a bare majority. Such messy and drawn-out scenes have become routine in the chamber, where Mr. Johnson is working with a razor-thin majority.

"I share the frustrations of many that the Senate altered our deal at the last minute," Representative Tom Cole of Oklahoma, the chairman of the Appropriations Committee said. "But our obligation is not to those emotions—it's to the American people."

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Minneapolis and an Internet at War With Truth

This article is by Stuart A. Thompson, Tiffany Hsu and Steven Lee Myers.

The deaths of two protesters in Minneapolis at the hands of law enforcement have plunged the country into a political crisis much like the one after the police killing of George Floyd in the same city in 2020.

Now, though, advances in technology and an erosion of trust are distorting realities, online and off, like never before.

Enormous changes have transformed the internet in the six years since Mr. Floyd's death in Minneapolis. Artificial intelligence tools did not exist for general use in 2020; now they are everywhere. Social media has be-

Fact and Fiction Meld as A.I. and Social Media Churn

come even more toxic. Efforts to moderate it have loosened.

The influencers behind some of the most pernicious digital lies, who once toiled in the dark corners of the internet, are now emboldened, promoted on major platforms and even mimicked by some of the most powerful people in the country.

All of these forces came together with newfound intensity in the opening weeks of the year. After

federal immigration agents shot and killed Renee Good and Alex Pretti in Minneapolis, A.I. fakes of the victims spread, genuine videos were viewed with suspicion, a Democratic lawmaker displayed an altered image on the Senate floor and online sleuths misidentified random people as being the agents involved in the shootings. The federal government spread an altered image and backed provably false narratives.

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DOCTORED PHOTO A protester, disgusted by a manipulated image of her circulated by the White House, speaks out. PAGE A12



VINCENT ALBAN/THE NEW YORK TIMES

U.S. speedskaters at a training session in Milan on Tuesday. The Milan-Cortina Olympics, which begin this week, will be held in eight separate locations with venues hundreds of miles apart.

For Fans, Each Day Will Be Cross-Country Event

By JASON HOROWITZ

CORTINA D'AMPEZZO, Italy — On the day the Olympic flame arrived to Cortina d'Ampezzo, one of the principal hubs of this month's Winter Games, a potentially more critical ceremony for the event's success took place 20 miles south beside a curving mountain road.

Claudio Andrea Gemme, the head of Italy's highway authority, stood on a red carpet that rolled

Complex Logistics at a Spread-Out Games

toward the mouth of a tunnel that he and other officials were inaugurating after years of works.

"Our goal was to complete this project for the Olympics," Mr. Gemme said, before an Alpine marching band began playing and drowned him out.

He drifted off to greet top Italian government officials and the local bishop, who came to bless the new construction with splashes of holy water and a prayer for the Games.

The 25th edition of the Winter Games, which start this week, will have eight separate locations spread across about 8,500 square miles of northern Italy, a logistical nightmare that has led officials to welcome each new tunnel, increased train service or extended

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Tehran Closer to Talking

President Masoud Pezeshkian of Iran said he supported "equitable negotiations" with the U.S. The sides are expected to meet on Friday.

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Venezuela's leader has offered an amnesty proposal and allowed opposition officials to emerge from hiding.

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Original Bassist for Funkadelic

Billy Bass Nelson, 75, named George Clinton's group and later entered the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

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How Will Trade Truce Go?

President Trump lowered huge tariffs on most goods, but other aspects of an accord he announced with India's prime minister remained unclear.

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SPORTS B7-11

A Stadium Tour for a Cause

Kevin Ortiz's season-long journey to every NFL city revealed accessibility challenges for wheelchair users. His next stop: the Super Bowl.

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OPINION A22-23

Margaret Renkl

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THE WEATHER

Today, sunshine, some clouds, dry, high 33. Tonight, partly to mostly cloudy, dry, colder, low 19. Tomorrow, plenty of sunshine, dry, high 30. Weather map appears on Page B8.

In Trump's Fraud Sweep, It's Better to Be a Friend

Crackdown Serves as a Tool for Retribution Against Rivals as Allies Get Pardons

By TONY ROMM

WASHINGTON — When federal prosecutors revealed troubling details in December about a sprawling fraud ring in Minnesota, the White House quickly vowed a "relentless assault" to stop the theft of taxpayer funds.

"Our country has been losing over half a trillion dollars to fraud every single year," President Trump claimed during a speech the following month, adding that "those days are over."

The Trump administration has since turned its anti-fraud campaign largely into a tool for political retribution. Without the permission of Congress, the federal government has tried to hold up billions of dollars for programs that Mr. Trump has long disfavored, including those that provide child care, housing and groceries for the poor. And the White House has meted out some of its harshest punishments for states led by Democrats, particularly the president's rivals.

Mr. Trump's tactics and motivations are apparent in a battery of public statements, letters, internal memos and court filings viewed by The New York Times. They cast doubt on the president's claims that the chief goal of his fraud crackdown is to save taxpayers' money and help balance the budget.

Instead, Mr. Trump has coupled the new politically charged scrus-

tiny with steep cuts to the parts of government that historically try to ferret out fraud. The president in his second term has tried to fire, defund or otherwise impede dozens of nonpartisan investigators, including those who have previously scrutinized his administration.

He has also pardoned political allies who have been charged with fraud in programs that he now seeks to protect. Some of those pardons concern crimes that allegedly bilked Medicare and Medicaid, according to prosecutors' court filings, which peg the possible losses to taxpayers into the hundreds of millions of dollars.

Mark Greenblatt, who served as an inspector general for the Interior Department until he was fired by Mr. Trump last year, said that it was "welcome" when any administration uses the levers of government to protect taxpayers' interests.

Mr. Greenblatt added, however, that in the president's latest efforts "there are some very troubling signs, and very troubling events over the past year, that I think should send up red flags for the American people."

In a statement, Abigail Jackson, a spokeswoman for the White House, said that the administration "remains committed to stop-

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Mayor Above the Fray Tackles Fussy Rules for Cars and Cafes

By HEATHER KNIGHT

SAN FRANCISCO — For a city known for its anything-goes ethos, for its embrace of letting your freak flag fly, the list of activities one could not legally do in San Francisco was remarkable.

You could not, for instance, park your own car in your own driveway without first constructing a screen or fence to protect neighbors from such an unsightly view. Business owners couldn't paint a sign on their own storefront without getting special permission.

And cafe owners couldn't serve romantic dinners by candlelight — at least not without heading to the city's permit office, lighting a candle there and waving a cloth napkin over the flame to prove that it would not catch fire.

San Francisco's labyrinthine bureaucracy has long been the source of eye rolls and embarrassing headlines, with layers of laws added to the books over decades in response to one emergent concern after another.

Over the past 13 months, the nation has been consumed by the

Trump administration's international feuds and its deployment of immigration agents and the National Guard to U.S. cities. In California, wildfires devastated two communities in the Los Angeles area. The challenges have often felt larger than life.

In San Francisco, however, Mayor Daniel Lurie has spent his

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trials the mayor daily, his yarmulke and curled sidelocks unmissable in the crowd.

And across his Mamdani-averse neighborhood and well beyond it, Mr. Kornbluh has found that his beat is of particular interest lately.

His scoops travel widely, from the insular centers of Brooklyn Hasidic power, to Reform congregations that despise Benjamin Netanyahu almost as much as Mr. Mamdani does, to the offices of national politicians who feel neglected by Mr. Kornbluh's recent

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A Feisty Hasidic Reporter Has A Few Questions for Mamdani

By MATT FLEGENHEIMER

Jacob Kornbluh, a 44-year-old Brooklyn grandfather who cajoles his political sources in a British-Yiddish-fuhgeddaboyd-ish accent, begins many mornings getting decked in shul.

"People say, 'Oh, go back to covering Zohran,'" he said of his peers in the Hasidic enclave of Borough Park. "They tease me as if I am the one enabling him."

Mr. Kornbluh is the senior political reporter for The Forward, the 129-year-old Jewish publication based a short walk from Mayor Zohran Mamdani's new office. He is the only Hasidic journalist who

trails the mayor daily, his yarmulke and curled sidelocks unmissable in the crowd.

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District Guards Against ICE

School officials in a Minneapolis suburb keep watch for federal immigration agents from dawn to dusk.

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D.O.J. Leaves Out Press Law

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