

META WILL STOP
CHECKING FACTS
ON SOCIAL MEDIA

SHIFT AHEAD OF TRUMP

Will Depend on Users to
Correct Inaccurate
and False Posts

By MIKE ISAAC
and THEODORE SCHLEIFER

SAN FRANCISCO — Meta said on Tuesday that it was ending its longstanding fact-checking program, a policy instituted to curtail the spread of misinformation across its social media apps, in a stark sign of how the company was repositioning itself for the Trump presidency and throwing its weight behind unfettered speech online.

Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp, said it would now allow more speech, rely on its users to correct inaccurate and false posts, and take a more personalized approach to political content. It described the changes with the language of regret, saying it had strayed too far from its values over the previous decade.

“It’s time to get back to our roots around free expression,” Mark Zuckerberg, Meta’s chief executive, said in a video announcing the changes. The company’s fact-checking system, he added, had “reached a point where it’s just too many mistakes and too much censorship.”

Mr. Zuckerberg conceded there would be more “bad stuff” on the platforms as a result of the decision. “The reality is that this is a trade-off,” he said. “It means that we’re going to catch less bad stuff,

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EVOLUTION Mark Zuckerberg shifts back to his original thinking on free speech. PAGE B1

Syrians Rejoice
In a Damascus
Once Off Limits

By RAJA ABDULRAHIM

DAMASCUS, Syria — For much of her life, Sumaya Ainaya spent weekend and summer nights on Mount Qasioun, which overlooks the city of Damascus, joined by other Syrians drinking coffee, smoking hookah and eating corn on the cob roasted on grills nearby.

But soon after the Syrian civil war erupted in 2011, the military under President Bashar al-Assad closed the mountain to civilians. Suddenly, instead of families and friends shooting fireworks into the sky, soldiers with tanks and artillery launchers were firing at rebel-held areas below.

This New Year’s Eve, weeks after a coalition of rebels ousted the Syrian regime, Ms. Ainaya, 56, and her family returned to Mount Qasioun with snacks, soda and scarves to protect from the winter chill — and reclaimed a favorite leisure spot.

“Thank God, we’ve returned now — we feel like we can breathe again,” said Ms. Ainaya, an Arabic literature graduate and a mother of four, standing along a ridge and pointing out several Damascus landmarks.

“We feel like the city has returned to us,” said her son Muhammad Qatafani, 21, a dental student.

Across Damascus, as in much of the country, Syrians are reclaiming, and in some cases embracing anew, spaces and freedoms that had been off limits for years under

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INTERNATIONAL A4-10

Deadly Earthquake Hits Tibet

Chinese state media said at least 126 people died in the magnitude 7.1 quake that was also felt in Nepal. PAGE A10

Curriculum Changes in Syria

Critics say the swift move is a worrying sign of how the former rebels plan to govern a diverse country. PAGE A4

Schools Brace
For ICE Agents
At Their Doors

Anxiety About Trump’s
Immigration Policies

By DANA GOLDSTEIN

If immigration agents arrive on the doorstep of a New York City public school, principals have been told what to do: Ask the officers to wait outside, and call a school district lawyer.

The school system has enrolled about 40,000 recent immigrant students since 2022. Now, as President-elect Donald J. Trump prepares to take office with promises to deport millions of undocumented immigrants, the district has shared with school staff a protocol to try to shield students who have a tenuous legal status.

In a December letter to principals, Emma Vadehra, the district’s chief operating officer, wrote, “We hope using this protocol will never be necessary.”

Still, New York and some other school districts across the country are readying educators and immigrant families for a potential wave of deportations.

Public schools serving clusters of migrant children have already dealt with a dizzying set of challenges in recent years, as an influx of hundreds of thousands of migrants crossed the southern border. Some are educating students who speak Indigenous languages and may have never before been enrolled in formal education. Others are trying to prod teenagers to class, when they may face intense pressure to earn money. And many have assisted newly arrived families with finding shelter, food and winter clothes.

Now, these schools are facing an additional challenge: persuading parents to send their children to class when some are so anxious about deportation that they are reluctant to separate from their children for even part of the day.

“We have parents who are afraid,” said Adam Clark, the su-

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POOL PHOTO BY SUSAN WALSH

A horse-drawn caisson taking President Jimmy Carter’s coffin to the U.S. Capitol on Tuesday, where he will lie in state. Page A16.

WASHINGTON MEMO

Carter, Always a Proud Outsider, Receives a Capital’s Embrace

By PETER BAKER

WASHINGTON — Former President Jimmy Carter arrived in Washington on Tuesday to be honored in death as the city never truly honored him in life.

That he will end his long story with a pomp-and-circumstance visit to the nation’s capital is a nod to protocol not partiality, a testament to the rituals of the American presidency rather than a testimonial to the time he presided in the citadel of power.

To put it more bluntly, Mr. Carter and Washington did not exactly get along. More than any

president in generations before him, the peanut farmer from Georgia was a genuine outsider when he took occupancy of the white mansion at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue — and determinedly, stubbornly, proudly remained so.

He never cared for the culture of the capital, never catered to its mandarins and doyens, never bowed to its conventions. The city, in turn, never cared for him and his “Georgian mafia,” dismissing them as a bunch of cocky rednecks from the hinterlands who did not know what they were doing. Other outsider

Coda to a Lengthy and
Often Mutually Testy
Relationship

presidents eventually acclimated to Washington. Not Mr. Carter. And by his own admission, it would cost him.

“I don’t know which was worse — the Carter crowd’s distrust and dislike of unofficial Washington or Washington’s contempt for the new guys in town from Georgia,” recalled Gregory B. Craig, a

longtime lawyer and fixture in Washington who served in two other Democratic administrations. “I do know it was there on Day 1.”

Between the two camps, the blend of piety, pettiness, jealousy and condescension proved toxic. It was not partisan — Mr. Carter’s most profound differences were with fellow Democrats. But the litany of slights and snubs on both sides was long and lingering. Everyone remembered the phone call that went unreturned, the invitation that never came, the project that was

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NANNA HEITMANN FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

The Ukraine veteran Aleksandr with Yuri A. Pogorelov, a prosthetist, at a Moscow-area sanitarium.

A Long Battle for Badly Injured Russian Veterans

By VALERIE HOPKINS

PALASHKINO, Russia — Aleksandr had only two weeks of training in Russia before being sent to the front lines in Ukraine in the summer of 2023. About a month later, he became an amputee.

Learning to live without his right leg is taking much longer than two weeks.

“There was a lot of pain at the beginning,” said Aleksandr, 38, referred to only by his first name in accordance with military protocol. But, he added, “eventually, your brain just rewires itself and

At Home, Physical and
Mental Needs Linger

you get used to it.”

Aleksandr spoke in an interview at a sanitarium in the Moscow suburbs while a doctor refitted his prosthetic leg. He is one of hundreds of thousands of Russian soldiers returning home from a third year of war to government institutions and a society scrambling to provide for veterans at a time of sanctions, and to the paral-

lel realities of the seemingly unaffected hustle and bustle of big cities and the hardships on the front.

The veterans have both visible and invisible needs that they bring back to their families, who experienced the trauma of waiting for them to come home alive and now must learn to care for them.

There are at least 300,000 severely injured veterans, according to calculations by the independent Russian media outlets Mediazona and Meduza, as well as the BBC, which all use open

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JEAN-MARIE LE PEN, 1928-2025

Formed and Then Inflamed
French Far Right for Decades

By ROBERT D. MCFADDEN

Jean-Marie Le Pen, the founding father of France’s modern political far-right who built a half-century career on rants of barely disguised racism, antisemitism and neo-Nazi propaganda, died on Tuesday in Garches, west of Paris. He was 96.

His death was confirmed on X by Jordan Bardella, the president of the party Mr. Le Pen founded. Mr. Le Pen’s family also announced the death, in a hospital, in a statement to Agence France-Presse.

In April 2024, with Mr. Le Pen in frail health after suffering a second heart attack within a year, a French court granted his daughters legal guardianship, giving them the right to make decisions in his name.

An arm-waving reactionary with the swagger of a circus pitchman making outrageous claims, Mr. Le Pen ran unsuccessfully for the French presidency five times, making it to a runoff in 2002, riding waves of discontent and xenophobia and raising specters of a new fascism as he excoriated Jews, Arabs, Muslims and other immigrants — anyone he deemed to be not “pure” French.

Mr. Le Pen’s youngest daughter, Marine Le Pen, succeeded him as leader of his party, the National Front, in 2011 and rose to prominence on a tide of populist anger at the political mainstream. She was defeated in France’s presidential elections three times — in 2012, placing third with 17.9 percent of



JOEL SAGET/A.F.P. — GETTY IMAGES

Jean-Marie Le Pen in 2016. He ran for president five times.

the vote behind François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy; in 2017, with 33.9 percent, losing to the centrist Emmanuel Macron; and in 2022, with 41.5 percent, defeated again by Mr. Macron.

But that year’s elections also sent a record number of representatives from the party, renamed National Rally, to the lower house of Parliament — 89 in all — testimony to the success of Ms. Le Pen’s efforts to normalize it and moderate its message in some regards.

By then it had become the leading opposition party, no longer an outcast widely viewed as a threat to the republic, and in 2023 the Na-

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NATIONAL A11-18

Bearing Witness to a Riot

A reporter who was at the Capitol when a pro-Trump mob stormed the complex on Jan. 6, 2021, assesses what has changed four years later. PAGE A11

Trump Loses Sentence Appeal

President-elect Donald J. Trump wants to expunge his conviction before he takes office. He would be the first felon elected to the presidency. PAGE A13

Test for Biden’s Climate Law

A tax credit for renewable energy could be hard to kill because it applies to technologies favored by Republicans, not just wind and solar. PAGE A17



FOOD D1-8

Their Pieces of the Pie

Where do you find great slices of New York-style pizza? Go far west, Tony Gemignani, above, might say. PAGE D1

Just Mad About Saffron

A growing cadre of small farmers and gardeners are cultivating the spice for profit, or simply for pleasure. PAGE D2

ARTS C1-6

Architect’s Path to Fame

Frida Escobedot had mostly designed temporary structures before becoming the first woman to design a wing at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. PAGE C1

SPORTS B6-10

Paid to Lose, and Losing Big

The Mississippi Valley State men’s basketball team has not won a nonconference road game since 2006, playing to fund the athletics program. PAGE B6

OPINION A20-21

Michelle Goldberg PAGE A20



OBITUARIES A19, 22

Part of Peter, Paul and Mary

Peter Yarrow, left, formed a folk trio with Mary Travers and Noel Paul Stookey that became a pop phenomenon. He was 86. PAGE A22

