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ANALYSIS

Views split on White House UFC event



President Donald Trump's pitch in November 2024 to hold a fight at the White House came at a time when mixed martial arts had fought its way into the mainstream. KYLIE COOPER/REUTERS FILE

Fight brings politics, sports brands together

Zac Anderson and Chris Kenning
USA TODAY

It was 2001, and mixed martial arts fighting was on the ropes.

Banned in 36 states, booted from cable operators, derided as "human cock-fighting" – it was such an outcast sport that it traded hands for \$2 million. A song.

The new owners of Ultimate Fighting Championship faced a big challenge: Nobody wanted to host the fights.

"When UFC started, people were like, 'Oh, my God, this is disgusting and horrible. Oh, my God, this is brutal,'" Dana White, who would become UFC president, told USA TODAY.

In came Donald Trump. Long a fan of boxing and often seen ringside in Las Vegas, he agreed to showcase UFC matches at his Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City, New Jersey. It was the opening White said he needed when few others would touch it.

"Trump was the first guy to give us a shot," White said.

Now, a quarter century later, Trump is set to host one of the most unlikely and controversial UFC fighting events in history: The UFC Freedom 250, a six-fight event on June 14 timed to Trump's 80th birthday and the nation's 250th,

fought on the White House's South Lawn.

A lawsuit filed June 7 by the Public Integrity Project alleged decisions made by the Department of the Interior and the National Park Service permitting the event violated federal law and the Park Service's own regulations, but a federal judge ruled on June 12 that it could proceed.

Federal Judge Amit Mehta in Washington, DC, noted that the critics had called the fighting arena assembled on the South Lawn, "hideous," "grotesque" and "disgusting," but said the plaintiffs had failed to prove irreparable harm and had waited too long to file their lawsuit.

See UFC, Page 2A

Status of Iran deal hazy after statement

U.S., Tehran seemingly at odds on nuclear issue

Bart Jansen, Joey Garrison
and Michael Loria
USA TODAY

Pakistan's Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said June 12 the text of a peace deal between the United States and Iran "has been reached," and Iran's foreign minister said a deal has "never been closer," raising hopes for a genuine settlement to wind down the three-month war.

"The Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding has never been closer. Pending its finalization, the media should refrain from entering speculation about its content," Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi said on X.

President Donald Trump reposted Araghchi's statement.

"Setting aside the noise, we can confirm that a final, agreed upon text of the peace deal has been reached and Pakistan is now working closely with both sides to finalize the next steps," Sharif said on X. "Peace has never been this close as it is now."

Sharif noted what he described as an "incessant misinformation campaign being waged by those who want to sabotage the peace deal."

He and Araghchi were referring to a continuing flurry of confusion over the terms of the agreement that suggested the two sides could still be at odds over its most significant and complicated component – the nuclear question.

Trump and ally Israel launched the fight Feb. 28, and peace talks have dragged on for weeks under a ceasefire that began in April.

Key to any deal for Trump is ensuring Iran disavows its nuclear program. He has said Iran has committed not to possess a nuclear weapon.

However, the Islamic Republican News Agency disagreed with that characterization early June 12.

"The passing references made in the text of the memorandum to Iran's nuclear program do not create any new commitments for Iran and are merely references to subsequent negotiations and Iran's firm commitment not to develop nuclear weapons based on the permanent policy of the Islamic Republic of Iran," the news agency said.

Should the memo be signed, terms will be worked out over 60 days, including over the "lifting of all unilateral and illegal U.S. sanctions, and a mechanism for compensating Iran for the damages caused to it," the news agency said.

The agency added, "Contrary to some strange claims in the media, Iran does not make any commitment in this text to hand over management or return the Strait of Hormuz." Instead, the agreement envisions the establishment of maritime security by coastal countries in the region.

In response to these terms that appeared to favor Iran, Trump accused Iran of misrepresenting the deal.

"The terms that Iran leaked out to the Fake News have NOTHING to do

See DEAL, Page 2A

Study examines GLP-1 use during pregnancy

Nancy Lapid
REUTERS

Use of GLP-1 drugs for diabetes or obesity early in the first trimester of pregnancy, before a woman realizes she is pregnant, is not a cause for alarm, a large new data analysis suggests.

These medications, which include Novo Nordisk's semaglutide, sold as Ozempic and Wegovy, and Eli Lilly's tirzepatide, sold as Zepbound and Mounjaro, are not recommended for use during pregnancy because their safety for the fetus is unknown and animal studies have suggested potential risks.

Researchers at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health analyzed 3,572 pregnancies in women who were



Medical guidelines advise stopping GLP-1 drugs at least one or two months before pregnancy. GEORGE FREY/REUTERS

See STUDY, Page 2A

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