

USA TODAY WEEKEND

THE NATION'S NEWS | \$3 | JUNE 12-14, 2026

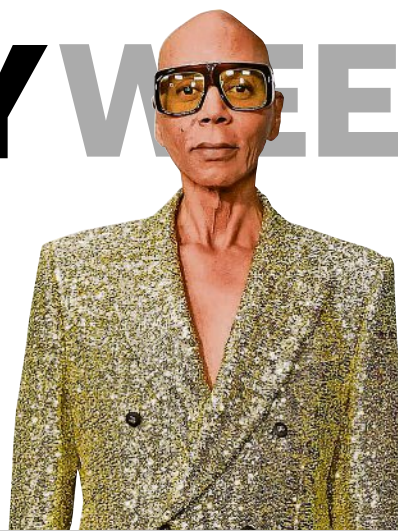
RODIN ECKENROTH/GETTY IMAGES

Perspectives on World Cup 2026

U.S. star Christian Pulisic, pope, President Trump, Nancy Armour chime in on soccer. **In Sports**

A second chance at justice for worker

He cleaned up PCB-polluted river at site with lax safety rules. Then he got cancer. **In Weekend Extra**



RuPaul: 'Laughter is our beacon'

Drag icon explains why movie spoof "Stop! That! Train!" is a political statement. **In Life**

UFC set to rumble at White House

Event mirrors Trump's no-holds-barred style

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 cockfighting" – it was such an outcast sport that it traded hands for \$2 million – a song.

And 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.



Ultimate Fighting Championship President and CEO Dana White, left, says President Donald Trump "was the first guy to give us a shot."
FRANK FRANKLIN II/POOL VIA REUTERS

In came Donald Trump. Long a fan of boxing and often seen ringside in Vegas, he agreed to showcase UFC matches at his Taj Mahal casino in Atlantic City. 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.

The \$60 million spectacle is the culmination of a decades-long relationship between a president and a

See **UFC EVENT**, Page 3A

Trump to become second president to reach 80

He faces questions about his health as he joins Biden in exclusive club. **2A**

Follow live UFC coverage at sports.usatoday.com

Get real-time updates as six-fight spectacle unfolds on June 14.

Trump cites progress toward deal with Iran

For the latest developments in the Middle East, visit [usatoday.com](https://www.usatoday.com).

At this flag factory, every stitch is a tribute to freedom



Annin Flagmakers in South Boston, Virginia, has seen the United States through tragedy and triumph since 1847. Its flags draped Abraham Lincoln's casket and flew to the moon on Apollo 11. PHOTOS BY JACK GRUBER/USA TODAY

'One rule' for 179 years: Patriotism, not politics



Karissa Waddick
USA TODAY

SOUTH BOSTON, VA – Inside this cavernous warehouse off U.S. Route 58, thin strips of red and white cotton cascade over nearly every surface.

The strips are piled high in plastic bins, sprawled over tables and fed underneath bobbing needles. The whir of dozens of sewing machines working at once fills the stark, concrete room.

Here at this 200,000-square-foot factory, seamstresses work eight and sometimes 12 hours a day weaving together the American flag.

Their company, Annin Flagmakers, bills itself as the oldest and largest manufacturer of the star-spangled banner in the United States. It is one of few companies still making the flag in America.

Since the company's founding in 1847, Annin flags have marked the country's highest highs and lowest lows. Its flags hung at President Abraham Lincoln's inauguration and draped his casket. They flew atop

See **FLAG FACTORY**, Page 6A

USA250

About this series

USA 250 is our nationwide initiative to celebrate America's 250th anniversary – the nation's history, its meaningful places and its people. Read more at [usatoday.com/usa250](https://www.usatoday.com/usa250).

At Annin, employees work eight and sometimes 12 hours a day weaving together American flags. This year the company has partnered with the nonpartisan organization America250 to weave together hundreds of thousands of handheld flags for events across the nation in an initiative called "America Waves" to help celebrate the semiquincentennial.



Matthew Hall, 25, buys "surprise" bags of surplus food to stretch his budget. "It's a win-win," he says. PROVIDED BY MATTHEW HALL

One answer to high prices: 'Surprise' grocery bags

Apps let savvy shoppers fight waste, save money

Betty Lin-Fisher
USA TODAY

Matthew Hall is trying to stretch his grocery budget and save up to replace his aging car amid rising food prices and overall inflation.

Hall regularly uses an app called Too Good to Go to find steep discounts on food.

Hall and other shoppers are using these services, which connect grocery

stores, cafes and restaurants with consumers, to find more inexpensive food and encourage sustainability by reducing food waste.

"In the interest of sustainability and keeping things out of landfills, I use it for things that I can use to meal-prep to keep costs low," Hall, 25, of Durham, North Carolina, told USA TODAY. "It's a win-win for me and for the business."

Too Good to Go started in Europe in 2016 and now is in 21 countries with 120 million users and 180,000 partners, said Chris MacAulay, vice president of

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