

NEWSIN brief

Trump booted at UFC fight night

President Donald Trump was loudly booed on Saturday for the second time in a week at a sporting event as he attended a UFC fight in New York's iconic Madison Square Garden arena. There was no repeat of the loud chants of "lock him up" that greeted Trump when he attended a World Series baseball game last weekend, but loud jeers rung out. Many mixed martial arts fans also clapped and cheered as Trump took his seat just 15 feet from the cage where the UFC was set to award the "BMF" belt.

El Salvador expels Venezuela diplomats

El Salvador has ordered Venezuela's diplomats to leave the country within 48 hours, in line with President Nayib Bukele's position that the Venezuelan government of Nicolas Maduro is illegitimate. More than 50 countries have switched their recognition to national assembly speaker Juan Guaido as Venezuela's legitimate acting president. Despite sanctions by US and allies, Caracas still has strong support at the UN, from Russia and China in particular.

Toll in Philippine quakes climbs to 21

The death toll in two powerful quakes that struck the southern Philippines in the past week has risen to 21, authorities said yesterday, as survivors struggled to access food and water. The 6.6-magnitude and 6.5-magnitude quakes hit the island of Mindanao two days apart, destroying buildings and displacing tens of thousands of residents. Some villagers staying under tents near a highway were begging for help from passing motorists, carrying placards asking for food and water, TV footage showed.



People point at a riot police officer as he detains a protester at a shopping mall in Tai Po in Hong Kong, yesterday. Inset, Police officers aim their weapons at protesters in the mall. Flashmob rallies erupted inside multiple shopping centers across the international finance hub in the afternoon, sparking frequent clashes with riot police.

Iran's Khamenei rules out US talks

Calls Macron's effort as 'naive'

Iran's supreme leader yesterday again ruled out negotiations with Washington, a day before the 40th anniversary of the hostage crisis at the US embassy in Tehran. "Those who see negotiations with the US as the solution to every problem are certainly mistaken," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei said during a speech to mark the anniversary, according to his official website. "Nothing will come out of talking to the US, because they certainly and definitely won't make any concessions." On November 4, 1979, less than nine months after the toppling of Iran's American-backed shah, students overran the embassy complex to demand the United States hand over the ousted ruler after he was admitted to a US hospital. It took a full 444 days for the crisis to end with the release of 52 Americans, but the US broke off diplomatic relations with Iran in 1980 and ties have been frozen ever since. Khamenei, however, said the Iran-US "disputes" did not start with the embassy takeover. "It goes back to the 1953 coup, when the US overthrew a national govt -- which had made the mistake of trusting the US -- and established its corrupt and puppet govt in Iran," his Twitter account said in English. That CIA-organised coup re-established the rule of the country's last shah, Mohammad-Reza Pahlavi, who had fled the country in August 1953 after trying to dismiss Mossadegh. Khamenei called French President Emmanuel Macron's efforts to set up talks between Iran and the US "naive". Tensions have escalated again between Tehran and Washington since US President Donald Trump withdrew from the 2015 Iran nuclear deal last year and re-imposed unilateral sanctions.

UK PM 'sorry' for Brexit delay

Euro-sceptic Nigel Farage says he won't run in Dec polls

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson yesterday apologised for not taking Britain out of the European Union by October 31, while Brexit figurehead Nigel Farage said he will not stand in next month's general election. "It is a matter of deep regret," Johnson told Sky News, before criticising US president Donald Trump for saying his Brexit deal with Brussels would prevent a future Britain/US trade agreement. "I don't wish to cast any aspersions on the president, but in that respect he is patently in error," Johnson said. "Anybody who looks at our deal can see it is a great deal... it allows us to have full unfettered control of our tariff schedule". Trump on Thursday told friend Farage -- whose Brexit Party will be up against Johnson in the December 12 election -- that "under certain aspects of the deal -- you can't do it, you can't trade." Farage said yesterday he will

not seek to become an MP in next month's vote, but that his party would challenge the Tories across the country. "Do I find a seat, try and get myself into parliament? Or do I serve the cause better traversing the length and breadth of the United Kingdom supporting 600 candidates -- I've



decided that the last course is the right one," he told BBC's Andrew Marr. The Brexit Party was formed earlier this year to fight the European parliamentary elections, where it emerged as the runaway winner. But Farage, who has been a member of the European Parliament since 1999, has already tried to become an

MP on seven occasions, losing out each time. Farage has been a harsh critic of Johnson's deal but has called for an election pact with the Conservatives, even as the prime minister ruled out such a deal. "I ruled out a pact with everybody because I don't think that it's sensible," said Johnson. "What I can say respectfully to the leaders of all other parties is, alas, the only likely consequence of voting for them, rather than for us as Conservatives is that you're making it more likely that you will thereby get (Labour leader) Jeremy Corbyn". With the Tories relying on Brexit supporters to gain a majority on December 12, a strong showing by Farage's party threatens to split the leave vote and open the door for the Labour party. But Farage kept up his opposition to Johnson's deal, carrying a two-page advert in the Sunday Express which said that "Boris' deal is not Brexit".

'Guardian of the forest' killed by illegal loggers

Indigenous community blames Bolsonaro govt

A Brazilian land defender was killed and a second injured in an ambush by loggers in the Amazon rainforest, regional authorities reported. Indigenous leader Paulo Paulino Guajajara and his partner Laercio were members of "Guardians of the forest", a group who attempt to protect their land from illegal logging. The two men had left their village on Friday night to look for water when the attack occurred, the Human Rights Secretariat of the Maranhao governorate said on Twitter. Paulo Paulino was shot in the neck and died in the jungle, according to the International Survival organization, who said his partner was injured but managed to escape. A logger has also been reported missing. "The Bolsonaro government has

indigenous blood on its hands," Brazil's pan-indigenous organization APIB, which represents many of the country's 900,000 native people, said in a statement on Saturday. Justice Minister Sergio Moro tweeted that the police will investigate the murder, which took place in the Arariboia indigenous territory, roughly 500 kilometres from state capital Sao Luis. "Paulino and Laercio are the most recent victims of a state that refuses to comply with what the constitution determines," Greenpeace said in a statement. Three other guardians have died in previous attacks. "It is time to stop this institutionalized genocide. Stop authorizing the bloodshed of our people!" Sonia Guajajara, coordinator of the Association of Indigenous Peoples of Brazil, said on Twitter.



AMAZON AMBUSH



Thousands march for Scottish independence

Thousands rallied in Glasgow on Saturday calling for Scotland to become an independent country, with First Minister Nicola Sturgeon telling the crowds that their goal was "within touching distance". The Scottish National Party (SNP) leader was the headline speaker at the event in George Square, the first time she has addressed an independence rally since the 2014 referendum campaign, with a crucial general election looming next month. "Make no mistake, the general election we face now on December 12 is the most important election for Scotland in our lifetimes," she told the crowds. "The future of our country is on the line. Scotland voted against independence in a 2014 referendum by 55 percent.

Merkel wants 1m electric car charging points by 2030

Germany should have one million charging stations for electric cars by 2030, Chancellor Angela Merkel said in a video message yesterday, ahead of meetings on Monday with the car industry on how to speed the move to low-emission battery-driven vehicles. "For this purpose, we want to create a million charging points by the year 2030 and the industry will have to participate in this effort," Merkel said. Germany now has just 20,000 public charging points.

Ukraine behind 2016 Democratic party hack!

Documents released by the US Department of Justice on Saturday indicated that a top advisor to then-candidate Donald Trump said as early as the summer of 2016 that Ukraine, not Russia, was behind a hack of Democratic party emails. Trump and his surrogates have suggested that Kiev hacked Democratic National Committee servers and planted evidence to frame Russia, as a way of undermining the legitimacy of the US leader's election. Trump has pressured Ukraine's president to investigate his election rival Joe Biden -- a move at the crux of an impeachment investigation against him in the House of Representatives. The hundreds of pages of documents out Saturday were part of an initial tranche released to US media outlets BuzzFeed and CNN, which sued the government for access to notes from the investigation conducted by special counsel Robert Mueller into Russian meddling in the 2016 election. Installments of the internal documents from the Mueller probe, which concluded in March, will be released every month for the next eight years, BuzzFeed said.

SOUTH CHINA SEA ROW

Ready to work with Asean: Beijing

Beijing said yesterday it is "ready to work" with Southeast Asian nations on a code of conduct in the flashpoint South China Sea, where it is accused of building up military installations and bullying fellow claimants. China claims most of the resource-rich waterway, a major global shipping route that has long been a source of tension in the region. For years, the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) has been locked in talks for a code of conduct for the sea, where China is accused of deploying warships, arming outposts and ramming fishing vessels. The agreement, set to be finished in 2021, will lay out conduct guidelines for the sea along with conflict resolution parameters. Yesterday, China's premier Li Keqiang said the first reading of the document -- a chance for all members to comment on the draft terms -- was "a very important landmark". "We stand ready to work with Asean countries building on the existing foundation and the basis to strive for new progress" on the guidelines, he said. He added that China wanted to "maintain and uphold long-term peace and stability in the South China Sea". The Philippines -- which has sparred with China in the sea -- said yesterday that Beijing is committed to the code, despite its broad claims to the waterway. "It recognises the fact that if it doesn't agree to a code of conduct then there will be turmoil in the region," presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo told reporters in Bangkok on the sidelines of Asean.



Malaysia's Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad, Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and President of the Philippines Rodrigo Duterte prepare to pose during Asean leaders summit, in Bangkok, Thailand, yesterday.

Delhi gasps under toxic smog

Air pollution level hits 'severe plus'; 32 flights diverted

India's capital New Delhi was enveloped in heavy, toxic smog yesterday -- the worst levels in recent years -- with flights diverted or delayed as politicians blamed each other for failing to tackle the crisis. Every winter, the megacity of 20 million people is blanketed by a poisonous smog of car fumes, industrial emissions and smoke from stubble burning at farms in neighbouring states. Air pollution levels bordered on the "severe plus" threshold for the capital yesterday. Concentrations of particles measuring less than 2.5 microns hit the highest level of this season, exacerbated by light rains late Saturday, India's state-run System of Air Quality Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said. The reading for pollutants in the atmosphere hit 810 micrograms per cubic metre yesterday morning, beyond the "hazardous" zone according to the US embassy in Delhi, which independently monitors pollution levels. The recommended World Health Organisation safe daily maximum is 25. "Pollution has reached unbearable levels," Delhi Chief

Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted yesterday. Visibility was so poor that major carriers Air India and Vistara said yesterday flights were being delayed or diverted to and from Delhi's airports. "It's actually scary -- you can't see things in front of you," protester Jaivipra told AFP at a rally in Delhi yesterday calling for politicians to do more to curb pollution. Nurses at the demonstration said they were seeing more people suffering from respiratory problems. Patients are coming with more lung and respiratory diseases, like more (are) affected with asthma, sources at hospitals said. The conditions sparked a blame game between state and federal politicians over who was responsible for the conditions, which authorities said Friday reached "emergency" levels. In a tweet last week, Kejriwal called on the state governments of neighbouring Punjab and Haryana to take action. "Delhi has turned into a gas chamber due to smoke from crop burning in neighbouring states," he tweeted. Schools in Delhi have already been ordered closed until Tuesday, and construction halted from Monday there will be an odd/even car licence plate scheme to cut traffic.



Iraqi protesters shut down streets, offices

Protesters in Iraq's capital and the country's south shut down streets and government offices in a new campaign of civil disobedience yesterday, escalating their month-long movement demanding change to the political system. Demonstrations broke out on October 1 in outrage over rampant corruption and unemployment in Iraq, but were met with a violent crackdown that left dozens dead. Since resuming later last month, the protests have swelled again with the support of students and trade unions, who jointly announced a campaign of non-violent resistance yesterday. In Baghdad, university-age demonstrators parked cars along main thoroughfares to block traffic on the first day of the work week in the Muslim-majority country, as police officers looked on. Other students took part in sit-ins at their schools, and the national teachers union extended a strike they began last week. The engineering, doctors and lawyers syndicates have all backed the protests. "We decided to cut the roads as a message to the government that we will keep protesting until the corrupt people and thieves are kicked out and the regime falls," said Tahseen Nasser, a 25-year-old protester in the eastern city of Kut. "We're not allowing government workers to reach their offices, just those in humanitarian fields," such as hospital staff, he said. The government has proposed a string of reforms, including a hiring drive, social welfare plans and early elections once a new voting law is passed. The pledges have had little effect on those in the streets, who have condemned the political class wholesale.