

10 THE WORLD



MEANWHILE BOTSWANA'S LARGEST BLUE DIAMOND

A big blue diamond weighing more than 20 carats has been unveiled in Botswana, where the gem was discovered. The government-owned Okavango Diamond Company on Wednesday called it the largest blue diamond ever discovered in the southern African nation. A company statement says it is "in the very top bracket of all-time historical blue diamond finds."

TOPOF THE WORLD



SUDAN Bashir moved to prison as protesters rally

Khartoum: Sudan's military rulers have transferred ousted president Omar al-Bashir to prison, a family source said Wednesday, as demonstrators keep up their sit-in outside the army complex calling for a swift transfer to civilian government. Following the dramatic end to Bashir's rule of three decades last week, he was moved late Tuesday to Kober prison in Khartoum, the source said without revealing his name for security reasons. Witnesses near the prison in north Khartoum said there was a heavy deployment of soldiers and members of a paramilitary group outside. The 75-year-old's whereabouts have been unknown since a military takeover on Thursday, when the country's new rulers said he was being held "in a secure place".

China says Azhar issue headed for settlement, but no April 23 deadline

Rejects reports of US, UK ultimatum to lift its 'technical hold' on designating Jaish chief global terrorist

KJM VARMA
BEIJING, APRIL 17

CHINA ON Wednesday dismissed reports that the US, UK and France have served it an ultimatum until April 23 to lift its "technical hold" on designating Pakistan-based JeM chief Masood Azhar as a global terrorist but claimed that the vexed issue is "moving towards settlement".

After the Pulwama attack, a fresh proposal to designate Azhar under the 1267 Al Qaeda Sanctions Committee of the UN Security Council was moved by France, the UK and the US.

However, China blocked the bid by putting a "technical hold" on the proposal. Following this, the US backed by the UK and France moved directly to UN Security Council (UNSC) to blacklist Azhar.

China, a veto wielding member of the UNSC, had opposed the move, saying the issue should be resolved at the 1267 Committee



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itself which also functioned under the top UN body.

Reacting to reports that the three countries have fixed April 23 as deadline for China to lift its technical hold in the 1267 Committee or else they would press for a discussion on the issue at the UNSC itself, Foreign Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said, "I don't know where you get such information."

He said both the UNSC and its subsidiary body 1267 Committee have clear rules and procedures.

"You need to get clarification from the sources about where you get such information. China's position is very clear. This issue should be resolved through cooperation. We don't believe that any efforts without the consensus of members will achieve a satisfying result," he said.

"On the issue of listing Azhar, China's position remains unchanged. We also stay in communication with relevant parties. The matter is moving towards the direction of settlement," he said.

"The relevant parties are forcing new resolution through the UN Security Council. We firmly oppose that. In fact, the relevant discussion in UNSC, most member expressed wish that this issue should be discussed within the 1267 committee and they don't hope to bypass it to handle the issue," he said. **PTI**

Imran Khan to visit China next week, sign new pacts

REUTERS
ISLAMABAD, APRIL 17



PAKISTANI PRIME Minister Imran Khan will visit China next week to meet its leaders and deliver a keynote speech at the vast Belt and Road Forum in Beijing, the South Asian nation's foreign ministry said on Wednesday, as economic anxiety grows at home.

China has pledged \$60 billion in infrastructure loans for Pakistan, touted as a success story of its Belt and Road initiative, which aims to build road and maritime trading routes across the globe.

But Pakistan's economy has hit serious turbulence over the past year and Islamabad is now finalising a bailout package with the International Monetary Fund to stave off a balance of payments crisis, despite more than \$10 billion

in short-term loans from allies such as China and Saudi Arabia.

Khan will visit China from April 25, and give a keynote speech at the Belt and Road Forum that starts the following day.

"In addition to participating in the Belt and Road Forum, the Prime Minister would also hold bilateral meetings with President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang," the ministry said in a statement.

The two countries will sign several pacts to enhance cooperation, and Khan will meet corporate and business leaders, it added.



Alan Garcia faced arrest in a corruption case. Reuters

Peru's ex-president dies after shooting himself during arrest

MITRA TAJ & MARCO AQUINO
LIMA, APRIL 17

PERU'S FORMER president Alan Garcia died in a hospital in Lima on Wednesday, hours after shooting himself in the head while he was being arrested in connection with a bribery probe, authorities said on Wednesday.

Garcia, who had six adult children, was 69.

A skilled orator elected president twice, first as a firebrand leftist and then as a champion of foreign investment and free trade, Garcia had been dogged by allegations of corruption in recent years that he had repeatedly denied.

Interior Minister Carlos Moran said at a news conference shortly before Garcia died that the former president had told police he needed to call his attorney after they arrived at his home to arrest him.

"He entered his room and closed the door behind him," Moran said. "Within a few minutes, a shot from a firearm was heard, and police forcibly entered the room and found Mr Garcia sitting with a wound in his head."

Garcia was one of nine people a judge had ordered to be arrested on Wednesday for alleged involvement in bribes distributed by Odebrecht, a Brazilian construction company.

"Others might sell out, not me," Garcia said in some of his last broadcast comments on Tuesday.

President Martin Vizcarra ordered flags to be flown at half mast. "I'm dismayed by the death of former president Alan Garcia," Vizcarra said on Twitter. "I send my condolences to his family and loved ones." **REUTERS**

EXPLAINED E The scandal that shook S America

IN 2016, Brazil-based construction firm Odebrecht, in a deal with authorities, confessed to having engaged in largescale bribery to land government contracts. Subsequent cases have implicated top leaders across South America in the corruption scandal, including the former presidents of Brazil and Colombia. But the scandal affected Peru the most. Four former Peruvian presidents have been implicated. Last week, a court ordered one of them, Pedro Pablo Kuczynski, to be placed under preventive custody. The attempt to arrest Alan Garcia, who has repeatedly denied wrongdoing, comes days after a report claimed his personal secretary took a \$4-million bribe from Odebrecht.

Indonesia's Widodo on track to secure 2nd term as President

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
JAKARTA, APRIL 17



Joko Widodo after casting his ballot in Jakarta. Reuters

INDONESIA'S JOKO Widodo was on track to be re-elected leader of the world's third-biggest democracy with pollsters giving him a wide lead over rival Prabowo Subianto, a firebrand ex-general, hours after voting closed Wednesday across the 17,000-island archipelago.

While official results are due only next month, a series of so-called "quick counts" by pollsters showed Widodo holding a strong lead with around 55 per cent of the vote to Subianto's 44 per cent.

The vote officially ended at 1 pm in Sumatra, although some of the 800,000 polling stations across the volcano-dotted nation remained open late due to delays and long queues.

From the jungles of Borneo to the slums of Jakarta, Wednesday saw millions of Indonesians cast their ballots in one of the world's biggest exercises in democracy.

Horses, elephants, motorbikes, boats and planes were pressed into service to get ballot boxes out across the vast country that is home to hundreds of ethnic groups and languages.

More than 190 million voters were asked to choose between the incumbent Widodo, lauded for his infrastructure driven economic push, and his fiery nationalist rival, who has strong ties to the country's three-decade Suharto dictatorship.

Rebuilding Notre Dame: Rector says may be shut for six years

ASSOCIATED PRESS
PARIS, APRIL 17



Damage seen on the facade at the Notre Dame Cathedral. AP

NOTRE DAME'S rector says he will close the burned-out Paris cathedral for up to six years.

Bishop Patrick Chauvet acknowledged that the famed monument would close down for "five to six years" as he spoke with local business owners Wednesday, two days after a blaze torched the roof of the cathedral and brought down its spire.

Chauvet said "a segment of the cathedral has been very weakened" by the devastating fire. He did not elaborate which section he was talking about.

He added it was unclear what the church's 67 employees would be doing in the future.

The French PM has announced an international architects' competition to rebuild the spire of Notre Dame Cathedral.

Eduard Philippe is speaking following a special Cabinet meeting Wednesday held by French President Emmanuel

Macron, focusing on the reconstruction of the cathedral.

Philippe said the competition aims at "giving Notre Dame a spire adapted to technologies and challenges of our times." He said authorities have no estimate yet of the total cost of the renovation work. Macron said Tuesday he wants the cathedral to be rebuilt in five years. Philippe said: "This is obviously a huge challenge, a historic responsibility."

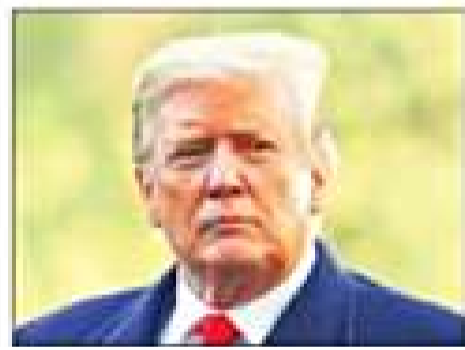
Presidential cultural heritage envoy Stephane Bern said 880 million euros (\$995 million) has been raised in just a day and a half since the fire. Contributions came from near and far, rich and poor — from Apple and magnates who own L'Oreal, Chanel and Dior, to Catholic parishioners and others from small towns and cities around France and the world.

Trump vetoes Bill to end US support for Yemen war

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Tuesday vetoed a resolution from Congress directing him to end US support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, the second such move of his presidency.

The resolution was a harsh bipartisan rebuke to Trump that took the historic step of curtailing a President's war-making powers — a step he condemned in a statement announcing his veto.

"This resolution is an unnecessary, dangerous attempt to weaken my constitutional authorities, endangering the lives of American citizens and brave service members, both today

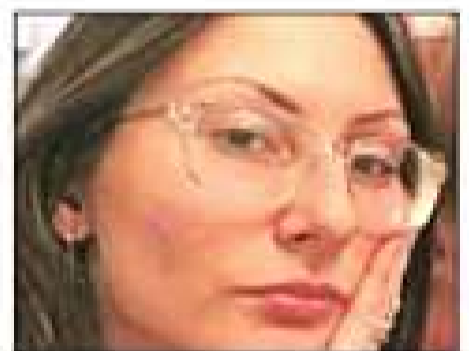


and in the future," Trump said.

The veto was the second of his presidency, after he overrode a congressional resolution to reverse the border emergency he declared in order to secure more funding for his wall between the US and Mexico in March. **PTI**

US teen found dead after her threats forced hundreds of schools to close

JULIE TURKEWITZ & JACK HEALY
DENVER, APRIL 17



Authorities said Sol Pais was armed and considered "extremely dangerous"

A FLORIDA student who the authorities said was on a "pilgrimage" to Columbine near the anniversary of the shooting was found dead on Wednesday. Her threats had prompted a massive police hunt in the Denver area and the closing of hundreds of schools.

Sheriff Jeff Shraeder of Jefferson County, Colo., said the woman, identified as Sol Pais, 18, was found dead from an "apparent self-inflicted gunshot wound."

Before she was found, the authorities said Pais she had trav-

elled to Denver and was considered armed and "extremely dangerous," leading to the decision to keep half a million students home in two dozen school districts.

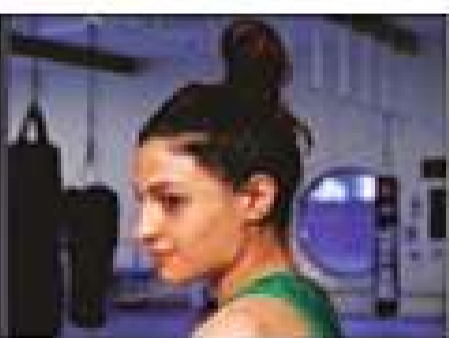
An FB bulletin sent to local

law enforcement agencies on Tuesday said Pais was "infatuated" with the Columbine attack, and officials expressed concerns about her mental stability. She had also purchased a shotgun and ammunition after arriving in Denver, the authorities said.

Pais, a student at Miami Beach Senior High School, had last been seen wearing a black T-shirt, camouflage pants and black boots, the authorities said.

On Tuesday, Dean Phillips, an FBI special agent, said the search had turned into a "massive manhunt". Phillips said his team had received a tip from federal agents in Miami identifying Pais as a possible threat in Colorado. **NYT**

JULIEN PRETOT
PARIS, APRIL 17



Sadaf Khadem became the first Iranian woman to contest an official boxing match on Saturday. Reuters

SADAF KHADEM, who on Saturday became the first Iranian woman to contest an official boxing bout, has cancelled her return to Tehran after an arrest warrant was issued for her there, her representative said on Wednesday.

An arrest warrant was also issued against Mahyar Monshipour, the Iranian-born former boxing world champion who set up the bout in western France and was planning to travel back to Iran with Khadem this week, the representative, Clara Dallery, told Reuters. Monshipour is a French citizen.

On Saturday, Khadem beat local boxer Anne Chauvin in an amateur bout. The 24-year-old, who was in Paris on Monday, was returning to Monshipour's home town of Poitiers.

Franco-Iranian relations have

soured after comments by France's ambassador to the US last week on Iran's nuclear programme sparked an angry reaction from Tehran.

Iran's Boxing Federation said on Monday that it organised no bouts for women and would bear no responsibility for individual competitors. Iranian women should wear the Islamic hijab while competing in the country and abroad, it added. **REUTERS**

THE IDEA THAT PARTS OF THE BRAIN MAY BE RECOVERABLE AFTER DEATH UPENDS CONVENTIONAL KNOWLEDGE

'Partly alive': Scientists restore cellular activity in brains of dead pigs

GINA KOLATA
APRIL 17

IN A study that raises profound questions about the line between life and death, researchers have restored some cellular activity to brains removed from slaughtered pigs.

The brains did not regain anything resembling consciousness: There were no signs indicating coordinated electrical signalling, necessary for higher functions like awareness and intelligence.

But in an experimental treatment, blood vessels in the pigs' brains began functioning, flowing with a blood substitute, and certain brain cells regained meta-

bolic activity, even responding to drugs. When the researchers tested slices of treated brain tissue, they discovered electrical activity in some neurons.

The work is very preliminary and has no immediate implications for treatment of brain injuries in humans. But the idea that parts of the brain may be recoverable after death, as conventionally defined, contradicts everything medical science believes about the organ and poses metaphysical riddles.

"We had clear lines between 'this is alive' and 'this is dead,'" said Nita A Farahany, a bioethicist and law professor at Duke University. "How do we now think about this middle category of 'partly alive'?"

We didn't think it could exist." For decades, doctors and grieving family members have wondered if it might ever be possible to restore function to a person who suffered extensive brain injury because of a severe stroke or heart attack. Were these brains really beyond salvage?

The new research confirms how little we know about the injured brain and so-called brain death. Bioethicists like Dr Farahany were stunned and intrigued by the findings, published on Wednesday in the journal Nature.

"This is wild," said Jonathan Moreno, a bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania. "If ever there was an issue that mer-



(Representational image) Blood vessels in the dead pigs' brains began functioning again and its cells regained metabolic activity after experimental treatment. Reuters

ited big public deliberation on the ethics of science and medicine, this is one."

Until now, it has been assumed that the brain declines quickly when its blood supply is

cut off. Cells deteriorate, and the connections between neurons crumble. Scientists have believed those changes are irreversible unless blood is quickly restored.

Researchers at Yale University acquired the heads of 32 pigs killed for their meat. The scientists saw into the skulls and removed the brains. By the time the experiment started, the brains had been without blood and at room temperature for four hours.

The team has developed a system called BrainEx that pumps an experimental solution into the intact brain. The scientists hope the technology will help point the way to new treatments for strokes, traumatic brain injuries and diseases

like Alzheimer's.

The scientists pumped the solution into the pigs' brains for six hours. It brought oxygen to the tissue and contained chemicals that allowed the scientists to track its flow with ultrasound.

The solution also contained chemicals intended to block nerve signals. The scientists reasoned that brain cells might be better preserved — and their metabolisms more easily restarted — if the cells were not active.

But the investigators also did not want to take a chance that the brains might regain consciousness, unlikely as that seemed. Had the team seen electrical activity suggesting actual consciousness, they planned to

give the brains anesthetic drugs and cool them immediately to stop the process.

In addition to the brains that got the BrainEx solution, the scientists also examined brains that did not receive infusions and those receiving infusions of a dummy substance. Brains in both groups showed no signs of activity, and their cells deteriorated.

"It is not a living brain, but it is a cellularly active brain," Dr Nenad Sestan, a neuroscientist at Yale University who led the research, said of the revived tissue.

"We wanted to test whether cells in the intact dead brain can have some functions restored," he added. **NYT**