

world

Facing arrest, former Peru president Garcia kills himself

Lima, Peru

Peru's former president Alan Garcia died in hospital on Wednesday after shooting himself in the head at his home as police were about to arrest him in a sprawling corruption case. He was 69.

The health ministry said Garcia died at 10:05 am (1505 GMT) of "a massive cerebral hemorrhage from a gunshot wound and cardiorespiratory arrest."

Garcia was resuscitated three times after suffering heart attacks while undergoing emergency surgery, before finally succumbing, Peru's Health Minister Zulema Tomas said.

The Casimiro Ulloa Emergency Hospital in Lima earlier confirmed he had suf-



Alan Garcia (file)

ferred "a bullet wound to his head."

The attempted arrest unfolded at 6:30 am (1130 GMT) at Garcia's home in Lima's up-market Miraflores neighborhood. Police were acting on an arrest warrant for money laundering that would have allowed Garcia to be held for 10 days, giving authorities time to gather evidence and prevent him from fleeing, the prosecutor's office said.

Ivanka Trump unveils \$2 million boost for ICoast women



Senior Advisor to the U.S. President Ivanka Trump (4L) visits the cocoa cooperative farmers near Adzope

Abidjan, Ivory Coast

Ivanka Trump, daughter of the US president, unveiled Wednesday \$2.0 million in aid for women working in Ivory Coast's key cocoa sector.

Trump visited a cocoa plantation in Adzope, north of Abidjan, before taking part in the first West African summit on female entrepreneurship in the country's economic capital.

Ivory Coast is the world's leading producer of cocoa.

"When you empower women, they uplift their families,

their communities, and the whole country prospers," Trump said.

The aid was meant to "catalyze private sector investment" in the sector, according to a statement released by the US embassy in Abidjan.

Trump said the money would help "create 300 new saving associations, in the cocoa space across Cote d'Ivoire," and benefit "500 existing saving associations to connect them to the financial market place."

She was welcomed by women cocoa farmers, and joined briefly in dancing with them.

North wants Pompeo's removal from N-talks



North Korea's leader Kim Jong Un (L) greeting US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo (R) at the Paekhwawon State Guesthouse in Pyongyang

Seoul, South Korea

North Korea yesterday demanded the removal of US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo from talks over its banned nuclear programme, hours after the isolated state claimed to have tested a new kind of weapon.

Describing Pompeo as "reckless" and immature, the foreign ministry said it wanted him replaced by another interlocutor, a demand that significantly ups the ante in a sensitive diplomatic standoff.

Pyongyang and Washington have been at loggerheads since the collapse of a summit between Kim Jong Un and Donald Trump earlier this year.

"I am afraid that, if Pompeo engages in the talks again, the table will be lousy once again and the talks will become entangled," Kwon Jong Gun, director general of the ministry's Department of American Affairs said, according to the official KCNA news agency.

"Therefore, even in the case of possible resumption of the dialogue with the US, I wish our dialogue counterpart would be not Pompeo but... (another

person who is more careful and mature in communicating with us."

It is not the first time North Korea has singled out Pompeo for special criticism.

When the secretary of state met with North Korean officials in Pyongyang in July last year, he was condemned for his "gangster-like" insistence that the North move towards unilateral disarmament.

Kwon, whom KCNA said was responding to a question from one of its journalists, said leader Kim had made clear that the US attitude has to change.

He said Pompeo was standing in the way of a resumption of talks.

"We cannot be aware of Pompeo's ulterior motive behind his self-indulgence in reckless remarks; whether he is indeed unable to understand words properly or just pretending on purpose.

"The US cannot move us one iota by its current way of thinking. In his previous visits to Pyongyang, Pompeo was granted audiences with our Chairman of the State Affairs Commission for several times and pleaded for the denuclearization.

"However, after sitting the other way round, he spouted reckless remarks hurting the dignity of our supreme leadership at Congress hearings last week to unveil his mean character by himself, thus stunning the reasonable people."

Analysts said the North may have been reacting to Pompeo's assessment -- during a recent Senate hearing -- that Kim could be described as a "tyrant".

"By agreeing that Kim is a tyrant, Pompeo basically insulted the North's 'highest majesty,'" said Koh Yu-hwan, professor of North Korean studies at Dongguk University in Seoul.

"Those in Pyongyang are taught not to stay silent when their supreme leader has been personally attacked," Koh added.

'Powerful warhead'

Thursday's extraordinary attack on Pompeo came hours after KCNA announced Kim had supervised the test-firing of a new tactical weapon with a "powerful warhead".

It also comes after satellite imagery suggested heightened activity at a nuclear test site.

Strong 6.1-magnitude quake hits Taiwan

Taipei, Taiwan

A 6.1-magnitude earthquake jolted Taiwan yesterday, the US Geological Survey said, shaking buildings and disrupting traffic.

In the capital Taipei, highrises swayed while some panicked schoolchildren fled their classrooms in eastern Yilan county, according to reports.

The quake was felt across the island and a highway connecting Yilan and Hualien was shut down due to falling rocks, authorities said.

An official at the Hualien county fire department told AFP that two people, including a male Malaysian tourist, were injured by falling rocks and that the department was planning to send in medics by helicopter.

Taipei's metro system was temporarily closed for safety checks following the quake, officials said.

28 killed in Portuguese tourist bus accident: Madeira officials

Lisbon, Portugal

At least 28 people were killed when a tourist bus crashed on the Portuguese island of Madeira on Wednesday, local officials said.

German tourists were among those who died, the country's embassy said, without giving figures.

The regional protection service did not confirm the death toll given to the media by Filipe Sousa, mayor of Santa Cruz, where the accident happened.

Televised images showed the bus had spun off the road, apparently having flipped several times, before crashing into a house at the bottom of a slope.

Two students fined 27 million euro for Italy forest fire

Rome, Italy

Two Italian students have been told to pay a joint fine of 27 million euros (\$30 million), Italian media reported Wednesday, after being accused of letting a barbecue start a forest fire.

Prosecutors say the two 22-year-olds, who dispute the case, lit a barbecue with a group of friends near Lake Como in the north of Italy on December 30 to celebrate New Year.

The wildfire was started by the embers of the barbecue, eventually ravaging 1,000 hectares (2,471 acres) of forest, according to the findings of an investigation.

Scientists unearth 220m-year-old dinosaur fossils

● The find was discovered in September last year in San Juan province

Buenos Aires, Argentina

A site containing the 220-million-year-old fossilized remains of nearly a dozen dinosaurs has been discovered in western Argentina, researchers said Wednesday.

"There are almost ten different individuals, it's a mass of bones, there's practically no sed-

iment," said Argentinian paleontologist Ricardo Martinez.

"It's very impressive." According to Martinez, of the University of San Juan, the fossils are approximately 220 million years old, belonging to "an era of which we know little".

"This discovery is doubly important because there are at least seven or eight individuals of dicynodonts, the ancestors of mammals, the size of an ox," he said.

He said there were also remains of archosaurs, reptiles that could be the ancestors of great crocodiles "that we do not know about yet".

The find was discovered in September last year in San Juan province, about 1,100 kilometres (680 miles) west of Buenos Aires.

The site is between one and two metres (yards) in diameter and about the same depth, leading scientists to speculate it was a former drinking hole at a time of great drought, and the creatures died of weakness at the spot.

Argentina has been a rich source of fossils from the Triassic, Jurassic and Cretaceous eras over the years -- most, of creatures not found in the northern hemisphere.



The Institute and Museum of Natural Sciences (IMCN) of the San Juan University, of Argentine researcher Ricardo Martinez sitting next to a 220-million-year-old fossil at the Ischigualasto National Park in San Juan province, Argentina