

WORLD  
world

## For sale: a giant, ornery bird that killed its last owner



A cassowary bird that is native to Australia and New Guinea rainforests is seen in its enclosure at the Beijing zoo.

AFP | Washington, United States

The creature called a cassowary -- boasting long, dagger-like claws, standing as tall as a tallish person and sporting a truly foul disposition -- will be auctioned Saturday, two weeks after slashing to death 75-year-old exotic animal lover and breeder Marvin Hajos.

Hajos was raising the flightless bird, which has a blue face and a ridge atop its head, and other exotic animals on his property in Alachua county in the north central part of Florida.

He died April 12 when he fell near the cassowary pen and was attacked by the bird.

A total of around 90 animals that Hajos owned will be auctioned off, said Scotty Wilson, the auctioneer at Gulf Coast Livestock Auction in Madison, Florida.

They include brightly colored macaws and critters called marmosets, or pocket monkeys, primates which are only five to six inches (13 to 15 cm) long, said Wilson, who knew Hajos for years.

"Marvin was a very beloved figure and the exotic animal community around here is small but close knit. So I imagine we will have a strong turnout for the auction," he told AFP.

There is no starting price set for the cassowary and Wilson declined to say how much it might fetch.



With powerful legs, they can jump seven feet straight up in the air. Only ostriches are heavier in the world of birds. Cassowaries can run up to 31 miles per hour. The birds are native to Australia and New Guinea.

In the event no one wants it, several conservation groups have already told the auction house they will take care of the cassowary.

Proceeds will go to Hajos' widow and other family, said Wilson.

"Marvin left instructions to the effect that if anything ever happened to him, the animals were to be sold immediately because she did not have the means to take care of them," Wilson said.

Cassowaries are the world's most dangerous bird, according to the San Diego Zoo website.

They are similar to emus, can grow to nearly six feet tall (1.8 m) and weigh up to 170 pounds (75 kilos) in the case of females and somewhat less for males, according to the website.

## Thousands protest China-backed mega-dam in Myanmar

Yangon, Myanmar

Thousands of people in northern Myanmar took to the streets on Monday to protest against the proposed reinstatement of a Chinese-backed mega-dam they say will cause huge environmental damage and bring little benefit to the country.

The protest came just days ahead of a trip by civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to Beijing for a summit on China's Belt and Road Initiative.

Myanmar's former military junta signed a 2009 deal with Beijing to construct the Myit-sone dam in Kachin state.

But public anger rose to the



Chinese Premier Li Keqiang (R) shakes hands with Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi

surface as the country started to transition towards democracy and the \$3.6 billion project was mothballed two years later. If the 6,000 megawatt dam were built on the country's famed Ayeyarwaddy River, it would flood an area the size of Singapore, displacing tens of thousands.

## Huge crowd floods Khartoum

AFP | Khartoum, Sudan

Tens of thousands of protesters converged from all directions on Sudan's army headquarters yesterday after calls for a "million-strong" demonstration to demand the ruling military council cede power.

The day after three council members resigned following talks with protest organisers, demonstrators flocked towards the central Khartoum site yesterday evening, beating drums and singing revolutionary songs, said a journalist at the scene.

"We want the military council out. We want a civilian government," said protester Adam Ahmed, a medical student.

The rally came after Sudan's new military rulers and protest leaders agreed to set up a joint committee, to chart the way forward two weeks after the ouster of veteran president Omar al-Bashir.



Sudanese protesters chant slogans as they gather for a "million-strong" march outside the army headquarters in the capital Khartoum

The Alliance for Freedom and Change, an umbrella group leading the protests, had called for a million-strong march to "continue to protect our revolution and to ensure that all our demands are achieved".

Many of those rallying chanted "Blood for blood! We will not accept compensation!", demanding punishment for officials responsible for killings

during Bashir's iron-fisted, three-decade rule.

"All those responsible for the conflicts in Sudan should be tried and brought to justice," said protester Ismail Jadallah.

Also at the protest were dozens of judges, dressed in their robes, who had marched from the constitutional court, an AFP photographer said.

"We are here to give a mes-

sage that the judiciary should be independent without any political intervention," a judge told journalists.

A photographer in downtown Khartoum said crowds of protesters had gathered earlier outside Egypt's embassy and consulate.

Several people held banners calling on Egyptian President Abdel Fattah al-Sisi not to "interfere in our affairs", after Cairo hosted a summit of African leaders who said more time was needed for a transition to civilian rule in Sudan.

Across the city, demonstrators arrived at the army headquarters from the states of Jazeera, White Nile and also from Bashir's hometown Shendi, boosting the ranks of those already camped at the site, many of them for the past several weeks. The giant rally followed a late-night meeting between the military council and leaders of the protest movement.

## Twitter adds way to report voter-tricking tweets

San Francisco, United States

Twitter on Wednesday began making it easier to report tweets aimed at interfering with people voting, starting first in Europe and India.

An option to report Twitter messages as being misleading about voting was being added to the one-to-many messaging service's app in India and Europe, with a promise it would be expanded globally through the year.

"Any attempts to undermine the process of registering to vote or engaging in the electoral process is contrary to our company's core values," the Twitter safety team said in an online post.

"We are further expanding our enforcement capabilities in this area by creating a dedicated reporting feature within the product to allow users to more easily report this content to us."

Twitter teams entrusted to review reported content have been trained as part of an enhanced appeals process in the event tweet removal decisions are challenged, according to the San Francisco-based company.

"You may not use Twitter's services for the purpose of manipulating or interfering in elections," the safety team said.

Examples of misleading information fired off in tweets included falsely asserting people could vote by email, phone, text messages or even using Twitter messages.

## Mexico ready to apologize to US over border incident



Trucks carrying construction material ride on the US side of the US-Mexico border fence as seen from Tijuana, in Baja California state, Mexico

Mexico City, Mexico

Mexico's president said Thursday he was willing to offer an apology to the United States, if necessary, to cool an escalating war of words over a border confrontation between US and Mexican troops.

"If necessary, the secretary of foreign affairs will send a note explaining how the facts occurred and, if there was an infraction; he will offer the apologies that are required," President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador said in his daily news conference.

The leftist president was keen to emphasize that Mexico wanted to avoid "any kind of friction, confrontation," with the United States, its main trading partner.

"We do not intend to violate, to affect, the sovereignty of the United States of America," he said.

On Wednesday, US Presi-



President Andres Manuel Lopez

dent Donald Trump escalated his war of words with Mexico over immigration when he announced he would send armed soldiers to the border after Mexican soldiers had "pulled guns" on US troops.

Trump was apparently referring to an April 13 incident in which Mexican troops reportedly questioned and pointed their weapons at two US troops conducting surveillance on the border.

"Mexico's Soldiers recently pulled guns on our National

Guard Soldiers, probably as a diversionary tactic for drug smugglers on the Border. Better not happen again!" he tweeted.

"We are now sending ARMED SOLDIERS to the Border. Mexico is not doing nearly enough in apprehending & returning!"

Mexico's Foreign Minister Marcelo Ebrard late Wednesday downplayed the incident, saying the Americans were in an unmarked car south of the border fence but north of the border itself in a spot that is not clearly marked either as Mexico or the United States.

He said such incidents happened on a score of occasions over the past four years, without either government "giving it any great importance."

The Mexican foreign ministry said that the incident happened on April 13, south of the border fence near Ciudad Juarez "in a area where the boundaries of the border are not clear because of its geography."