



Federal Police officers at one of the front doors Tuesday of the National Museum in Rio de Janeiro.

Fragments from fire provide small hope

The Associated Press

RIO DE JANEIRO — Firefighters found bone fragments from a collection in the still-smoldering National Museum, an official said Tuesday, raising hopes that a famed skull might somehow have survived a massive blaze that turned historic and scientific artifacts to ashes.

Flames tore through the museum Sunday night, and officials have said much of Latin America's largest collection of treasures might be lost. Aerial photos of the main building showed only heaps of rubble and ash where the roof collapsed.

The firefighters “found fragments of bones in a room where the museum kept many items, including skulls,” said Cristiana Serejo, the museum’s vice director. “We still have to collect them and take them to the lab to know exactly what they are.”

In its collection of about 20 million items, one of the most prized possessions is a skull called Luzia, which is among the oldest fossils ever found in the Americas.

Museum spokesman Marcio Martins noted that the collection contains hundreds of skulls, and all material would

first need to be examined by the Federal Police, which is investigating the cause of the fire. Experts will then examine them to determine their identity.

Many experts have already said that regardless of what is salvaged, the loss will be immeasurable. Marina Silva, a candidate for president in upcoming elections, called it a “lobotomy of Brazilian history.”

The Globo newspaper in an editorial Tuesday said the museum fire’s devastation “represents a cultural loss impossible to quantify. We only know that it is enormous.”

No cellphones for French schoolkids

PARIS — French children who are going back to school after summer vacation have to do so without their mobile phones.

That’s because of a new government law banning phone use in all primary and middle schools for the entire day, including during breaks. The

only exceptions are in cases of emergency and for disabled children.

Pupils are told to shut down their phones or put them in a locker.

The law allows teachers to confiscate phones until the end of the day in cases of noncompliance.

High schools can also voluntarily implement the measure. Education Minister Jean-Michel Blanquer said it aims to help children focus on lessons, better socialize and reduce social media use. The ban is also designed to fight online bullying, and prevent thefts and violence in school. — AP

Urging a revote on Brexit

Big union seeks a referendum on the final deal

The Associated Press

LONDON — One of Britain’s biggest trade unions on Tuesday joined calls for a new public vote on leaving the European Union, saying voters were misled during the 2016 referendum campaign.

The GMB union, which has more than 600,000 members, said, “The promises that were made during the referendum campaign are simply not the reality we are facing.”

In a video statement, GMB General Secretary Tim Roache says members in manufacturing, retail and other sectors face uncertainty because the British government has yet to negotiate a deal with the EU.

The union says Britons voted to leave the EU, but they “did not vote for economic chaos or to put jobs and hard-won rights on the line,” and voters should be able to accept or reject the final Brexit deal.

With less than seven months

to go until Britain leaves the EU, the two sides have yet to strike a deal on divorce terms and future trade, and Prime Minister Theresa May’s Conservative government remains split over how close a relationship to seek with the bloc.

May wants to keep the U.K. aligned to EU regulations in return for free trade in goods. But her plan has infuriated Conservative supporters of a clean-break Brexit, who say it would prevent the U.K. from striking new trade deals around the world.

EU leaders say May’s plan smacks of “cherry picking” benefits of membership in the bloc without the cost or responsibilities.

Britain and the EU had hoped to hammer out an agreement on divorce terms and the outlines of future trade by October so that it can be approved by individual EU countries before the U.K. leaves the bloc on March 29. Both sides now say that deadline may slip to November or later.

The British government has ramped up planning for a “no deal” Brexit, amid warnings that such an outcome could cause economic mayhem.



Anti-Brexit activists stage a London protest Tuesday.