



NEW YORK: A group of friends play Pokemon Go on their smartphones at Union Square, in New York City. — AFP

POKEMON GO CRAZE CRASHES AUSSIE SERVERS, DRAWS POLICE WARNINGS

SYDNEY: High demand for the mobile augmented-reality game Pokemon Go crashed the app's servers in Australia yesterday, while attracting safety and trespassing warnings from police. The game has been a huge hit with players since it was rolled out in Australia, New Zealand and the United States late last week, with more than five million downloads on the Android Google Play app store. It has also topped Apple's app charts.

A Pokemon "walk" in Sydney on Sunday saw thousands of gamers descend on the iconic harbor, chasing virtual cartoon character monsters around the Opera House and Botanical Gardens with their mobile phones. "(Western Australia) Police have received numerous reports of Pokemon around the state. Rest assured - we're gonna catch 'em all!" quipped the police force on Facebook, using the game's tagline.

Pokestop

But they warned that "I was collecting Pokemon" is not a legal defense against a charge of trespass, so be sure that you have permission to enter an area or building. Officers in the northern city of Darwin also took to the social media website to advise users that while their police station featured as a "Pokestop"-locations where players can pick up supplies-gamers did not have to

enter it to get the items. In Sydney and Melbourne, where "Pokemon" has been trending high on Twitter, users complained about crashed servers, with one posting: "Twitter = moral support group for when #pokemongo server goes down".

"Finally the world has found something to unite about. Our collective trauma of the #PokemonGo server being down," another user wrote. Guy Blomberg, who arranged the Sydney "walk", said he hoped to organize larger get-togethers at the Oz Comic-Con and PAX Australia video game conventions, which he helps run, later this year. "Even on the train this morning, there were other people playing, so I leant over and went, 'What have you caught today?'" he told AFP. "It's a great conversation starter."

The app's popularity has sent shares in Nintendo, which has invested in the game's developer Niantic after it was spun off from tech giant Google, soaring by more than 40 percent over three trading sessions in Japan. "It is a truly incredible offering," chief market strategist at IG Chris Weston wrote in a note yesterday. "Still, as someone who missed the original Pokemon craze, I am finding the idea of millennial's transfixed on their phones through the streets of Melbourne like a scene from 'The Walking Dead' quite concerning." — AFP



SAN FRANCISCO: A sign outside of Kawika Ocean Beach Deli advertises Pokemon Go related activities to passersby in San Francisco. — AP

POKEMON GO SMARTPHONE GAME LEADS WOMAN TO BODY IN RIVER

RIVERTON, Wyoming: Authorities in central Wyoming are investigating after a woman playing the popular smartphone game Pokemon Go found a man's body in a river. Shayla Wiggins told the Riverton Ranger newspaper that she spotted the body in the Wind River near the city of Riverton on Friday while playing the new game. It sends players to real-world locations to capture virtual creatures.

Fremont County Undersheriff Ryan Lee says the death appears to be accidental and possibly a drowning. He says evidence indicates the man went into the water where he was found. The victim hasn't been identified pending an autopsy. Lee says the FBI is helping in the investigation. It comes as police in Missouri say four teens used Pokemon Go to lure victims to a location and rob them. — AP

JAPAN MESSAGING APP LINE SET FOR YEAR'S TOP TECH IPO

TOKYO: Japan-based messaging app Line said Monday it could raise more than \$1.0 billion in one of the year's biggest share sales, as it makes its market debut this week. The company, looking to expand on booming popularity among smartphone users in Asia, priced its shares at a top-of-the-range 3,300 yen (\$32), suggesting strong demand for the sale. Based on that price, the initial public offering will raise 115.5 billion (\$1.14 billion) through the sale of 35 million shares. An option to sell more shares could put the IPO on course to raise a total of \$1.3 billion.

Line, owned by South Korea's Naver, starts trading in New York on Thursday and in Tokyo Friday. The sale, valuing the firm at about \$6.9 billion, is the biggest technology IPO this year, Bloomberg News reported, and the largest so far in Tokyo. The popular app lets users make free calls, send instant messages, and post photos or short videos, along with a host of other paid services. It combines attributes from Facebook, Skype and WhatsApp, with games and a mobile

payment service also on offer. Line's messaging service launched in 2011 after the quake-tsunami tragedy damaged Japan's telecoms infrastructure nationwide, forcing people to use online resources to communicate. It is best known for letting users send each other cute cartoon "stickers", and is hugely popular in Japan, particularly among teenagers. The app has a strong presence in Asian markets such as Thailand, Taiwan and Indonesia, as well as some Spanish-speaking nations, including Spain and Mexico.

Line said it would use proceeds from the stock offering to help it expand in Asia, and tap the US and European markets where it's not a major player. The sale comes two years after the firm initially announced plans to list that were later shelved, reportedly because of disagreements over the sale between Line and its South Korean owner. Line's offering would be the biggest in Tokyo since Japan Post made its long-awaited trading debut in November with a share sale that topped \$11.5 billion. — AFP

NEW DATA-SHARING RULES FOR EU AND US ADOPTED

NEW PRIVACY SHIELD IMPOSES STRICTER OBLIGATIONS

BRUSSELS: New rules governing trans-Atlantic data transfers were formally approved yesterday, months after Europe's top court ruled against the previous arrangements amid concerns over the surveillance activities of US intelligence agencies. The European Union and the US say the new Privacy Shield imposes stricter obligations on American companies, including the likes of Facebook and Apple, to safeguard the personal data of individuals, from health matters through to social media activities.

Critics argue that the new framework doesn't go far enough, that the consumer protections are not strong enough and that the possibility of blanket surveillance from US agencies remains. As part of the deal, the US government has assured that any access on national security grounds by public authorities to personal data transferred under the new arrangements will be subject to "clear conditions, limitations, oversight and preventing general access."

The two sides say that includes stronger monitoring and enforcement by the US Department of Commerce and Federal Trade Commission including increased cooperation with European authorities. Under the terms of the new deal, there will be an annual joint review of the pact and those who think their data has been misused has a route for complaint. And the US will appoint a new official - an ombudsman based at the State Department - responsible for following up on European complaints.

Milestone for privacy

"The approval of the Privacy Shield is a milestone for privacy at a time when the sharing of data is driving growth in every sector, from advanced manufacturing to advertising," US Commerce Secretary Penny Pritzker said in Brussels at the launch of the data-sharing pact. "For businesses, the free flow of data makes it possible for a startup in Silicon Valley to hire programmers in the Czech Republic, or a manufacturer in Germany to collaborate with a research lab in Tennessee," she added.

The deal potentially brings an end to a period of uncertainty for businesses following last October's decision by the European Court of Justice that the previous Safe Harbor pact was invalid because it did not adequately protect consumers when their data



BRUSSELS: EU Justice Commissioner Vera Jourova listens to a question during a news conference in the Commission Berlaymont building in Brussels, Belgium.

was stored in the US. The pact, which had been used by around 4,500 companies, had allowed the easy transfer of data from the EU by having US companies promise to provide privacy protections equivalent to those in the EU.

The EU court's ruling that the pact was invalid opened up the possibility that data privacy officers across the 28-country EU might be inundated by complaints by consumers worried about their privacy. "The adoption of Privacy Shield will enhance legal certainty for thousands of businesses on both sides of the Atlantic while providing an adequate level of protection for citizens' data," Markus J Beyrer, the director general of lobby group Business Europe. "Trans-Atlantic data flows are fundamental to the success of the European economy and today's decision will support job creation across industry."

Robust new system

Concerns over the privacy of data transfers had been stoked by the spying revelations made by Edward Snowden, a former contractor at the US National Security Agency. Snowden's revelations had prompted the complaint to the court from Max Schrems, an Austrian law student. Schrems said yes-



BRUSSELS: US Secretary of Commerce Penny Pritzker speaks during a news conference in the Commission Berlaymont building in Brussels, Belgium. — AP photos

terday that the new arrangements don't go far enough and argued that the requirements on the US authorities are not equivalent to those that exist in the EU.

"It is little more than a little upgrade to Safe Harbor," he said. "It is very likely to fail again ... This deal is bad for users, which will not enjoy proper privacy protections and bad for businesses, which have to deal with a legally unstable solution." Schrems' view was echoed by Jan Philipp Albrecht, the home affairs and data protection spokesman for the Greens in the European Parliament, who said the European Commission "signed a blank cheque for the transfer of personal data of EU citizens to the US, without delivering equivalent data protection rights."

Both Pritzker and Vera Jourova, the European Commissioner for Justice, said they are confident that the new deal will stand up to any court challenge. "The EU-US Privacy Shield is a robust new system to protect the personal data of Europeans and ensure legal certainty for business," Jourova said. "It brings stronger data protection standards that are better enforced, safeguards on government access, and easier redress for individuals in case of complaints." — AP

APPLE'S MAC NO LONGER BUCKING PC INDUSTRY'S SALES SLIDE

SAN FRANCISCO: After defying industry trends in recent years, Apple is feeling the slowdown in global purchases of laptop and desktop computers. Apple shipped 4 to 8 percent fewer Mac computers during the second quarter of 2016, compared with a year earlier, according to new estimates from two research firms - even while some of its bigger rivals managed to find growth in the PC business.

Apple enjoyed steady increases in Mac sales for most of 2014 and 2015, while the rest of the PC market was in a slump. Although the leading PC-makers sell more units, Apple's Macs tend to command both higher prices and consumer loyalty. But Apple Inc has been reporting a dip in Mac unit sales since the end of last year, and estimates released Monday suggest that trend is continuing.

Overall business

Analysts estimate Apple shipped 4.4 million to 4.6 million Macs in the quarter ending June 30. PC sales overall have been declining for the last four years, as more consumers and businesses turn to smartphones and other gadgets. Global PC shipments fell to 62.4 million in the last quarter, down 4.5 percent from a year earlier, according to researchers at International Data Corp. Analysts at a second firm, Gartner, estimated that drop at 5.2 percent.

Lenovo, the world's biggest PC-maker, saw shipments fall more than 2 percent around the world, to 13.2 million, despite a strong showing in the United States. But HP, Dell and ASUS all increased their shipments during the last quarter, according to both research firms. Analysts said those companies benefited from a healthy US market, consumer interest in new laptops running Google's Chrome software, and seasonal purchases by public agencies.

Microsoft's new Windows 10 software hasn't given PC sales much of a boost. Analysts say that could change in coming months, as the end of a promotional offer means consumers will no longer be able to upgrade older Windows machines for free. Some Apple fans say an update for the popular MacBook Pro laptop is overdue, while the Cupertino, California, company has been promoting its iPad Pro tablet, which works with a detachable keyboard.

Apple enjoyed eight consecutive quarters of year-on-year Mac sales increases before posting a 4 percent drop in units sold during the last three months of 2015. That was followed by a 12 percent drop in the first quarter of this year. Macs are a small part of Apple's overall business, however, since the company makes most of its money from iPhones. Apple will report second-quarter sales on July 26. — AP



DETROIT, Michigan: This file photo shows General Motors President Dan Ammann speaking on the eve of the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Michigan. — AFP

GM SEES SELF-DRIVING CARS AS GRADUAL ROLLOUT

WASHINGTON: General Motors believes in autonomous vehicles as a safer mode of transport, and expects the technology to come more quickly than most people think, a top executive said Monday. "There isn't going to be a particular moment or day when we see it - it will unfold in a gradual way, but it will be a lot faster than people are expecting," said GM president Dan Ammann at the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference in Colorado.

Amman declined to comment on the fatal accident involving a Tesla electric car in semi-autonomous driving mode but said GM believes the technology will lead to safer roads. "It's our fundamental belief that autonomous technology will lead to lower fatalities," Ammann said. Amman, appearing on stage with Lyft co-founder John Zimmer, said the auto giant's strategy on autonomous cars is linked with the ride-sharing startup in which GM has invested some \$500 million. "We think ridesharing is interesting and we think autonomous vehicles are interesting and we think we can put the two together" with Lyft, he said.

Zimmer said autonomous driving technology is a key element in Lyft's long-term vision of changing the model of car ownership. He said that in the United States alone, spending on car ownership amounts to some \$2 trillion annually "so we believe in cities that the majority of that spend will transform to transportation as a service." Earlier Monday, GM and Lyft announced an expansion of their deal allowing Lyft drivers to Los Angeles, San Francisco and Denver. The companies said Lyft drivers would also be able to use the soon-to-be-launched Chevrolet Bolt electric vehicle. — AFP

CBS, TWITTER ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP FOR CONVENTION

NEW YORK: Twitter says it will live-stream CBS News' online coverage of the Republican and Democratic conventions later this month, a first for the social media outlet. People will be able to watch video of the conventions on mobile devices and desktops alongside a feed of political tweets, the company said on Monday. The GOP convention in Cleveland begins on July 18, with the Democrats in Philadelphia the following week.



Besides being the latest example of Twitter's foray into video, the announcement is a major shot of exposure for CBSN, which is CBS News' two-year-old live online stream. "It makes us first among equals if you're looking for convention video," said David Rhodes, CBS News president. NBC News also announced Monday that the broadcast network will offer one hour of prime-time news coverage on each of the four nights of the conventions, identical to ABC's plans divulged last week. CBS hasn't announced its plans, but is likely to do the same.

That in itself is a reflection of increased interest. In 2012, ABC, CBS and NBC had convention coverage on three of the four nights of each convention. CBSN's Josh Elliott, Elaine Quijano and Vladimir Duthiers will

anchor the coverage on Twitter. Other CBS News anchors and reporters also will appear on the stream during hours the network is not in news coverage. CBSN does not simulcast CBS News' television broadcast. Although CBS does not say how many people watch its live stream, it claims steady growth. The Twitter exposure should attract viewers much like channel surfing does on television, Rhodes said.

Since Twitter said that some of the early primary debates attracted some 4 million tweets apiece, there should be an audience available. Twitter experimented with video during the recent Wimbledon tennis tournament and has announced plans to beam some NFL games this fall. Political news has driven big ratings for cable news network's this year, which will likely offer near-nonstop convention coverage. With delegates opposed to Republican Donald Trump still talking about objecting to his nomination, and the long candidacy of Democrat Bernie Sanders, the conventions offer less predictability than in the recent past.

It's somewhat unusual for the networks to be announcing their coverage plans so late, and there's a reason for that. Rhodes said the parties, particularly the Republicans, have been less forthcoming about their own schedules than in recent election cycles. "We don't want anybody just to assume that we're going to flip a switch and they're going to be able to program to millions of people without any filter," he said. Rhodes said delaying an announcement of the network plans gives broadcasters some leverage in getting information about convention planning from the parties. — AP