



## Indian mountaineers mourn climber who died in Chile

KOLKATA, India (AP) — India's mountaineering community is mourning the death of a well-known Indian climber who died trying to summit an Andean mountain in Chile. Malli Mastan Babu died in extreme bad weather during an ascent of Cerro Tres Cruces, a mountain in Chile's Atacama region. The death of the 40-year-old, known in India for climbing the highest peaks on each of the seven continents, was confirmed by an official at India's embassy in Santiago, Chile. He had been missing since March 23. Mohan Singh Kohli, leader of the first Indian expedition to reach the summit of Mount Everest in 1965, said Malli "definitely had the guts and courage to take risks in life." Many climbers noted Malli had degrees from some of India's top universities, which would have all but guaranteed him a well-paid corporate position. "But his dedication and love for adventure drew him to mountaineering," said Debashish Biswas, a top Indian climber.

## Same-sex partnerships win recognition in Shibuya ward

TOKYO (AP) — Tokyo's Shibuya ward has become the first locale in Japan to recognize same-sex partnerships as the "equivalent of a marriage," guaranteeing the identical rights of married couples, including hospital visitations and apartment rentals. The ward assembly voted to approve an initiative to start issuing same-sex marriage certificates. The new ordinance applies only to Shibuya, and it's technically not legally binding. Violators, however, will have their names posted on the ward's website. Shibuya is also planning an aggressive educational campaign on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) issues. Although gay celebrities are visible and popular in Japan, LGBT Japanese say a culture that values harmony and uniformity makes growing up and living as LGBT extremely difficult.

## Tibet chief demands monasteries display Chinese flags

BEIJING (AP) — Tibet's Communist Party chief has reiterated a demand that Buddhist monasteries display the national flag as part of efforts to shore up Chinese control over the restive region. Chen Quanguo wrote in an editorial appearing in state newspapers that national flags should be among the elements found in monasteries. Those also include newspapers, television, telephones, and water and electrical services. Demands to display Chinese flags have frequently sparked protests by Tibetans who complain of heavy-handed Chinese rule. Tibetan monks and nuns are among the most active opponents of Chinese rule in the region and face some of the harshest restrictions on their activities. Chen's demand was contained in a lengthy editorial that first appeared in the party flagship *People's Daily* and was reprinted in other papers.

## 2004 Olympic hurdles champ Liu Xiang confirms retirement

BEIJING (AP) — Former Olympic champion hurdler Liu Xiang has confirmed his retirement more than two years after his last race, citing age and injuries. The 31-year-old Liu said on his microblog that the decision is sad and painful, but he felt he had no other choice after years of nagging injuries. The Shanghai native hasn't competed since withdrawing at the London Olympics in 2012 after rupturing his Achilles tendon. He pulled out of the 2008 Beijing Games with a similar injury, and years of treatment have apparently failed to fix the problem. Liu became one of China's best-known athletes by winning the 110-meter hurdles at the 2004 Athens Olympics in a then-world record time. He went on to become one of the country's highest-earning sports stars.

## Four arrested at boutique after hidden camera found

PANAJI, India (AP) — Indian police have arrested four people following a federal government minister's complaint that a niche boutique in the southwestern resort of Goa had a closed-circuit television looking into a changing room where she was trying on clothes. Police officer Umesh Gaonkar said the four boutique employees face charges of insulting a woman and outraging her modesty, which carry a maximum prison sentence of two years. Human resources development minister Smriti Irani was in the store when one of her assistants informed her about the camera, which the officer said was aimed through the changing room's ventilator, said Nilesh Rane, another police officer. The store is in the beach village of Candolim, popular with international tourists. The camera was found to be recording customers inside the room, Gaonkar said. Complaints of hidden changing-room cameras have been pouring in from around India.

## China's Ninebot buys U.S. personal scooter maker Segway

HONG KONG (AP) — Segway, the iconic but struggling U.S. maker of self-balancing personal electric scooters, has been bought by a Chinese rival. Beijing-based Ninebot Inc., which makes a range of short-distance motorized transport devices, said it bought Segway Inc. for an undisclosed amount. It said it received \$80 million from a group of investors to finance the purchase. Ninebot's purchase of Segway, based in New Hampshire, is the latest example of a Chinese company acquiring foreign brands or technology. It's also the latest chapter for Segway, which has passed through several owners and generally failed to live up to the great hype surrounding its launch in 2002. Segway founder Dean Kamen famously promised that his invention would revolutionize transportation, claiming it "will be to the car what the car was to the horse and buggy." But sales of the two-wheeler failed to take off and it earned a goofy reputation thanks to some high-profile mishaps, including President George W. Bush toppling over on one in 2003.



**RADIATING WELCOME.** *Godzilla's head is unveiled as the irradiated monster was appointed special resident and tourism ambassador for Tokyo's Shinjuku ward during its awards ceremony in Tokyo. The giant Godzilla head towering 171-feet above ground level was unveiled at an office of Toho, the studio behind the original 1954 film. (AP Photo/Shizuo Kambayashi)*

## Godzilla welcomed in Tokyo — to lure visitors, not to scare

By Yuri Kageyama

AP Business Writer

**T**OKYO — Fire-breathing, building-stomping Godzilla has been welcomed in part of Tokyo as a sign of prosperity, not destruction.

The irradiated monster was appointed special resident and tourism ambassador for Shinjuku ward, known for its down-home bars and noodle restaurants.

A Godzilla-size head towering 171 feet above ground level was unveiled at an office of Toho, the Japanese studio behind the 1954 original. Toho is shooting a comeback film this year after a decade-long hiatus.

Godzilla's standing as an icon has had its ups and downs, but its stature has been reinstated after the Hollywood *Godzilla*, directed by Gareth Edwards, became a global hit last year.

Japan is hoping the biggest star in the nation's movie history will help lure tourists during a market-opening strategy launched by the prime minister.

At an awards ceremony next to the giant Godzilla head, an actor in a rubber suit waddled to Shinjuku mayor Kenichi Yoshizumi. However, Toho executive Minami Ichikawa had to accept the residency certificate in Godzilla's place, since the suit's claws aren't designed to grab anything.

The longtime belief is that any place Godzilla destructs in the movies is sure to prosper in real life, Yoshizumi said.

"Godzilla is a character that is the pride of

Japan," he said.

Hiroshi Ohnishi, chief executive of the Isetan-Mitsukoshi department store chain, who heads the area's tourism promotion, kept referring to Godzilla with the very polite honorific *sama* — used at the end of a name — underlining respect for the creature as a business-drawing landmark for the region.

The fire-breathing *gojira* — as it is pronounced in Japanese, combining gorilla and *kujira*, or "whale" — was born a genetic aberration, caused by nuclear testing in the Pacific Ocean.

The reptilian mutation also symbolized a national trauma over the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki at the end of World War II.

The first *Godzilla*, directed by Ishiro Honda, with both an unforgettable score and bestial screech, is revered as a classic.

But in 2004, Toho announced it had made its last *Godzilla*, the 28th in the series.

Toho's reboot is set for release next year, ahead of a sequel by Edwards for Legendary Pictures and Warner Brothers, planned for 2018.

Over the years, Godzilla has demolished Tokyo Tower, Rainbow Bridge, the Parliament building, and several castles in Japan, as well as Golden Gate Bridge and other chunks of San Francisco in the Hollywood version.

Shinjuku ward has not been spared, having been flattened in three Toho movies. If Godzilla chooses to return, it can now stomp on its own giant head. But Ichikawa told reporters where it will show up was still undecided.

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Units per U.S. dollar as of 4/17

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Cambodian Riel	4035.1
China Renminbi	6.1979
Fijian Dollar	2.0574
Hong Kong Dollar	7.7512
Indian Rupee	62.365
Indonesian Rupiah	12850
Iranian Rial	27993
Japanese Yen	119.17
Laos New Kip	8120.5
Malaysian Ringgit	3.624
Nepal Rupee	99.928
Pakistani Rupee	101.56
Papua N.G. Kina	2.6738
Philippine Peso	44.205
Russian Ruble	50.811
Saudi Riyal	3.7507
Singapore Dollar	1.3452
South Korean Won	1083.6
Sri Lankan Rupee	133.16
Taiwan Dollar	31.035
Thai Baht	32.365
Vietnam Dong	21590