

GOOGLE REMOVES CHINESE NAME ON MAP AFTER PHILIPPINE FURORE

MANILA: Google has quietly removed the Chinese name for a South China Sea shoal bitterly disputed by Beijing and Manila from its maps service, following an outcry from Filipinos. The Google Maps website on yesterday referred to the rich fishing ground—a subject of a case lodged by the Philippines at an international arbitration tribunal—by its international name, Scarborough Shoal.

The service had earlier labeled the shoal as part of China's Zhongsha island chain, prompting an online campaign

demanding that the Internet giant stop identifying the outcrop as part of Chinese territory. "We've updated Google Maps to fix the issue. We understand that geographic names can raise deep emotions which are why we worked quickly once this was brought to our attention," Google's office in Manila said in a statement.

Scarborough Shoal lies 220 kilometers off the main Philippine island of Luzon and 650 kilometers from Hainan island, the nearest major Chinese land mass.

China has controlled the shoal since 2012, following a brief standoff with the Philippines. Since then, the Philippines has accused the Chinese coast guard of harassing Filipino fishermen at the shoal, including robbing them of their catch at gunpoint earlier this year.

Campaigns website Change.org began a petition last week to get Google Maps to drop the Chinese name of the shoal on its site. The petition drew close to 2,000 supporters. "China's sweeping claim of (the) South China Sea under

their nine-dash line purportedly historical boundary is illegal and is creating tension among nations," the petition read. "Google maps showing this is part of Zhongsha island chain gives credence to what is plainly a territory grab that peace loving nations should stand against."

Last week, a United Nations-backed tribunal at The Hague started hearing a Philippine petition to declare illegal China's maritime claims in the South China Sea that overlap those of the

Philippines. On Monday, Filipino officials wrapped up arguments to convince the panel it had jurisdiction over the case, presidential spokeswoman Abigail Valte said. Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said the Philippines was "confident" the tribunal would assume jurisdiction. "We are doing this as a peaceful means to resolve the dispute. We can't fight China economically, militarily and even politically. This is the way to do it," de Lima told Manila broadcaster ABS-CBN yesterday. — AFP

NOKIA EYES COMEBACK THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

HELSINKI: Finnish telecoms equipment maker Nokia said yesterday it was looking at re-entering the mobile phone market by striking a licensing deal with another firm. "The right path back to mobile phones for Nokia is through a brand-licensing model," the company said in a statement. "That means identifying a partner that can be responsible for all of the manufacturing, sales, marketing and customer support," it added.

The group "would work closely" with its partner to "guide the design and technology differentiation," it said. Nokia was the world's top mobile phone maker between 1998 and 2011 but was overtaken by South

Korean rival Samsung after failing to respond to the rapid rise of smartphones. The Finnish company sold its handset to Microsoft in 2014 for some \$7.2 billion, which dropped using the Nokia name on Lumia smartphones.

Last week, Microsoft announced plans to cut 7,800 jobs and write down the value of its struggling mobile phone division. A new Nokia handset could hit the market at the end of 2016 at the earliest as Microsoft holds the rights to the Nokia brand for mobile phones until then. Chief executive Rajeev Suri had hinted at a return to the mobile phone market in an interview with a German business monthly last month. —AFP

COMCAST OFFERS NEW VIDEO SERVICE FOR ITS CUSTOMERS

NEW YORK: Comcast, the country's largest cable company, is offering its own online video alternative as people spend fewer hours watching live TV and more time using tablets and phones for entertainment. The new service, called Stream, will be available to Comcast's Internet customers and cost \$15 a month. For now, it will include only broadcast networks like FOX and NBC in addition to HBO, but no cable channels like AMC or TNT.

Anyone can watch broadcast networks for free on a TV with an antenna, which costs about \$20 and up. And HBO already sells a stand-alone streaming service for \$15 a month. Comcast has ambitions to offer more TV online, however. It wants to add cable channels over the next year so that online TV subscribers have "access to any of the content we have available" for traditional cable customers by the end of March in 2016, said Marcien Jenckes, Comcast Cable's executive vice president for consumer services. Prices will be similar to traditional cable, he said.

Comcast's service, which is only for its customers, follows the launch earlier this year of Dish Network's nationwide Internet TV service, Sling TV, which sells for \$20 a month and includes cable channels like ESPN, AMC and Food Network. You can also add on HBO. A slew of Internet TV options have come in the past year as many cable and TV companies think younger customers prefer to watch TV online, without paying for a full bundle that can easily top \$70 a month.

Smother competitors'

The offer to smother competitors' online TV services was a major reason

why regulators were concerned about Comcast's bid to buy Time Warner Cable. It would have created a TV and Internet behemoth that would serve more than half of the country's high-speed Internet customers, as calculated by the government. The deal never went through. Comcast dropped its bid in April. Comcast Corp, which is based in Philadelphia, said Monday that it will launch the service in

Boston at the end of the summer, followed by Chicago and Seattle. It plans to make it available to all its Internet service customers by early 2016. Jenckes declined to say how many customers Comcast hoped to win online. Comcast had more than 22 million Internet customers at the end of the first quarter. The Stream service has limitations. You can watch live TV at home but there are rights restrictions for a lot of live content if you want to watch on your phone outside your home network. It will work on computers, tablets and phones but won't work directly on TVs. Instead, users can log in to HBO's app and other channel apps through TV-connected gadgets like an Apple TV or Roku, for example.

Stream does come with a DVR service that can store 20 hours of video. Many young people like sharing passwords for online TV accounts with their friends. Stream allows only two streams on separate devices at the same time. Like with Dish's Sling TV, Stream customers could sign up online and disconnect the service at any time. A major complaint about cable service is contracts that are difficult to escape and having to drop off set-top boxes and other equipment after canceling service. —AP



SUN VALLEY, California: Ben Silbermann (left), co-founder and is CEO of Pinterest, chats with Tim Cook, chief executive officer of Apple Inc, at the Allen & Company Sun Valley Conference. —AFP

PINTEREST CEO SEES THE SITE'S FUTURE IN 'CATALOG OF IDEAS'

MAKING INTERNATIONAL GROWTH IS THE TOP PRIORITY

ASPEN: Pinterest is not a social network but a "catalog of ideas" to help people discover and try new things in their lives, founder and chief executive Ben Silbermann says. Silbermann said Monday that the company now valued at \$11 billion after its latest funding — is fundamentally different from social networks which try to bring users together.

"We've always thought of Pinterest as a catalog of ideas," he told the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference in Aspen, Colorado. "There are recipes to cook, there are products to buy, there are places to visit. And we figure our job is taking this huge catalog of ideas—there are 50 billion pins—and to show you the right ones at the right time. And I think that's a different thing than a social network."

Pinterest has become one of the Internet's hottest websites, particularly among women, by giving people virtual bulletin boards that they can decorate with pictures showcasing interests in anything from food to sports, to fashion or travel. Pinterest is making international growth

its top priority, Silbermann said, noting that some 40 percent of its users are now outside the United States.

No IPO coming

But he also said there are no immediate plans for public stock offering and that the San Francisco company is focused on growing its base and building revenues, mainly around advertising. "We don't have any short-term plans to go public," Silbermann said. "Our inspiration is to build a product that people love... and to build a business model that can support that."

Silbermann said Pinterest—which sometimes calls itself a "visual bookmarking tool"—helps people with important personal choices. "These are some of the most important and personal decisions people make—what am I going to eat, what's my home going to look like, where am I going to travel. I think people struggle to have good tools to make those decisions. They still flip through catalogs, they look at billboards."

Pinterest has not talked about its user base or

revenues, but some private analysts say it has more than 60 million users worldwide. The company recently began getting advertising revenue in the form of "promoted pins" and it created a "buy button" which, like those launched by Facebook and Twitter, allow users to buy things they see without leaving those services. Silbermann said Pinterest is not getting any revenue at this time from the buy button, saying it was launched because "people were asking for it for a long time."

He sees advertising as the "primary" driver of revenue for Pinterest but said he wants to avoid "ugly" ads which detract from the user experience.

So far, Silbermann said users have been receptive to the promoted pins, with little negative feedback. "That speaks to the fact that the motivation between a person who is there to discover something they love and an advertiser who is there to have their product discovered are very closely aligned," he said. "And our job is to make that process work really well." — AFP



WASHINGTON: This June 11, 2013 photo shows the Comcast Corp. logo during The Cable Show 2013 convention. — AP

RETAIL STARTUP JET.COM SET FOR MAJOR RELEASE

ASPEN: Jet.com, a well-funded US startup which aims to shake up online retailing with new ways to cut prices, is set for launch next week, its chief executive said. Marc Lore told the Fortune Brainstorm Tech conference Monday the new online site will have at least 10 million products in a variety of categories, but dismissed the notion that it is taking on colossus Amazon. He said that with the growth in online retail, there is room for "multiple players" but that he sees Jet as an innovator in pricing. "I felt there was an opportunity to innovate around price," he said. "There were a lot of companies innovating around service."

Jet, which has raised some \$200 million in venture funding and has partnerships with more than 1,600 sellers, said the model is based on finding ways to

get lower prices when consumers order several items. Consumers may see prices change while they shop if they order several items that can be delivered more economically than if they were sold separately. "We make those cost savings transparent," he said in Aspen, Colorado. "We call that smart cart bonuses."

Lore said the company has a goal of reaching \$20 billion in revenue by 2020, and will spend \$100 million on marketing and advertising in its first year of operation. Jet uses a membership model, with a \$50 annual fee, while promising lower prices over the long term. "I feel our value proposition is very compelling," Lore said. Lore was a founder of online retailer Quidsi—including diapers.com and soap.com—which sold to Amazon in 2011 for \$545 million. — AFP

THE INTERNET FLOODED WITH TRIBUTES TO NINTENDO CHIEF

TOKYO: Nintendo Co President Satoru Iwata's death from an illness at 55 is being mourned by game fans around the world. They're sharing Iwata Mii avatars, creating pictures with farewell messages on the Nintendo drawing game Splatoon and sending Tweets with "ThankYouIwata" hashtags. Some of the online tributes:

A petition is circulating, amassing thousands of signatures, urging Nintendo to create an "amiibo" figurine in the likeness of Iwata. The small dolls packed with sensors, which already come in Nintendo characters such as Super Mario and Kirby, are used to play games. "Even if the amiibo itself lacks in-game functionality, it serves as a small reminder of Iwata's legacy and accomplishments," the petition says. Nintendo had no comment.

An illustration showing Nintendo characters weeping around Iwata lying down with his eyes closed on a bed of flowers is going viral on Twitter. People said they found the drawing moving and a reminder that there would have been no Pokemon without him. "Thank you, Mr. Iwata," the words say above the picture.

One of the quotes people were remembering from Iwata was: "On my business card, I am a corporate president. In my mind, I am a game developer. But in my heart, I am a gamer." A YouTube clip of his keynote speech, delivered in English, at the Game Developers Conference in San Francisco 10 years ago, was attracting droves of views. He showed his business card, pointed to his head and then brushed his chest as he opened his speech with that comment. Various Iwata images are circulating in online homage, such as the one of him staring at a bunch of bananas, which had set off parody offshoots when it first popped up in 2012, becoming an Iwata meme. A video tribute by IGN includes that image as well as many others, including most recently Iwata's appearance as a puppet at the E3 conference earlier this year.

Game makers reflect on death
Video game creators and colleagues of

Nintendo President Satoru Iwata shared their reactions to his death as well. Michael Gallager president and CEO of the Entertainment Software Association said "Iwata-san's passing affects us all deeply. He was a true visionary who expanded our understanding of the amazing art of video games. We offer our condolences to his family, friends and Nintendo colleagues."

Shawn Layden, president and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment America, said in a statement "We are deeply saddened by the news of Mr. Iwata's passing. He contributed greatly to gaming through his leadership, vision and commitment to delivering fun for every-

one. On behalf of PlayStation, we'd like to extend our deepest condolences to Mr. Iwata's family, friends and everyone at Nintendo. We shall miss his passing for as long as there is gaming."

Head of Microsoft's Xbox division in a statement said "It is a sad moment for the industry. I always remember a speech he made where he said, 'On my business card, I am a corporate president. In my mind, I am a game developer. But in my heart, I am a gamer.' It's a statement that defines Nintendo in the time he led, and defines Iwata-san's impact on our industry. He will be missed." — AP



TOKYO: Satoru Iwata, president of Japan's Nintendo, speaks at a press conference to unveil a new portable game console "DS Lite". — AFP