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Victory

Fans of Club Atlético de Madrid celebrate after their team reached the finals of the UEFA Europa League soccer final Thursday evening in Plaza de Neptuno. Atlético defeated Liverpool in the two-game semifinal. Although both teams scored two goals over the two games, Atlético scored one of their two goals on Liverpool's home field, giving them the edge. Barely an hour after the go-ahead goal, scored in extra time of the second game, more than a thousand fans rushed to the plaza to celebrate. Atlético plays England's Fulham FC in Hamburg on May 12 in the one-match final.

NEW YORK

Car bomb dud causes scare in Times Square

Broadway evacuated as precaution, but no explosion

BY CRISTIAN SALAZAR
AND TOM HAYS
The Associated Press

Police found an "amateurish" but potentially powerful bomb that apparently began to detonate but did not explode in a smoking SUV in Times Square, authorities said Sunday. Thousands of tourists were cleared from the streets for 10 hours while the bomb was dismantled.

"We avoided what we could have been a very deadly event," Mayor Michael Bloomberg said. "It certainly could have exploded and had a pretty big fire and a decent amount of explosive impact."

Investigators removed three propane tanks, fireworks, two filled five-gallon gasoline containers, and two clocks with batteries, electrical wire and other components from the back of the Nissan Pathfinder, Police Commissioner Raymond Kelly said. A black metal box resembling a gun locker was also recovered and will be detonated off site, he said.

Kelly said the explosives were consumer-grade fireworks but could have caused huge damage on a block of Broadway theaters and restaurants teeming with

tourists.

"I think the intent was to cause a significant ball of fire," Kelly said.

Firefighters who arrived shortly after first call heard a popping sound, said Fire Commissioner Sal Cassano, who described the sound as not quite an explosion.

The bomb appeared to be starting to detonate but malfunctioned, police spokesman Paul Browne told The New York Times and the Wall Street Journal.

No suspects were in custody, although Kelly said a surveillance video showed the car driving west on 45th Street before it parked between Seventh and Eighth Avenues. Police were looking for more video from office buildings that weren't open at the time.

"The full attention of city, state and federal law enforcement will be turned to bringing the guilty party to justice in this act of terrorism," Gov. David Paterson said in a statement. Bloomberg did not describe it as an act of terrorism.

A T-shirt vendor alerted police to billowing smoke coming from the back of the vehicle at about 6:30 p.m., the height of dinner

hour as theatergoers rush to eat before Saturday night shows begin.

Smoke was coming from the car, its hazard lights were on and "it was just sitting there," said Rallis Gialaboukis, another vendor who has hawked his wares for 20 years across the street.

A white robotic police arm broke windows of the Pathfinder to remove any explosive materials. A Connecticut license plate on the vehicle did not match up, Bloomberg said. Police interviewed the Connecticut car owner, who told police he had sent the plates to a nearby junkyard, Bloomberg said.

Heavily armed police and emergency vehicles shut down the city's busiest streets, choked with taxis and theatergoers on one of the first summer-like days of the year.

Tourist Shelly Carlisle said police crowded into her Broadway theater after the curtain closed on "Next to Normal," a show on the same block where the SUV was found.

"At the end of the show, the police came in. We were told we had to leave," Carlisle said. "They said there was a bomb scare."

AROUND THE WORLD

Growing oil slick causes worries of 'nightmare' scenario for Atlantic

VENICE, La. — President Barack Obama visited the Gulf Coast on Sunday to assess the response to a massive oil slick that keeps growing and creeping toward shores from Louisiana to Florida.

There has been little success stemming the flow from the ruptured well on the sea floor by skimming the oil, burning it or dispersing it with chemicals. Adding to the gloomy outlook were warnings from experts that an uncontrolled gusher could create a nightmare scenario if the Gulf Stream current carries it toward the Atlantic.

There is growing criticism that the government and oil company BP Global should have done more to stave off the disaster, which cast a pall over the region's economy and fragile environment.

The April 20 explosion of the Deepwater Horizon exploration rig killed 11 workers and the subsequent flow of oil threatens beaches, fragile marshes and marine mammals, along with fishing grounds that are among the world's most productive.

The Coast Guard conceded Saturday that it's nearly impossible to know how much oil has gushed since the blast, after saying earlier it was at least 1.6 million gallons — equivalent to about 2.5 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

Within weeks, the spill should eclipse the 1989 Exxon Valdez incident as the worst U.S. oil disaster in history. Experts warn the situation might already be much worse.

Obama pokes fun at his advisers, Palin, GOP at Correspondents' dinner

WASHINGTON — President Barack Obama offered a bit of wisdom to a ballroom filled with celebrities, political insiders and journalists: There are a few things in life harder to find and more important to keep than love.

"Well, love and a birth certificate," he quipped at

Saturday's White House Correspondents' Association dinner, poking fun at the so-called birther movement, which questions whether the president was born in the United States.

The president then took aim at Jay Leno, the comedian headlining the dinner, saying the talk-show host was "the only person whose ratings fell more than mine."

Obama also cracked jokes about Vice President Joe Biden and chief of staff Rahm Emanuel.

Although his poll numbers are down, he said, he hears he's popular on Twitter and Facebook.

"Or as Sarah Palin calls it, the socialized media," he added.

Greek finance minister outlines deep spending cuts as part of rescue deal

ATHENS, Greece — Finance Minister George Papaconstantinou outlined deep spending cuts and tax increases Sunday to free up a multi-billion-euro rescue by the International Monetary Fund and European Union, the first bailout for one of the 16 countries using the euro.

The measures, which include tax increases and salary and pension cuts for civil servants, aim to reduce the budget deficit to below 3 percent of gross domestic product by 2014, from the current 13.6 percent of GDP, Papaconstantinou said.

"We are called on today to make a basic choice. The choice is between collapse or salvation," he said.

The full amount of the three-year IMF/eurozone package will be announced in Brussels after an emergency eurozone finance ministers' meeting, where Papaconstantinou was heading after his Athens news conference. He said the amount would be "close to" widely reported figures. French and other officials have said it would be €120 billion.

Papaconstantinou said savings worth €30 billion through 2012 would be achieved through public service and pension pay cuts, higher taxes and streamlining government.

5 killed in heavy flooding

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — Heavy thunderstorms lashed parts of Tennessee with almost a foot of rain, leading to five deaths and flooded neighborhoods, roads and waterways. The storms also dropped reported tornadoes and hail along the Mississippi River Valley in Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, Kentucky and northward. The forecast called for more rain through the weekend.

Hundreds of homes had been evacuated and shelters were being opened across the state for people stranded due to flooded roads. Jeremy Heidt, spokesman for the Tennessee Emergency Management Agency, said crews were called out for swift-water rescues from Nashville to Memphis.

The five deaths in Tennessee were related to the storm, but the exact causes were not yet known, Heidt said Saturday evening.

Netanyahu welcomes indirect peace talks with Palestinians

JERUSALEM — Israel's prime minister on Sunday welcomed the Arab nations' endorsement of indirect, U.S.-brokered peace talks with the Palestinians.

Benjamin Netanyahu's office said the prime minister still awaited a formal Palestinian statement on the resumption of peace talks, but renewed his willingness to restart "at any time and at any place."

The executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization was expected to meet Saturday to officially announce a resumption of talks.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton has said the talks were to start soon, and U.S. Mideast envoy George Mitchell was expected back in the region later this week.

The last round of Israeli-Palestinian peace talks broke down in late 2008, reportedly while on the verge of an agreement.

— AP Reports



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