

NEWS

National and world news in brief

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Hawaiian dams on brink of collapse

KILAUEA, Hawaii: Seven are missing and two are dead after an earthen dam build in the late 19th century collapsed and flooded a village.

Hawaiian state officials, including state Civil Defense Director Maj. Gen. Robert Lee, fear that the dam collapse could signify widespread problems with several aging earthen dams throughout the state.

The dam, which was one of several that served to control the Kilauea Stream, collapsed Thursday. Officials warn that other dams downstream "could go at any time."

"Sounded like a 747 jet crashing here in the valley, all the trees popping and snapping and everything," Kilauea resident John Hawthorne said. "It was just a horrendous sound, and it never quit."

The American Society of Civil Engineers report that as many as 22 dams in Hawaii may have structural deficiencies serious enough to be a safety threat.

"I'm very concerned. We have about 60 dams like this and many more throughout the state, and they are old. The one that burst that caused this damage was built in 1890," said Hawaiian State Senator Gary Hooser. "There are seven people missing, young and old, men and women, and two bodies have been found. It is a very sad time here for our people in Kauai. We're small community. We're a family. It affects the community on the North Shore."

State officials continue to monitor the situation closely.

Alabama legislature considers "Rosa Parks Act"

MONTGOMERY, Alabama: Alabama state lawmakers are currently considering a law that several members say is a long time in coming: and act that would pardon everyone arrested for violating segregation laws in the state decades ago.

"This is something that's long overdue. It's something aimed at giving the state a forward look," said state Representative Thad McClammy.

The new measure could affect thousands of African-Americans still living in Alabama and other states who were jailed or fined for doing things like drinking out of the wrong water fountain or sitting in the wrong seat on the public bus.

"I think it's wonderful. There were 89 people arrested during the bus boycott, and I think every one of them should be pardoned because of the contribution they made to the state and the nation," said Democratic Rep. Alvin Holmes, who has a record of addressing civil rights issues in the state.

The state legislature is only in session another week, but lawmakers are confident that the act will pass before time runs out.

"I can't imagine anyone opposing this," said Republican State Rep. Steve McMillan.

Sony again delays PS3 launch date

TOKYO, Japan: The Sony Corporation announced on Wednesday that it was again delaying the launch date of its newest next-generation video game console, the PS3, or PlayStation 3.

Although the console was scheduled to be shipped this spring, a series of copyright, patent and technology disputes as well as some troublesome technical glitches has led to the release date being pushed back to November.

"When we initially announced our plans to launch this spring, we had expected the standardization work on all of the technologies to be completed by last August, but there were improvements that were decided on since then," Sony Games Division president Ken Kutaragi reported Wednesday at a business meeting to update software developers who had been kept in the dark about the delay. "We wanted to be sure to include all future technologies that are available now."

The new six-month delay in the release of the PS3 is highly annoying to gamers and industry enthusiasts, who have been speculating on the console's release date, games and system specifications for over a year.

However, industry analysts and software developers are more concerned about the business impact of the new six-month delay.

"There's nothing in the first half of the year, and the install base in the second half will be so small it will have no material impact for earnings at all," KBC technology and business analyst Hiroshi Kamide said. "This is going to be a horrendous year."

Sony executives are also concerned that the new release date will put the PS3 in direct competition at release with the forthcoming Nintendo Revolution, which is scheduled to be released at roughly the same time with several new innovations that break gaming conventions.

Sony's press release stated that the PS3 will cost at least \$500 at launch and will have a selection of five to seven games.

Unrest grows in Ecuador

QUITO, Ecuador: Ecuadorean President Alfredo Palacio has repeatedly called for peace and calm as the widespread civil unrest in his country grows amid free trade protests and the resignation of the Interior Minister.

Three democratically elected governments in Ecuador have been forcibly removed or overthrown within the last ten years.

Citizen protesters took 15 government soldiers hostage after calls for improved public works projects and education were ignored by the elected government.

Resigned Interior Minister Alfredo Castillo warned that the continued tension created by Native Americans, contracted oil workers, and irate citizens could lead to yet another coup if their concerns are not addressed.



Source: CNN.com, Yahoo! News

Classifieds

"Life is a place of service, and in that service one has to suffer a great deal that is hard to bear, but more often to experience a great deal of joy."

~Count Leo Tolstoy,
Russian novelist (1828-1910)

Janet Neff Sample Center
for Women's Literature

Skating policies prevent hits to Penn State's pocketbook

By Greg Lanich
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The Penn State administration is having a hard time dealing with damages attributed to skaters and skateboarders. A recent email from Student Affairs Director Ken Miller emphasizes the policy on skateboards, roller-skates, and bicycles, and that students are causing large amounts of damage on campus. A full copy of this policy is available at <http://guru.psu.edu/policies/SY16.html>. This policy states that skates and bicycles are not permitted on walkways or roads. It also states multiple times, "the use of skateboards on campus is prohibited."

The fairness of this policy has been debated by administration and skateboarders for some time now. A student skateboarder on campus, who wished to remain anonymous, believes that skaters are being unfairly accused. "Most of the damage is from people who are underage drinking." This student believes that their recreation and possible future career are being compared to illegal drinking and vandalistic behavior. "It's unfair that they compare me to people who are breaking the law, when I'm just doing something fun and healthy."

Concerning the policy on bicycles, it is unclear on which pathways bicycles are permitted. Although the policy states bicycles cannot be ridden on walkways, the school and the Student Government Association (SGA) have bought

bicycle racks and placed them on or near walkways. "The SGA spends hundreds of dollars catering to the bike riders and attacks everything else. They just feel like they need to blame someone, and the skateboarders are the easy target." The damages on campus have been reported in the thousands. Many of the damages have been to benches, railings and some buildings. Even damages to the Nittany Lion statue outside of the Junker Center have been reported.

The Administration wants to strictly enforce the policy to prevent more damages and repairs. "Over the last several weeks there has been significant damage to outdoor areas and facilities including stair railings, benches and buildings that appears to be the result of acrobatics being performed by bicycles, skateboards or in-line skates. At a time when campus resources are stretched thin, these damages end up hurting the entire campus community. Policy SY16 regulation of the General University has strict guidelines about the use of bicycles, mopeds, skateboards, sleds and in-line skates on University property. This policy will be strictly enforced to prevent further damage from happening to University property."

The administration seems to be backed into a corner concerning its options with how do deal with this vandalism. Whether or not skateboarding or general vandalism is the cause for these damages, they do have to be paid for. Odds are good that the costs will be passed on to innocent students through tuition and housing increases.

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