

NATION/WORLD DIGEST

Gov't Rules Allow Unapproved iPhone Apps

WASHINGTON (AP) — Owners of the iPhone will be able to break electronic locks on their devices in order to download applications that have not been approved by Apple. The government is making that legal under new rules announced Monday.

The decision to allow the practice commonly known as "jail-breaking" is one of a handful of new exemptions from a federal law that prohibits the circumvention of technical measures that control access to copyrighted works. Every three years, the Library of Congress authorizes such exemptions to ensure that existing law does not prevent non-infringing use of copyrighted material.

Another exemption will allow owners of used cell phones to break access controls on their phones in order to switch wireless carriers.

Calif. Mayor To Stop Taking High Salary

BELL, Calif. (AP) — The mayor of Bell has apologized for the excessive salaries paid to city officials and says he will step down after completing his term without pay.

Mayor Oscar Hernandez said in a statement posted Monday on the Bell city clerk's website that the salaries were indefensible.

The city's chief administrative officer was earning nearly \$800,000 a year.

Hernandez last week defended the city's salaries.

He says he will not collect any pay for the remainder of his term, which expires in March.

Ed Dept, Civil Rights Leaders Discuss Reform

WASHINGTON — Civil rights leaders are criticizing a number of Obama administration education reforms aimed at turning around low performing schools and closing the achievement gap for minority students.

Eight civil rights organizations, including the NAACP, contend the Education Department is promoting ineffective approaches for failing schools. They also criticize that the \$4.35 billion "Race to the Top" grant competition — aimed at spurring innovative reform — leaves out many minority students.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan and a White House adviser met with the groups Monday.

Blagojevich Judge, Attorney Clash

CHICAGO (AP) — The judge in Rod Blagojevich's corruption trial has clashed with an attorney for the former Illinois governor about what the lawyer can say in closing arguments.

Judge James Zagel sent the jury home for the day Monday after Blagojevich's attorney Sam Adam Jr. complained the judge was gutting his closing arguments. Adam said he intended to mention witnesses that prosecutors did not call — even though the judge previously warned him not to do so.

Adam also says he would be willing to go to jail for contempt if the judge didn't change his mind.

Blagojevich and his brother, Robert Blagojevich, have pleaded not guilty to charges including an alleged scheme to sell the Senate seat President Barack Obama gave up when he was elected president.

Biden Touts Stimulus Projects In Parks

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK, Wyo. (AP) — Vice President Joe Biden says the hundreds of stimulus projects now under way in national parks across the U.S. are long-overdue upgrades to what he calls the country's neglected national jewels.

The vice president is on a two-day tour highlighting Recovery Act projects in Yellowstone and Grand Canyon national parks.

Biden spoke Monday to about 100 Yellowstone National Park employees after surveying the progress of one of the projects, the \$4.7 million replacement of the Madison Wastewater Treatment Plant.

Biden says some \$750 million in stimulus money has gone to 800 national park projects. He says, "We're beginning to polish once again these national jewels."

He says the projects have created jobs in tough times, but they need to be done regardless of the economy.

U.S. Links Support For Palestinians To Talks

RAMALLAH, West Bank (AP) — Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas has been told he needs to move to direct talks with Israel quickly if he wants President Barack Obama's help establishing a Palestinian state.

According to an internal Palestinian document obtained by The Associated Press, U.S. envoy George Mitchell delivered the message this month.

Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat on Monday confirmed parts of the 36-page document. Erekat said Abbas was told that "if he wants Obama's help, then he needs to go to direct talks."

But Erekat said there was no U.S. warning that it would not be able to ensure a continued Israeli settlement slowdown without direct negotiations.

The West Bank construction curb ends in September. Israel's prime minister said Monday he will not extend it.

No Sign Of Castro At Revolution Day Event

SANTA CLARA, Cuba (AP) — A public celebration to mark Revolution Day has begun in this central Cuban city with no sign of Fidel Castro.

The 83-year-old ex-president had a made a string of appearances at small public events in recent weeks, fueling speculation he could turn up for Monday's event in Santa Clara.

Instead, Raul Castro — who succeeded his older brother as president, first temporarily, then permanently — presided over the event.

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Hayward To Leave BP; Job In Works

BY HARRY R. WEBER AND DANICA KIRKA
Associated Press Writers

LONDON — BP is jettisoning CEO Tony Hayward, whose verbal blunders made the oil giant's image even worse as it struggled to contain the Gulf oil spill, and will assign him to a key job in Russia, a person familiar with the matter said Monday.

Hayward is set to step down in October and take a post at TNK-BP, the company's joint venture in Russia, according to the person, who spoke on condition of anonymity because an official announcement had not been made by the British company's board.

The move was being made more than three months after an oil rig explosion set off the spill and less than two weeks after a temporary cap finally stopped the oil from leaking. The government's oil spill chief, retired Coast Guard Adm. Thad Allen, said in Washington on Monday that efforts to solidly seal BP's busted deep-sea well are set to begin in a week.

Moving Hayward gives BP a chance to make a fresh start. BP executive Robert Dudley, an American who has been overseeing oil spill recovery efforts, is likely to be his successor.

"The sooner Bob Dudley is empowered to act as CEO, especially with regard to the U.S., the better it will prove to be for BP," said Stephen Pope, the chief global equity strategist at Cantor Fitzgerald in London.

The board met Monday but it was unclear whether it had made the demotion official. A

statement was expected early Tuesday, at the same time the company files its second quarter results.

Hayward left BP's headquarters after the board meeting without speaking to reporters. The Briton's silver Lexus was mobbed by photographers, who chased the car down the tony street in central London.

It's not yet clear what Hayward's role will be with TNK-BP, but the job suggests BP still holds more faith in Hayward than much of the U.S. public and political establishment do. Analysts consider the Russian venture one of BP's crown jewels; it accounts for a quarter of the company's production.

TNK-BP's challenges are well known to Hayward's likely successor as CEO, who used to run it. Dudley was forced to flee Russia in 2008 and ran BP's interests there in absentia until that became untenable after a dispute with Russian shareholders.

Repeated calls to TNK-BP's offices in Moscow went unanswered Monday.

BP owns half of the oil firm, which is Russia's third-largest. Moving Hayward gives insiders who believed he was scapegoated for his off-the-cuff remarks — rather than his performance — a chance to keep a highly trained professional in the company.

"They still think highly of Tony Hayward but they have to get him away from this situation," said Phil Weiss, an oil analyst with Argus Research in New York. "TNK-BP is an important part of BP."

Hayward was called back to London a month ago after a bruising encounter with a

congressional committee and has since kept a low profile. There is persistent speculation that BP Chairman Karl-Henric Svanberg, who moved into the post on Jan. 1, is also likely to lose his job later this year.

In New York, BP shares rose almost 5 percent Monday as the stock market anticipated a formal announcement about Hayward. Shares of BP PLC rose \$1.79, or 4.9 percent, to close at \$38.65 Monday in New York. BP shares closed up 4.6 percent at 416.95 pence (\$6.45) in London.

The one-day board meeting comes a day before BP announces earnings for the second quarter. That report is expected to include preliminary provisions for the cost of the Gulf disaster, which analysts say could be as high as \$30 billion.

Hayward, 53, who has a doctorate in geology, had been a well-regarded chief executive. But his promise when he took the job in 2007 to focus on safety "like a laser" came back to haunt him after the April 20 explosion on the Deepwater Horizon rig, which killed 11 workers and unleashed a gusher of oil a mile below the surface.

His early attempts to shift blame to the rig owner, Transocean, failed to take the heat off BP. Later remarks that the amount of oil pouring into the Gulf was "tiny" compared to its volume of water and his complaint that he would "like my life back" made him an object of scorn.

Dudley assumed oversight of the oil spill recovery last month, soon after Hayward was pilloried for spending a day at a yacht race at the height of the disaster.

Leaks Create Fresh Doubt About Afghan War, Secrets

BY ROBERT BURNS
Associated Press Writer

WASHINGTON — The monumental leak of classified Afghan war documents threatened Monday to create deeper doubts about the war at home, cause new friction with Pakistan over allegations about its spy agency and raise questions around the world about Washington's own ability to protect military secrets.

The White House called the disclosures "alarming." The torrent of more than 91,000 secret documents, one of the largest unauthorized disclosures in military history, sent the Obama administration scrambling to assess and repair any damage to the war effort, either abroad or in the U.S. The material could reinforce the view put forth by the war's opponents in Congress that one of the nation's longest conflicts is hopelessly stalemated.

The leaks come at a time when President Barack Obama's Afghanistan war strategy is under congressional scrutiny and with polls finding that a majority of Americans no longer think the war there is worth fighting. Still, the leaks are not expected to prevent passage of a \$60 billion war funding bill. Despite strong opposition among liberals who see Afghanistan as an unwinnable quagmire, House Democrats must either approve the bill before leaving at the end of this week for a six-week vacation, or commit political suicide by leaving troops in the lurch in war zones overseas.

The Pentagon also was looking at possible damage on the ground in Afghanistan. "Someone inadvertently or on purpose gave the Taliban its new 'enemies list,'" declared Rep. Jane Harman, D-Calif., who said the White House indicated the disclosures compromised a number of Afghan sources.

White House spokesman Robert Gibbs emphasized that the documents covered the period before Obama ordered a major

increase in U.S. troops fighting in Afghanistan, and the administration denied they would cause any policy shift in the fight against Taliban insurgents.

Indeed, despite the furor over the publication of the reports on the WikiLeaks whistleblower website, the information did not reveal any fundamentally new problems in the war effort.

Military officers, current and former, described the documents as mostly tactical spot reports, including hunches about possible suspects and bomb plots that couldn't be verified. Some of the reports contain errors; others appear to be based on flimsy evidence.

Still, much of the material is anything but encouraging. Underscoring the difficulties the U.S. faces, the documents include the first publicly released indication that the Taliban has used portable surface-to-air missiles against U.S. helicopters. One report on a June 2005 incident said a Black Hawk helicopter used evasive measures to avoid getting hit east of Kandahar by what its crew chief identified as a portable missile.

The documents also report potential Iranian support of an Afghan terrorist group.

They said that on Jan. 30, 2005, Iranian intelligence agencies brought the equivalent of \$212,800 in Afghan currency across the

Iranian border and transferred it to a 1990s-model white Toyota Corolla station wagon occupied by members of Hizb-Islami, a Taliban-allied insurgent group led by former Afghan Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar.

The money trail was lost.

Don't Hold Your Breath For Housing Prices

BY ALAN ZIBEL
AP Real Estate Writer

WASHINGTON — Thought the housing crisis was over? Not quite.

Despite four years of falling prices and recent signs that they were finally bottoming out, homes are expected to lose still more value in many metro areas over the next year.

Parts of the country already pummeled by the housing crisis, like Las Vegas, Phoenix and Miami, will be hit hardest. But even some places that have rebounded or held up relatively well — including New York, Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. — will suffer, too.

That's the conclusion of economists who have been reducing their estimates for home prices as the outlook for the economic recovery has darkened. The number of homes for sale or headed for foreclosure is so high that they think prices will be even lower by next July.

Because housing is such an important engine of the economy, lower prices could dim the recovery. When home values fall and people have less equity, they tend to cut back on spending. And as prices decline, potential homebuyers stay on

the sidelines, slowing sales even more.

Earlier this year, analysts said they thought home prices had finally reached their low point and were ready to start rising slowly in most areas of the country. Now, they think the actual bottom could be nearly a year away.

The average home price in the Standard & Poor's Case-Shiller index of 20 big U.S. cities is forecast to drop nearly 2 percent this year from a year earlier, according to the average estimate of more than 100 economists polled this month by MacroMarkets LLC.

That's more pessimistic than in May, when the consensus was for prices to be nearly flat. Other, more bearish analysts think prices will sink 10 percent or more.

Price drops of more than 10 percent are expected in the Phoenix, Miami and Las Vegas areas over the next year, according to Moody's Analytics. Those areas have already been scorched by 50 percent declines in home values.

Moody's predicts that other areas — New York, Los Angeles, San Diego, San Francisco, Denver, Detroit, Cleveland, Minneapolis, Tampa, Fla., and Washington D.C. — will see declines of 2 to 8 percent by next July.

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