

Outage leaves thousands in dark



Yalonda M. James/S.F. Chronicle
Downtown glows in the distance past the Painted Ladies amid a power outage affecting 130,000 homes and businesses.

PG&E can't give time to fully restore electricity after substation fire, series of blackouts hit many parts of S.F.

By Sarah Ravani and Anna Bauman
STAFF WRITERS

Pacific Gas and Electric Co. was working Sunday to restore power to roughly 17,000 customers in San Francisco after a series of blackouts on Saturday brought life in many parts of the city to a standstill. But the utility said it could not provide an estimate for when those homes and businesses would be brought back online.

The damage from a Saturday afternoon substation fire at Eighth and Mission Streets, which caused some of the power shutdown, was "significant and extensive and the repairs and safe restoration will be complex," PG&E said in an update at 7:30 a.m. Sunday.

"We have mobilized additional engineers and electricians. At this time, we are unable to provide a precise timeframe for full restoration but will provide additional detail and information as our assessment and repair efforts continue."

Andrea Borba, a spokesperson with PG&E, posted a video on X about 11 a.m. that engineers and electricians were at the Mission substation working to restore power, but provided no update on when service would be back citywide.

The company said Sunday



Benjamin Fanjoy/For the S.F. Chronicle
Jesse Ahluwalia, owner of the Laundry Corner, turns breakers off Sunday to prevent a surge when power returns to the laundromat in the Richmond District. His power went out about 1:45 p.m. Saturday.

morning that its crews had restored power to 110,000 customers, leaving 21,000 without electricity in the Presidio, the Richmond District, Golden Gate Park and "small areas" downtown. The 130,000 homes and businesses that went dark Saturday represent about one-third of the utility's city customers.

PG&E did not say what may have caused blackouts not related to the substation fire. The utility also did

not say what caused the substation fire.

Mayor Daniel Lurie, in a video posted on X on Sunday morning, said his office is working to ensure seniors and disabled residents in the affected neighborhoods are safe. "We also are pushing PG&E hard for a timeline on full restoration," Lurie said.

San Francisco Fire Lt. Mariano Elias said the substation that

Outage continues on A7

Region lacks power for data

Utility upgrades haven't caught up with AI centers

By Roland Li
STAFF WRITER

A few blocks away from San Jose's airport, an empty concrete and glass structure is waiting to be turned on.

Work began six years ago on the four-story data center, called SJC37 and owned by Digital Realty, one of the world's biggest data center landlords. The tan exterior is finished, but there's no equipment installed — and it could be years before the project gets the power it needs to start operations.

Silicon Valley Power, a public utility owned by the city of Santa Clara, is working on a \$450 million system upgrade to meet demand from data centers and other users, but isn't scheduled to finish until 2028. Another nearby project owned by data center company Stack Infrastructure is also sitting empty and isn't expecting power until 2027.

The delays, first reported by Bloomberg, are emblematic of the Bay Area's disparities in the AI industry.

The region is the runaway leader in artificial intelligence, home to both the world's deepest engineering talent pool and status as headquarters of industry

Data continues on A9

Approval for 'in-law units' may cost \$1M

By Jessica Roy
PERSONAL FINANCE COLUMNIST

When Katherine Roberts toured the three-story Edwardian home for sale on a quiet street in San Francisco's Cole Valley in 2003, a lot of words came to mind.

Charming. Beautiful.

And from the real estate agent, an unfamiliar one: unwarranted.

"A tiny little word there that got me in so much trouble," Roberts said.

The lower level had once been basement storage, but decades earlier an owner had carved it without permits into two small studio apartments. Their ceilings were 7 feet high — an acceptable minimum height for residential space under state code, but 6 inches too low to meet San Francisco's more stringent requirement — meaning the units were "unwarranted" and couldn't legally be rented.

A previous owner had worked around this problem by renting out the

Home continues on A8

Slackliner finds new work-life balance

By Connor Letourneau
STAFF WRITER

Breannah Yeh isn't just an extreme-sports influencer who posts viral videos of herself balancing on a 1-inch-wide nylon rope high above national parks, major cities, even crashing waves. She's also an unlikely inspiration for frustrated Bay Area tech workers contemplating life beyond the industry.

Five years ago, the Oakland native was struggling to juggle a demanding Palo Alto tech job with her true passion — a niche sport called slacklining, often described as a more extreme version of tightrope-walking. Many nights, she lay

awake asking herself: Should she bet on the low-paying pastime, or stick with a stable career with high earning potential?

"I always knew what I wanted to do," Yeh said. "I just wasn't sure I could make a living doing it."

It's a dilemma many others in Silicon Valley face. With more than 50,000 Bay Area tech workers laid off over the past three years, a once-reliable industry has become increasingly volatile. Still, rather than pursue other interests, many tech employees flock to an increasingly crowded job-hunting market for a shot at lucrative salaries, stock options

Tech continues on A10



Jessica Christian/S.F. Chronicle
Tik Tok star Breannah Yeh bet on herself, dropping a demanding tech job to forge a career in slacklining.