



WIKINEWS

PRINT EDITION

December 18 2007

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Top Stories

Data for 3 million UK driving candidates lost

Some personal details of 3 million British learner drivers who had applied for the 'theory test' component of their Driving licence have been lost in Iowa, in the USA.

The data was lost on a hard drive that was owned by Pearson Driving Assessments Ltd, a private contractor to the UK driving standards agency.

Details were given by the UK Transport Secretary, Ruth Kelly, in the House of Commons at 1730 UTC today. It is the first major loss of data in the UK since information on 25 million people was lost by HM Revenue in October.

Featured story

Israel Journal: The Holy Land has an image problem

Wikinews reporter David Shankbone is currently, courtesy of the Israeli government and friends, visiting Israel. This is a first-hand account of his experiences about when he arrived to the country, what happend, and some interesting discussions that took place.

Wikipedia Current Events

- The "Mitchell Report" is released, naming a number of Major League Baseball players who are alleged to have used anabolic steroids or human growth hormone.
- Tropical Storm Olga causes floods and landslides in the Caribbean, killing at least 35 people.
- Two bombings in Algiers kill dozens of people, including 17 UN employees.
- A state of disaster is declared in South Korea's Taaean county, after the country's worst ever oil spill.
- The Afghan National Army and the International Security Assistance Force launch an assault near Musa Qala in Helmand Province, Afghanistan, against Taliban insurgents.
- President Pervez Musharraf (pictured) of Pakistan declares an end to the six-week state of emergency.

US presidential candidate Ron Paul breaks online fundraising record

United States presidential candidate Ron Paul, has broken a fund raising record by raising over

US\$6,000,000 on the internet in 24 hours on December 16, setting the record for the most money raised in a single day online. John Kerry held the previous record of US\$5.7 million.

Paul's goal for the fourth quarter fund raising bid was US\$12 million, but so far has managed to raise over US\$18 million.

At least 58,000 people contributed financially to Paul's campaign, 25,000 of which were contributing to his campaign for the first time.

Campaign officials say they will use the money for advertising on television in several states including Florida and California but primarily New Hampshire and Iowa. More people are also expected to be hired onto to his campaign.

The fund raising campaign, which was held on the anniversary of the Boston Tea Party was organized and operated by volunteers. The same volunteers also organized a re-enactment of the Tea Party which Paul attended and marched with supporters from The Statehouse to Faneuil Hall in downtown Boston, Massachusetts.

On November 5, Paul raised over US\$4 million in 24 hours.

Putin will accept prime minister position if Medvedev wins

Russian President Vladimir Putin said he will accept a nomination for Prime Minister of Russia, as Dmitry Medvedev has suggested he will do, if he wins the presidential election.

Meanwhile, the United Russia ruling party, which is backed by Putin, officially nominated Medvedev for presidency today. The intention was declared on December 10, being the long-awaited answer to the question on "Putin's successor". The next day Medvedev, who is the current deputy prime minister of the Russian government and the chairman in the board of directors of Gazprom gas giant, offered Putin the Prime Minister position in case of winning the election, which is forecasted to happen.

Today, United Russia, which has a majority in the country's lower parliament, has held its VII convention where the nomination and Putin's declared consent took place. 478 voting members backed Medvedev while one opposed. Medvedev is also backed by three other parties — A Just Russia, Agrarian Party of Russia and Civilian Power.

Recently there were speculations about Putin's intention to become a head of Russia and Belarus alliance, which were speedily rejected by Putin's representatives.

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was lost by HM Revenue in October.

In her statement to MPs, Ruth Kelly confirmed that no banking information was contained within the lost data, nor were individuals' dates of birth. She highlighted that security measures had been taken, and that the information that had been stored was not in a format "readily usable or accessible" by standard means.

Political figures in the UK continue to raise concerns about both the specific loss of this information, and the nature of governments ability to safely gather and maintain information. Susan Kramer, representing the Liberal Democrats stated "This constant attempt to gather data, to get more data, to know more about you, to link it more together, all of that it seems to me is what comes into question."

Flight attendant Todd Herzog wins \$1 million on 'Survivor: China'

Todd Herzog, a flight attendant from Pleasant Grove, Utah, has won the US\$1,000,000 grand prize on the CBS American reality television series Survivor: China. Herzog, 22, defeated New York City waitress Courtney Yates and former Miss Montana USA Amanda Kimmel in the final vote. Herzog was voted 'Sole Survivor' by four of the seven jury members, while Yates received two votes and Kimmel received one. He was described as being the smartest and most strategic of the final three contestants. When making his opening statement to the jury, he said, "The main thing I can ask tonight is that you are able to see the difference between my strategic game and the relations that I actually built with you because they were all real."

Herzog, who was only 14 years old

when the first season of Survivor premiered, was once the founder of his school's Survivor club and was voted by his graduating class as "Most likely to appear on Survivor."

The finale aired on December 16, 2007.

Climate Conference in Bali concluded; opinions on outcome differ

The climate conference that was held for the last two weeks in Bali came to a conclusion on Saturday. Agreement was reached on the so called Bali roadmap, but opinions differed on the substance of this and other documents that were decided upon.

The Roadmap establishes the target year of 2009 and the scope for a post-2012 climate change agreement. This agreement is expected to include the setting, for industrialized nations, of reduction targets for greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, amongst other things.

While the EU had wished for the inclusion of a guideline range of 25-40% for GHG emission cuts by industrialized nations by 2020, this had been opposed by the US and others, and so was not included in the final "roadmap" which addresses all nations that are part of the United Nations Framework on Climate Change Convention (UNFCCC). The range was however included in the preamble of the document agreed on by the members of the Kyoto Protocol.

The "Bali Roadmap" document can be seen as having three distinct sections:

The first is the preamble, which is non binding and is there to put the following decisions in context. This is where the guideline emissions cut range would have been. Still included is a reference to the

latest report by the international body of scientists that is charged with assessing the current state of knowledge on climate change. This Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) had presented its Synthesis report earlier this year. It also recognizes that "deep cuts in global emission will be required" to avoid dangerous climate change.

The second part is composed of a section calling for a "shared vision for long-term cooperative action, including a long-term global goal for emission reductions" and then goes on with a description of the four "building blocks" envisioned for tackling climate change. These are

- mitigation
- adaptation
- technology development and transfer
- and financing

The third and last part is the technical part of the document, with a proposed timetable for meetings and similar procedural matters being included.

But it was not just the future that was talked about. There was also consensus on a number of current issues, such as the setting up of an expanded adaptation fund, and the necessity of accelerating the transfer and development of "climate friendly" technology.

Perspectives on the outcome varied, with some non governmental organizations (NGOs) like Greenpeace International being generally happy that an agreement was achieved, but stating that a stronger mandate for the post 2012 negotiations had been wished for, and that current issues were not all addressed satisfactorily either.

The UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon on the other hand welcomed the outcome of the conference, stating that all of his three benchmarks for success had been reached. He went on to say that he "believes that the Bali Roadmap that has been agreed is a pivotal first step toward an agreement that can address the threat of climate change, the defining challenge of our time."

The EU also welcomed the agreement that was reached, with Commission President José Manuel Barroso noting that "We have worked hard to achieve this result. It is a very important step forward." Both he and Stavros Dimas, European Commissioner for Environment, made it clear that Bali had only been the start of what needed to be done, with the later stating that "Now the real hard work must begin. It is essential that the agreement to be worked out over the next two years is ambitious enough to prevent global warming from reaching dangerous levels."

Africans win the 2007 ING Taipei International Marathon

The annual "Taipei International Marathon", mainly sponsored by ING Antai (Taiwan Branch of ING Group NV) in the fourth year, started with more than 20,000 athlete's participation. In order to obey the regulation, Taipei City Government, the race organizer, adopted the "ChampionChip" timer system for participants at 9KM, half-marathon, and marathon classes. Comparison to last year, the starting control was apparently better than last year.

Not only intensive races from 42k, 21k, and 9k classes, ING Antai also invited the main actors Hung-yu Yu and Chia-chia Tsui from the local TV advertisement named

"Run with your father" to the Fun Run lead-running.

In the Kids Run class, the participants included in not only qualified school teams from "ING Taipei Kids Running" last month but also students outside of Taipei. Although the organizer invited athletes from Basketball Teams of Taipei Municipal Sung Shan Senior High School and Taipower Women Basketball Team to help the security control, some participants were still fallen down after the starts, it forced some runners quit this race.

Media from Taiwan and world-wide hoped runners can make a new record at this race, but only Taiwanese runners broke local records at this race because the actual strength was uncertain after different elite runners than past years participated this race. Finally, Hillary Bett from Kenya and Tabitha Tsatsa from Zimbabwe won the title at this race, and Yu-fang Hsu and Wen-chien Wu broke records of local runners to win the Taiwan Champions.

In the after-race press conference, Wikinews Reporter Rico Shen made a brief interview for Bett and Tsatsa about images of Taiwan. They praised the friendship on people of Taiwan and scenery during the full-marathon races. They also hoped their fellow runners can participate this race in the future to enjoy scenery of Taipei.

Wikinews in other Languages

French-

- Saut à ski : Morgensten survole la compétition
- Ski alpin : Première victoire de Jean-Baptiste Grange en coupe

du monde

- Droit en France : La Poste est déclarée responsable en matière de distribution des objets recommandés
- Championnat de France de Rugby Pro D2 2007-2008 : les résultats de la huitième journée
- Chypre va adopter l'euro comme monnaie officielle

Polish-

- Uroczystości z okazji 37. rocznicy Grudnia '70 przy Pomniku Ofiar Grudnia 1970 obok Stoczni Gdynia S.A.
- Lech Kaczyński spotkał się z przewodniczącym Prezydium Bośni i Hercegowiny
- Lech Kaczyński przyjął z rąk harcerzy Betlejemskie Świątełko Pokoju
- Kempa: opublikować podsłuchy CBA

German-

- Chinas Wirtschaft stark überbewertet
- Ausnahmezustand in Pakistan aufgehoben
- Saudi-Arabien: König begnadigt „Qatif Girl“
- Landkreis Lüchow-Dannenberg: Wolf von Jägern erschossen

Italian-

- Al Zawahiri attacca Benedetto XVI: "Ha offeso l'Islam"

Spanish-

- Presidentes de Chile, Bolivia y Brasil firman acuerdo para la construcción de carretera interoceánica
- Dos sismos despertaron a la zona central de Chile
- Chipre se encuentra listo para introducir el euro como moneda oficial

Today in History

1865 – Slavery in the United States was abolished when the Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution was adopted.

1892 – The first performance of Russian composer Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's fairy tale-ballet The Nutcracker was held at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg.

1966 – Epimetheus, one of the moons of Saturn, was discovered, but was mistaken as Janus. It took 12 years to determine that they are two distinct objects sharing the same orbit.

1987 – Programmer Larry Wall released the first version of the programming language Perl via the comp.sources.misc newsgroup.

Quote of the Day

I cannot be grasped in the here and now. For I reside just as much with the dead as with the unborn. Somewhat closer to the heart of creation than usual. But not nearly close enough. ~ Paul Klee

Listen to this quote online at http://en.wikiquote.org/wiki/Main_Page (today only)

Word of the Day

hymnody

- Composing, or singing of hymns or psalms.
- The hymns of a particular church or of a particular time

Listen to this word online at <http://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/hymnody>

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