



Top Story



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Wikipedia Current Events

- Former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto (pictured) is assassinated in Rawalpindi, Pakistan.
- The Nepalese government agrees to abolish the country's 240-year-old monarchy.
- The People's Power Party led by Samak Sundaravej wins a plurality in parliament after the general elections in Thailand.
- The Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta, Poland, Slovakia and Slovenia join the Schengen zone of the European Union.
- After more than 190 days of discussion, an interim government led by Guy Verhofstadt is formed in Belgium.
- Lee Myung-bak wins the presidential election in South Korea.
- The bodies of six people killed on 24 December are found in a house in Carnation, Washington.
- Hours of torrential rains cause landslides killing at least 78 in the island of Java in Indonesia.
- At least 34 people are killed following a pipeline explosion in Lagos, Nigeria

Featured Story

Tiger that escaped enclosure at San Francisco Zoo may have 'climbed' over wall

Zoo officials are now saying that a Siberian tiger that escaped her enclosure at the San Francisco Zoo in San Francisco, California on December 25, killing one and severely injuring two humans in the Terrace cafe, may have climbed or jumped over the walls that kept the tiger inside her habitat.

"The animal appears to have climbed or otherwise leaped out of the enclosure. There was no way out through the door," said Robert Jenkins, the zoo's director of animal care and conservation. The tiger has been identified as Tatiana, one of two Siberian tigers at the zoo. The other Siberian, Tony, was not involved in the attacks.

Police, who shot and killed Tatiana, are considering the incident a "crime scene" until they can determine if foul play may have been involved.

"[The incident is being treated as a crime] because we're not certain why the incident occurred - as result of human action or whether this was an incident where the animal was able to get out of the grotto," said Chief of the San Francisco Police Department Heather Fong.

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According to Wasif Ali Khan, a member of Benazir Bhutto's PPP, she died at 18:16 (13:16 UTC), after 35 minutes of attempted resuscitation. The doctors said she had shrapnel injuries.

Her supporters, once informed of the death started chanting, "Dog Musharraf, dog," referring to President Pervez Musharraf. Many blamed Musharraf and the security services for the deaths. In their anger and confusion, PPP supporters destroyed the doors of Rawalpindi General Hospital. Others took to the streets in several cities, including Karachi, where tires were set on fire on the roads, a gas station was burned, and two police officers were wounded by gunmen. In Peshawar, about 100 PPP's supporters blocked the main trunk road, torching billboards and posters of the Musharraf-

supporting Pakistan Muslim League-Q, opening fire in the air and screaming. Some buildings, including the main court and banks, were set on fire in Jacobabad as well.

Bhutto was born on June 21, 1953 in Karachi, Pakistan. She served two times as Prime Minister of Pakistan. Bhutto had returned to Pakistan from exile to stand in the upcoming elections. In 2007, she was named the second most influential woman in the world in a list at the American Internet portal MSN.

Benazir Bhutto is survived by her husband Asif Ali Zardari and three children: Bilawal, Bakhtwar, and Aseefa.

According to many polls taken before the assassination, Bhutto and her party would have won the January election.

Responses to the assassination -

A spokesman for the Interior Ministry of Pakistan said that "Terrorists are trying to derail the election process". He also said he couldn't say "whether Bhutto was the target of this attack or whether the attacker was trying to create chaos and bloodshed."

The minister for Pakistani external affairs said that he was "shocked," and that his "sympathy goes to [Bhutto's] husband and children". He also said "we were looking forward to democracy in Pakistan. The attack shows terror is on the march in Pakistan."

Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said that "In her death the subcontinent has lost an outstanding leader who worked for democracy and reconciliation in her country." He also said that "the manner of her going is a reminder of the common dangers

that our region faces from cowardly acts of terrorism and of the need to eradicate this dangerous threat."

President Musharraf called for citizens of Pakistan to stay calm and said that terrorists can be defeated, providing people do not panic. He also said there was "a serious lapse of security."

United States President George W. Bush said the act that took place was a "cowardly act by murderous extremists who are trying to undermine Pakistan's democracy".

In a statement today, United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon condemned the killing of Bhutto. "I am shocked and outraged by the assassination of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto, the leader of the Pakistan People's Party and former Prime Minister. This represents an assault on stability in Pakistan and its democratic processes," said Ban. "I strongly condemn this heinous crime and call for the perpetrators to be brought to justice as soon as possible."

The Secretary-General also expressed condolences to Bhutto's family and the people of Pakistan. "While strongly urging for calm and restraint to be maintained at this difficult time, I call on all Pakistanis to work together for peace and national unity," said Ban.

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif called it "the saddest day" in Pakistan's history. "Something unthinkable has happened," he said. Sharif said his party will boycott Pakistan's January 8 elections in the wake of Bhutto's death.

US Presidential candidates offer condolences to family of Benazir Bhutto

The United States Presidential candidates offered condolences to Benazir Bhutto's family and to the country of Pakistan today. Multiple candidates offered up messages about this former foreign leader.

Former Pakistani Prime Minister Bhutto was killed in a suicide attack as she was leaving a political rally in the city of Rawalpindi. At least 20 people died in the attack, local reports say. The attack has been condemned internationally.

Slate columnist John Dickerson commented that "Moments after former Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's death was announced, I was getting e-mails from campaign aides, political obsessives, and the campaigns themselves. The candidates are quick to express their sadness, of course, but everyone is moving so fast because they're trying to muscle into the news cycle more than ever. There's only a week to go before the Iowa caucuses, and this murder lands right in the middle of a key issue in both parties. The ability to react to unpredictable news in a crazy world is at the heart of both primary debates."

Democratic Senator Joe Biden was first, holding a press conference at noon EST today, at the Des Moines Marriott hotel, solely to speak on the topic. He said the following:

"This is a terrible day. My heart goes out to Benazir Bhutto's family, friends and followers.

Like her father before her, Benazir Bhutto worked her whole life – and gave her life – to help Pakistan become a democratic, secular and

modern Muslim country. She was a woman of extraordinary courage who returned to Pakistan in the face of death threats and even after an assassination attempt the day of her return, she did not flinch. It was a privilege to know her these many years and to call her a friend.

I am convinced Ms. Bhutto would have won free and fair elections next week. The fact that she was by far Pakistan's most popular leader underscores the fact that there is a vast, moderate majority in Pakistan that must have a clear voice in the system. Her assassination makes it all the more urgent that Pakistan return to a democratic path.

This fall, I twice urged President Musharraf to provide better security for Ms. Bhutto and other political leaders – I wrote him before her return and after the first assassination attempt in October. The failure to protect Ms. Bhutto raises a lot of hard questions for the government and security services that must be answered.

I know that Benazir's followers will be tempted to lash out in anger and violence. I urge them to remain calm – and not play into the hands of the forces of destruction. I urge Pakistan's leaders to open a fully accountable and transparent investigation. We must find out who was behind this and bring those responsible to justice. And the United States should offer any assistance necessary, including investigative teams, to get to the bottom of this horror.

The way to honor Benazir Bhutto is to uphold the values for which she gave her life: democracy, moderation and social justice. I join with the Pakistani people in

mourning the loss of a dear friend."

U.S. Senator Sam Brownback, formerly the chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee with responsibility for Southeast Asia, commented:

"I offer my deepest condolences for the loss of Benazir Bhutto and to the families of those killed today. This is a terrible loss to her supporters, the people of Pakistan and for democracy. I hope and pray that that the people of Pakistan and President Musharraf can avoid further bloodshed and continue down the road to democracy. Pakistan has been a good friend to the United States in fighting fundamentalist terrorism, and I sincerely hope we can continue to work together. Pakistan needs to continue to work toward a peaceful, stable and democratic nation if they hope to maintain our strong friendship. "

Democratic Senator Hillary Clinton commented from western Iowa:

"Today the world once again is reminded of the dangers facing those who pursue democracy and free elections, in Pakistan and elsewhere in areas that are rife with conflict and violence and extremism and anti-democratic forces at work. I have known Benazir Bhutto for a dozen years and I knew her as a leader. I knew her as someone willing to take risks.

I hope that if there is any opportunity for the government and people of Pakistan to respond to this tragedy appropriately, it would be to move more steadfastly and determinately toward democracy. She has given her life for that hope, and I know that the people of our country stand in solidarity with those who believe

as we do in the rights of people to be heard at the ballot box.”

26-year-member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee Senator Chris Dodd commented:

“Today's news from Pakistan is both shocking and saddening. As a member of the Foreign Relations Committee, I have had the opportunity to travel to Pakistan and come to know Former Prime Minister Bhutto very well over the years. I spoke to her personally several weeks ago and have stayed in close contact with her since. She was a respected leader who played an important part in moving Pakistan toward democracy.

As we recognize the loss of a leader today, we must also recognize the implication of today's tragedy to the security of the region and to that of the United States.

At this critical time we must do everything in our power to help Pakistan continue the path toward democracy and full elections. Our first priority must be to ensure stability in this critical nuclear state.

The United States should also stand ready to provide assistance in investigating this heinous act. And as Pakistan perpetrators to justice, it should also demonstrate that it will not allow such violence to derail democracy and proceed with elections in a timely manner.”

On his blog, former Arkansas Governor Republican Mike Huckabee commented:

“I am deeply troubled by the news accounts this morning of Pakistani opposition leader and former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto's assassination in a suicide attack. This is devastating news for the

people of Pakistan, and my prayers go out to them as we follow developments regarding this dire situation.

The terrible violence surrounding Pakistan's upcoming election stands in stark contrast to the peaceful transition of power that we embrace in our country through our Constitution. On this sad day, we are reminded that while our democracy has flaws, it stands as a shining beacon of hope for nations and people around the world who seek peace and opportunity through self-government.

Benazir Bhutto's assassination should also stand as a stark reminder for those who doubt the nature of our enemy.

I believe that we are currently engaged in a world war. Radical Islamic fascists have declared war on our country and our way of life. They have sworn to annihilate each of us who believe in a free society, all in the name of a perversion of religion and an impersonal god. We go to great extremes to save lives, they go to great extremes to take them. This war is not a conventional war, and these terrorists are not a conventional enemy. We must fight the war on terror with the intensity and single-mindedness that it deserves.”

Democrat Dennis Kucinich commented:

“This is a very dangerous moment for the world. Prime Minister Bhutto represented the forces of reform and the hope for an end to repression in a troubled region, and her death is a major loss to those efforts.

This terrible tragedy also underscores the need for the

United States to adopt a new foreign policy toward the entire region because our current policy is all wrong. Our interference in the internal affairs of Pakistan has opened wide the doors of repression and violence. At this very moment, we should be working with leaders of the region to convene a meeting at the highest levels to begin a new effort towards stabilization and peace.

The United States must take a new direction in Pakistan and throughout the region. I met her several times, both in Washington and New York. She was deeply and genuinely dedicated to Pakistan. This is a tragic loss.”

Republican John McCain commented:

The death of Benazir Bhutto underscores yet again the grave dangers we face in the world today and particularly in countries like Pakistan, where the forces of moderation are arrayed in a fierce battle against those who embrace violent Islamic extremism. Given Pakistan's strategic location, the international terrorist groups that operate from its soil, and its nuclear arsenal, the future of that country has deep implications for the security of the United States and its allies. America must stand on the right side of this ongoing struggle.

Republican Mitt Romney commented moments after the attack:

This points out again the extraordinary reality of global violent radical jihadism. We don't know who is responsible for this attack, but there is no question that the violence we see throughout the world is violence which is not limited to Iran—excuse me, Iraq—and Afghanistan

but is more global in nature.

Moldovian GDP has increased by over 3%

Moldova's GDP grew 3.3 percent to about \$3.567bn (\$3.106bn in comparable prices) in January-September 2007 compared to the same period a year earlier, the Republic's National Statistics Bureau informed. The figure does not include GDP data for the Transnistrian region. Hindered by a bad drought, which hurt the country's agricultural sector, and other external pressures, GDP growth is expected to exceed 3 percent only marginally this year, while the forecast for 2008 is 7 percent.

According to the source, production totaled 75.5 billion lei (+3.9%), while intermediary consumption 46.5 billion lei (+6.3%). The gross value added rose to 28.9 billion lei (+0.2%).

The rising necessities of the economy with the population's purchasing power developing and the increase in the prices of certain imported energy resources have led to an essential rise (20.9%) in imports and, consequently, in the net taxes on products and imports, up to 6.15 billion lei (+20.9%).

The final consumption of the population rose by 3.3% to 32.7 billion lei, while the final consumption of the public and private administrations increased by 3.4%, up to 6.9 billion lei. The gross capital formation was 12.5 billion lei, a 26.8% compared with the corresponding period last year. The imports and exports grew at the same rate, of 19.7%. The negative balance of net exports was about 17.05 billion lei.

The mission of the International

Monetary Fund predicts that the GDP growth in Moldova in 2007 will be 4.5-5%. Last year it forecasted a 3% growth for 2007.

Tiger that escaped enclosure at San Francisco Zoo may have 'climbed' over wall

Zoo officials are now saying that a Siberian tiger that escaped her enclosure at the San Francisco Zoo in San Francisco, California on December 25, killing one and severely injuring two humans in the Terrace cafe, may have climbed or jumped over the walls that kept the tiger inside her habitat.

"The animal appears to have climbed or otherwise leaped out of the enclosure. There was no way out through the door," said Robert Jenkins, the zoo's director of animal care and conservation. The tiger has been identified as Tatiana, one of two Siberian tigers at the zoo. The other Siberian, Tony, was not involved in the attacks.

Police, who shot and killed Tatiana, are considering the incident a "crime scene" until they can determine if foul play may have been involved.

"[The incident is being treated as a crime] because we're not certain why the incident occurred - as result of human action or whether this was an incident where the animal was able to get out of the grotto," said Chief of the San Francisco Police Department Heather Fong.

The tigers at the zoo are held captive by the combination of a 20ft (6m) tall wall and a 15ft (4.5m) wide moat. Zoo officials say that there are no cameras around the enclosure, and the incident was not caught on any

security cameras.

After the incident, all captive animals were counted and accounted for after the zoo was locked down, including the three other tigers that were in the cage. Earlier reports suggested that all of the tigers had escaped, which later turned out to be false.

Reports say that Carlos Sousa, 17, was killed by Tatiana, but the names of those injured have not yet been released. The human victims were all male, aged from their late teens to mid twenties. Both of the injured, aged 19 and 23, suffered severe upper body and arm lacerations, but their conditions have been upgraded from critical to stable condition at San Francisco General Hospital. It was earlier reported that one of the victims might have been a zoo worker, but later reports state all three were visitors.

"Our two victims, I'm happy to report, are doing very well right now. They are in very stable condition; they're in good spirits," said Dr. Rochelle Dicker to reporters at the hospital during a press conference.

Animal experts don't believe that the tiger attacked for food. Jack Hanna, animal expert and Director Emeritus of the Columbus Zoo in Powell, Ohio states that its possible someone may have "taunted" or "teased Tatiana."

"Were they taunting the animal? I don't know that right now. Were they throwing things that were making it angry? This is a first in this country. I've never heard of an individual (zoo visitor) being killed by an animal. It's much safer going to a zoo than getting in your car and going down the driveway," stated Hanna.

In 2006, another zoo worker was

seriously injured by Tatiana while attempting to feed her, but survived the attack.

The zoo's two surviving tigers remain unexhibited while the investigation continues. The zoo currently has two species of tigers, one Siberian and one Sumatran tiger.

Fearful toll of Indonesian floods, landslides up to 130; dozens missing as bridge swept away

Heavy rains in Indonesia yesterday triggered widespread flooding and landslides across the nation. It has emerged that last night a bridge was swept away by the swollen river it stretched across, leaving around 40 to 50 people missing in Madiun, East Java. Meanwhile, the total toll of those known or feared to be dead has reached 130.

According to local police chief Supardi in a telephone conversation with Xinhua the flood waters weakened a foundation, resulting in the collapse. At least twenty motorcyclists, car drivers and passengers are thought to be dead, but as of midnight, no bodies had been recovered. However, three bikes have been retrieved. 100 rescuers have been dispatched to the scene. Continuing heavy rain forced the search to be abandoned temporarily.

Java as a whole is the worst affected island; in addition to the bridge collapse most of the landslides occurred in two Central Java districts. Health ministry official Rustam Pakaya told reporters that at least 28,000 people have been forced to abandon their homes in central Java, although exact figures are not yet available. The Red Cross

commented that 45,000 East Javanese people have been similarly displaced. Thousands are seeking shelter in mosques and other public buildings.

Landslides buried houses and made roads impassable, while hundreds police officers, military personnel, local officials and volunteers have been digging with farm tools and even their hands to search for survivors. Heavy machinery is available but the road conditions have prevented it arriving at the areas where it is required. Jakarta has dispatched aid in the form of five tonnes of biscuits and instant meals, ten tonnes of baby food and multiple boats.

Heru Aji Pratomo, head of the disaster management centre in the worst-hit district of Karanganyar has confirmed the recovery of twelve more bodies. This brings the total confirmed death toll in the area to 48. He said that most bodies were recovered from three metre deep mud and required heavy digging machinery to retrieve. 28 remain missing.

Local resident Siswo told AFP "Suddenly I felt my house shaking, and I thought it was an earthquake. When I got outside, I saw that the houses next to mine were already covered by earth," and that it struck twelve neighbouring houses.

In the next district, Wonogiri, disaster management centre head Sri Mubadi told reporters they had retrieved two more bodies, reaching a total of six, with eleven more missing. He also confirmed that they currently have no access to heavy equipment.

In Tawangmangu about 1,000 rescuers were also searching for bodies and survivors without the

aid of heavy machinery. Three more bodies were retrieved today.

Islamic cleric Abu Bakar Bashir toured a Karanganyar village, at which time he commented that he felt the disaster had been caused as a form of divine revenge, saying "This was likely caused by immoral acts going on here," and "This could be a lesson to be learned." The 69-year-old served two years after being linked to the 2002 Bali bombings, before having his conviction overturned last year.

Chalid Muhammad, director of Walhi, an Indonesian environmental group, had a different opinion. "For five consecutive years landslides and floods have occurred in Java, claiming many lives. The main trigger is ecological destruction caused by deforestation, forest conversions and chaotic spatial planning," Chalid told Reuters.

"There have been no adequate efforts by the government to protect the people from disasters. When the landslides happened officials were on holiday and there was no access of heavy equipment to the affected areas."

Israel continues settlement expansion

Israel has announced two new housing projects in East Jerusalem and the West Bank, continuing to expand its settlements. Officials have stated that a bill to be approved by parliament this week, would set aside \$25 million for the expansion of development projects in Har Homa and Maale Adumim. The bill would create 500 apartments in the Har Homa area and another 240 in Maale Adumim.

Last month, both Palestinian leader Mahmoud Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert signed

a statement of "join understanding" at the 2007 Annapolis Conference in Maryland. This signalled the first peace agreement between the two parties in more than seven years.

However, many fear that settlement expansions will cause tension amid new peace agreements.

Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said, "This is a totally destructive policy. Every day we hear a new settlement expansion plan - this cannot be tolerated."

However, Rafi Eitan, Israeli Minister for Jerusalem Affairs offered a different stance.

"Har Homa is an integral part of Jerusalem and Israel will not stop building there. It is Israel's duty to provide its citizens with a place to live."

Earlier this month, United States Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice took a critical stance on the passage of another bill outlining the construction of 307 apartment units in Har Homa, saying that the expansion would "not help build confidence for peace talks."

Israel annexed East Jerusalem after the 1967 Six-Day War.

Wikinews interviews Christoph Bals of the NGO Germanwatch after conclusion of climate conference

This is an exclusive interview for Wikinews

With the Climate Conference in Bali having come to a successful conclusion, Sean Heron interviewed Christoph Bals from the German NGO Germanwatch on his opinion of the outcome, and an outlook on the future negotiations. Christoph is the Senior Political

Executive of Germanwatch, Co-Autor of the Climate protection-Index and did lobby work on Bali.

Wikinews: Could you explain what defines the organization Germanwatch and what your targets are?

Christoph Bals:

Germanwatch is a non governmental organization (NGO) that has the environment and north south justice/fairness as its main topics. We don't actually execute any projects in the south, but lend issues that are of relevance to the south - the so called developing nations - a voice towards politics, the economy and on the financial market.

WN: Could you go into more specifics on what it is you do on climate change?

CB: Climate Change is one of our main topics. Both the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and adaptation to climate change is important. For these two issues we engage ourselves both with regard to Germany and the least developed countries (LDCs). We are intensively involved in national and international political processes, building up pressure on politicians and economic players and/or working constructively with them, depending on how greater achievements are to be made.

WN: The next question, which is very much at hand, is of course how Germanwatch views the outcome of the negotiations? Have your expectations been fulfilled?

CB: We haven't been able to write in the reduction targets that we would have needed. But these targets can still be achieved in the negotiating framework that the Roadmap has put down. The biggest obstacle here were the United States. It won't be possible to agree to targets with this administration, but hopefully, in two years and with the next administration, we'll be able to agree to the necessary global targets.

WN: Would you have expected this outcome yesterday? Or a year ago?

CB: A year ago I would have found the current outcome almost revolutionary. Compared with my expectations before the negotiation it's different though; I then still had the hope that there would be more extensive progress at the end of this climate year. If you look at the packages that have been agreed on: technology transfer and development, adaptation to climate change, financial mechanisms, forest protection; then you can see that quite a substantial process has been started. So a lot has been achieved, but the biggest hurdles are still in front of us. What could cause some dynamics is that you need money for all these packages, and you can only really get that through strong reduction targets. Be it Climate charges or taxes, auctioning of emission certificates, or a sort of Tobin tax on international emissions trading. That leads to those

nations that want money out of the packages having an incentive to work for stronger reduction targets. It is to be hoped for that movement for strong emission targets as well as for the financing of technologies, forest protection and adaptation measures develops. And that a coalition of progressive industrial nations, least developed countries (the so called LDCs) and newly industrialized countries - for example China, Mexico, South Africa, India - support this. There were first signs for such a development in Bali.

WN: How do things continue after this conference? What's the course of events until the Conference in Copenhagen, Denmark 2009?

CB: The four packages climate protection targets, adaptation to climate change, accelerated commercial launching of the necessary technologies and financing of technology, forest protection and adaptation have to be negotiated in detail now. Next year there will be four rounds of negotiations. The final conclusion is to be reached by the end of 2009, at the climate summit in Copenhagen.

WN: What needs to happen in this period of time in your opinion? What do the agreements that are hopefully to be reached need to look like?

CB: The reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, so that a warming of more than

2°C (35.6 F) is averted, is central. The global average temperatures mustn't rise above 2°C in comparison with pre-industrial levels. We call this the aversion of the uncopeable, as the risks of such a warming would be simply too great.

To achieve this goal a reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 50-85% by 2050 is necessary. For the middle term this means that the peak of global emissions needs to be reached in 10-15 years and that the output is cut considerably year after year from then onwards. The group of industrialized nations have to reduce their emissions by 25-40% till 2020 (compared to 1990 baselines) on average to make this possible.

Regarding adaptation, what we call coping with the inevitable, the scale of funding is going to have to change. Roughly 50 billion Dollar a year are going to be required.

WN: What do you see as (the biggest) obstacle(s) on the way to such an agreement? You've already mentioned the current U.S. administration.

CB: We shouldn't think that the problem is just in the U.S., even if it is to be seen most clearly there. Many of us [Germans / Europeans] don't realize what the necessary emission cuts mean. If we really want to achieve greenhouse gas reductions of the magnitude I have just described, we first need to become conscious of the fact that the wealth of the industrial nations is build

on CO2. From the steam engine over coal power plants, the chemical industry up to cars and airplanes, the whole model of wealth is built up on fossil fuels and thus also CO2 emissions. Up until now more wealth also meant more emitted CO2. We now need to move towards an almost emission free model of wealth in large steps. And the role of leader seems to fall to Europe. If Europe manages to show it, the chances of the large newly industrialized nations following that lead rise enormously.

WN: Finally I, and perhaps the readers as well, are interested in how people at home can take a positive influence on the process?

CB: Well first, there is the possibility to engage yourself politically, working in an NGO like Germanwatch being the only option in that. What is encouraging in this area are the notable things that have already been achieved by an informed public. To name an example, the planning of multiple coal power plants has been stopped in recent times, just as well thanks to public pressure.

It should also be clear to everyone, that every banknote is also a ballot paper, with which you can decide for more or less emissions. For almost any way of spending money - be it groceries or mobility - there are climate compatible and non compatible choices. I can fly or take the train, or - if the later is not possible - at least compensate the warming effects

via sites such as atmosfair.de .
But even when I save money, it's up to me if it works for or against climate sustainability. For every investment possible, by now there are also options that support the protection of the climate - often without needing to forgo returns. The money I put on the bank is used for investments and projects that contribute to or undermine the sustainability of our economic system.

WN: Does that mean the demand for a climate compatible life style ?

CB: It's not about one climate compatible life style. It's more of a case of a climate compatible variant needing to be developed for each of the different life styles that exist in our society. The people in our society don't need to become uniform. Some will focus on protecting the climate through technical innovations and will bring their house up to the most recent level of efficiency, and massively use renewable energies. Others will see an increase in wealth in not having a car, instead buying a "Bahncard 100" [This is a flat rate for a years rail travel in Germany, at a cost of 3500 Euro, ed.] which also lets you take your kids along for free, and focus on a slower more concious life. We don't need to prescribe one life style, what is necessary is to advance every life style variant in a climate compatible way

WN: Thank you for the interview and your time.

2007-08 Aztec Cup Winter Cyber Games in Taiwan starts with charity and competitiveness

"Aztec Cup", named and famous in Taiwan on cyber-gaming industry, started in Taipei today and will run until January 6, 2008 at Taipei New World Shopping Center. Companies like iKala, Bandai-Namco, International Games System, Kingston Technology, and Seednet all supported this competition to help donations with Child Welfare League Foundation of the Republic Of China on public welfares.

According to the main organizer, Aztec Master Plan, the Aztec Cup would be scheduled with different gaming natures and populations by seasonal or friendship competitions. Several games might be chosen as the official games frequently in different kind competitions.

By the way for the sponsors, they identically agreed the combination with charity, cyber-gaming, and entertainment by the organizer in winter because it (the competition) can help the disadvantage organizations and developments of the cyber-gaming industry.

Also in the press conference, Taipei New World Shopping Center, the venue owner, mentioned to media: "We [the owner] definitively supported the gaming industry as some good examples like X06 Taiwan, 2006 World Cyber Games Taiwan Qualifier, and NBA 2K8 Asia Championship Taiwan Qualifier successively held in this venue. We hope the public can participate this competition to support the gaming industry in Taiwan."

TWTC Nangang is constructed in Taipei, Taiwan

Larger and bigger than the Taipei World Trade Center (TWTC), the Taipei World Trade Center Nangang Exhibition Hall (TWTC Nangang) was finally completed on December 24.

According to the hall owner, Taiwan External Trade Development Council (TAITRA), TWTC Nangang owned 2650 booths twice larger than current TWTC (1300 booths), several companies from different industries wanted to exhibit in TWTC Nangang by participating in some international shows, but the competition was apparently intensive because of limitations on booths and scales.

Recently in a press conference, Minister of Economic Affairs of the Republic of China Steve Ruey-long Chen said to media: "After the TWTC Nangang was finished its construction, it will bring on opportunities for companies from different industries including exhibition industry."

TAITRA also announced that some international shows will be moved to Nangang including the Taipei Cycle, Taipei PLAS, TAITRONICS and Food Taipei. COMPUTEX Taipei will exhibit in not only TWTC Nangang but also TWTC Hall 1 & 3, Taipei Show (formerly known as TWTC Hall 2), and the Taipei International Convention Center to challenge the largest scale in June, 2008.

Companies wanted to exhibit in the TWTC Nangang, but due to the construction of Neihu Line of Taipei Metro, it is still in process, and shows with similar industries will be exhibited in the same schedule respectively at TWTC Hall and TWTC Nangang, the traffic will

increase on those two exhibition centers after TWTC Nangang will be launched on March, 2008. TAITRA currently considered moving important trade shows to Nangang rather than domestic market shows.

President Bush signs Consolidated Appropriations Act 2008

On Wednesday, United States President George W. Bush signed into law a US\$555 billion appropriation bill, called the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2008 (aka H.R. 2764).

The bill will keep government agencies running through September 2008. It also includes US\$70 billion, which will fund the military efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan well into 2008.

The signing of the bill concluded a battle between Bush and the United States Congress, during which he threatened to use his Presidential veto. Even so, Bush complained about the final outcome of the bill:

"I am disappointed in the way the Congress compiled this legislation, including abandoning the goal I set early this year to reduce the number and cost of earmarks by half. Instead, the Congress dropped into the bill nearly 9,800 earmarks that total more than \$10 billion. These projects are not funded through a merit-based process and provide a vehicle for wasteful Government spending," Bush said in a press release from the White House.

Six dead in shooting near Seattle, United States

Six people were found shot to death inside a home in Carnation,

a city near Seattle, Washington in the United States.

According to the information officer for the King County sheriff's department, John Urquhart, they were victims of "homicidal violence." Investigators have ruled out murder-suicide.

The deaths are said to have occurred on Christmas Eve, and were discovered by a co-worker of the man living there at 8 a.m. PST (UTC-8), Wednesday.

"We have an investigation of suspicious deaths," said Detective Bob Conner. There are "no threats to any neighbors in the area," he added.

So far two people, a man and a woman who are only described as being in their twenties, have been arrested in connection with the shooting. CNN says that neither of the two individuals have "access to lawyers" and neither of them have confessed to any wrongdoing.

"This couple was among the people that showed up at the [crime] scene. And as we got to talking to them, we developed probable cause and made the arrests," said Sergeant John Urquhart.

The dead were described as a couple in their 50s, a couple in their 30s, and two children — a 6-year-old girl and a 3-year-old boy.

Authorities describe it as a "complex and large" investigation with over 15 people gathering evidence.

Today in history

- 1065 - Westminster Abbey is consecrated.
- 1308 - The reign of Emperor Hanazono,

emperor of Japan, begins.

- 1612 - Galileo Galilei becomes the first astronomer to observe the planet Neptune, although he mistakenly catalogued it as a fixed star.
- 1832 - John C. Calhoun becomes the first Vice President of the United States to resign.
- 1835 - Osceola leads his Seminole warriors in Florida into the Second Seminole War against the U.S. Army.
- 1836 - South Australia and Adelaide are founded.
- 1836 - Spain recognizes the independence of Mexico.
- 1846 - Iowa is admitted as the 29th U.S. state.
- 1867 - United States claims Midway Island, first territory annexed outside Continental limits.
- 1869 - William E. Sempole of Mount Vernon, Ohio patents chewing gum.
- 1879 - The Tay Bridge Disaster: The central part of the Tay Rail Bridge in Dundee, Scotland collapses as a train passed over it, killing 75.
- 1895 - The Lumière brothers have their first paying audience at the Grand Cafe in Boulevard des Capucines marking the debut of the cinema.
- 1902 - The first indoor professional American football game is played in New York City at Madison Square Garden.
- 1908 - An earthquake rocks Messina, Sicily killing over

75,000.

- 1912 - The first municipally owned streetcars take to the streets in San Francisco.
- 1935 - Pravda publishes a letter by Pavel Postyshev, who revives New Year tree tradition in the Soviet Union.
- 1939 - First flight of the Consolidated XB-24 Liberator bomber prototype.
- 1945 - The U.S. Congress officially recognizes the Pledge of Allegiance.
- 1948 - The DC-3 airliner NC16002 disappears 50 miles south of Miami, Florida.
- 1950 - The Peak District becomes the United Kingdom's first National Park.
- 1959 - Jazz pianist Bill Evans records the album Portrait in Jazz with his newly formed Bill Evans Trio.
- 1973 - The Endangered Species Act is passed in the United States.
- 1974 - Senegalese marxist group Reenu-Rew founds the political movement And-Jëf at a clandestine congress.
- 1981 - The first American test-tube baby, Elizabeth Jordan Carr, is born in Norfolk, Virginia.
- 1989 - A magnitude 5.6 earthquake hits Newcastle, New South Wales, Australia, killing 13 people.
- 1999 - Saparmurat Niyazov is proclaimed President for Life in Turkmenistan.

- 2000 - U.S. retail giant Montgomery Ward announces it is going out of business after 128 years.
- 2005 - A U.S. immigration judge orders John Demjanjuk deported to Ukraine for crimes against humanity committed during World War II

Quote of the day

The forces of moderation and democracy must, and will, prevail against extremism and dictatorship. I will not be intimidated. ... Despite threats of death, I will not acquiesce to tyranny, but rather lead the fight against it. ~ Benazir Bhutto

Word of the day

snowclone (noun)-
A type of cliché which uses an old idiom formulaically in a new context

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