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24/7

ELINVOIMAKESKUKSET

Vitality Centers Are Now Operational – Mika Palosaari to Lead Ostrobothnia



A major restructuring of Finland's regional administration took effect on January 1, 2026, with the official launch of ten new regional Vitality Centers. Replacing the former 15 ELY Centers, these new authorities aim to streamline government services and bolster regional growth. Mika Palosaari has been appointed as the Director General for the Ostrobothnia Vitality Center, serving a five-year term until the end of 2030.

The Vitality Centers hold a diverse mandate, overseeing tasks related to entrepreneurship, employment, transport, and environmental protection. They also play a crucial role in implementing EU regional policies and managing agricultural funds. Operating under the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, the centers receive guidance from multiple ministries to ensure a holistic approach to regional development. This reform is designed to make regional administration more resilient and responsive to modern economic needs, such as labor shortages and the green transition. By consolidating expertise and resources, the Vitality Centers are expected to serve as dynamic hubs that promote prosperity and sustainable development for businesses and residents alike.

Source: Finnish Government

CITYTHEATRE

Record-breaking Year for Vaasa City Theatre – "Piaf" Takes the Crown



Vaasa City Theatre is celebrating a stellar 2025 as audience numbers soared by 20 percent. With nearly 41,000 visitors throughout the year, the theatre has solidified its role as a cultural powerhouse in the region.

The undisputed star of the year was the musical drama *Piaf*, which captivated over 10,300 spectators. Another major highlight was Giacomo Puccini's opera *Tosca*, which achieved a rare feat by selling out every single performance before its opening night. Theatre Director Seppo Välinen expressed his gratitude to the audience for their continued support and engagement.

The momentum continues into 2026 with an exciting lineup, including the Finnish premiere of Florian Zeller's *The Truth (La Vérité)* and the family classic *Aladdin* and the *Magic Lamp*. For those who missed them, the hits *Piaf* and *Forever Young* will also remain on stage this spring.

Source: Vaasa City Theatre press release

Kristiinankaupunki and Närpiö, coastal municipalities in the Ostrobothnia region, have emerged as Finland's top wind power locations, generating levels of wind energy comparable to the effect of a nuclear power plant - when the wind is right. According to the Wind Power Statistics 2025, Finland's total installed wind power capacity exceeded 9,400 megawatts (MW) by the end of 2025, with a significant concentration in the Ostrobothnia region.

Among the notable developments is the Pjelax wind farm, straddling Kristiinankaupunki and Närpiö. With its 56 turbines and approximately 380 MW of capacity, Pjelax produces more than 1 terawatt-hour of renewable electricity annually – a milestone in Finland's clean energy transition.

The rapid expansion of wind power in these municipalities not only contributes substantially to Finland's renewable energy portfolio but also bolsters local economies through investment and jobs. As national planning reforms steer future projects toward northern Finland and further from population centers, Ostrobothnia's wind industry remains a cornerstone of Finland's energy strategy.

Source: Renewables Finland – Wind Power Statistics 2025

NIGHT OF THE SCIENCE

Night of Science Takes Over Helsinki – When Will Vaasa Follow Suit?

On Thursday, January 22, 2026, Helsinki will be transformed into a vast scientific playground. The annual Night of Science (Tieteiden yö) offers nearly 50 free events across the city, ranging from astronomical presentations to hands-on experiments, opening the doors of universities and museums to the curious public.

While Helsinki celebrates research with dozens of events, the city of Vaasa – a hub of students, researchers, and academic institutions – still lacks a similar festival. Despite its rich intellectual landscape, the doors to local research often remain closed to the general public. As Helsinki gears up for its night of discovery, the question remains: when will Vaasa host its own Night of Science?

Lähde: tieteidenyo.fi

WINTER SWIMMING

Chilly News: Inner Harbor Winter Swimming Spot Reopens!



The popular winter swimming spot in Vaasa's Inner Harbor is once again open to the public. The site was briefly closed for technical maintenance but is now fully operational for those seeking an icy dip.

Facilities are available as usual, though the city reminds swimmers to be extra careful on slippery piers. Winter swimming is booming in Vaasa, and the Inner Harbor location provides a scenic and convenient spot right near the city center. Time for a refreshing plunge in the sea!

The swimming area was closed since December 29th due to strong winds. Open-air swimming is now open again as usual every day from 6 am to 9 pm. The city reminds you that you should not go into the open-air swimming area alone. The best safety equipment for open-air swimming is a swimming buddy.

Lähde / Källä / Source: Vaasan kaupunki / Vasa stad (STT Info)

JANUARY SUNDAY

Alavus to Host Regional Commemoration of the January Sunday (Tammisunnuntai)

The regional commemoration of Tammisunnuntai will take place in Alavus on January 25th, 2026. This significant historical anniversary begins at 10:00 AM with a service at Alavus Church, featuring a sermon by Bishop Matti Salomäki, followed by a formal wreath-laying ceremony.

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Image of the week:



Winter

BABY FORMULA

Urgent Recall: Nestlé Pulls Popular Baby Formula from Shelves



Check your baby supplies! Nestlé expands the recall of NAN Sensilac due to potential toxin contamination.

Global food leader Nestlé has issued an expanded recall for specific batches of NAN Sensilac infant formula powder. The decision follows the discovery of a production deviation involving a raw oil ingredient. Investigations revealed the potential presence of cereulid, a toxin produced by the *Bacillus cereus* bacteria.

"The safety and well-being of

children are our top priorities," the company stated, emphasizing that the recall is a precautionary measure. Nestlé urges parents and caregivers to check their packaging details immediately and avoid using affected products. The company remains committed to the highest safety standards and regrets any concern caused to families.

More information: Nestlé Finland (<https://www.nestle.fi/media/pressreleases/allpressreleases/varottoimena-takaisinveto>)

OSTROBOTHNTIA

ÖJBERGET

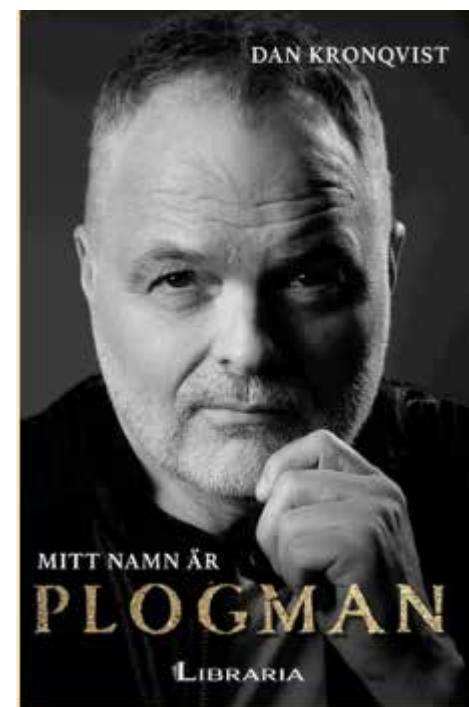
Ski Season Kickoff – Artificial Snow Tracks Now Open at Öjberget!

The winter season has officially arrived in Vaasa! Thanks to freezing temperatures, the artificial snow cannons have been working overtime to prepare the 1.5-kilometer cross-country track at Öjberget. Whether you are a pro athlete or a casual slider, the freshly groomed tracks offer excellent conditions for both classic and skating styles. With floodlights on until late evening and waxing rooms available, it's time to dust off your skis and hit the trails at one of the region's top winter destinations.

vaasa.fi

CHARLES PLOGMAN

Schlager Icon Charles Plogman Hits Vaasa – 60 Years of Music and Memories



Iskelmä-Finlandia-voittaja Charles Plogman vieraillee Vaasan pääkirjastossa maanantaina 2.2. klo 18.00. Pian 60 vuotta täyttyvä artisti avaa elämäänsä tuoreen Nimeni on Plogman -elämäkerran kautta. Alavetelin kasvattaja tuli koko Suomen tuntemaan tähti, jonka matka on sisältynyt niin suuria voittoja kuin kipeitä vastoinkäymisiä. Draamasalissa kuullaan tarinoita 40-vuotisen uran varrelta ja kirkistetaan tulevaan juhlaruundiin. Vapaa pääsy!

Image: Libraria

WIND POWER

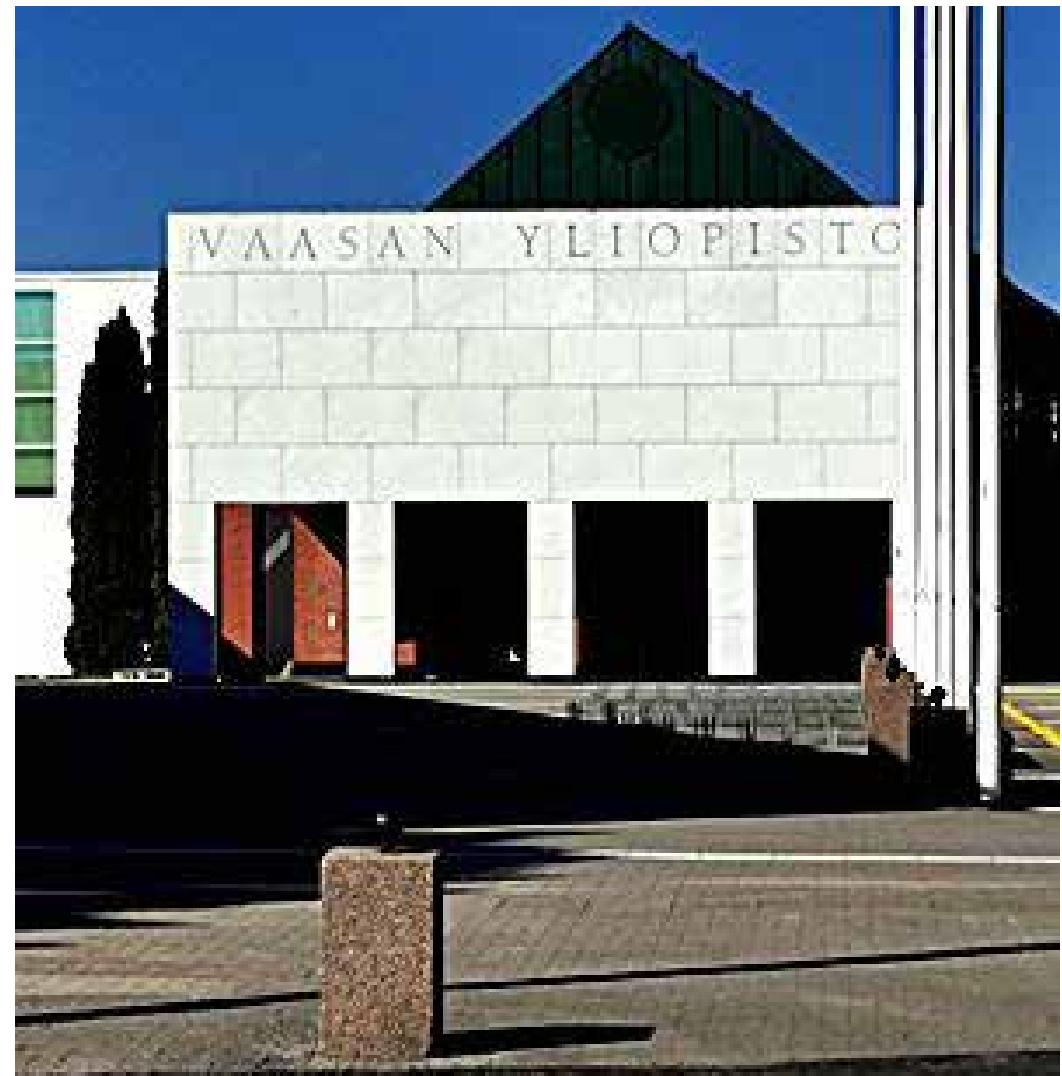
Kristiinankaupunki and Närpiö Lead Finland's Wind Power Surge – Enough for a Nuclear Plant's Output

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EDITORIAL

We Have a Superb Night of the Arts – Now It's Time for a Night of Science

Vaasa is a city of events, and the Night of the Arts in August is a massive success every year. The streets overflow with people, culture, and connections, proving that locals have a huge appetite for community events that open doors to new worlds. It is therefore high time to ask: why don't we utilize our city's greatest resource—science and research—in the same way?

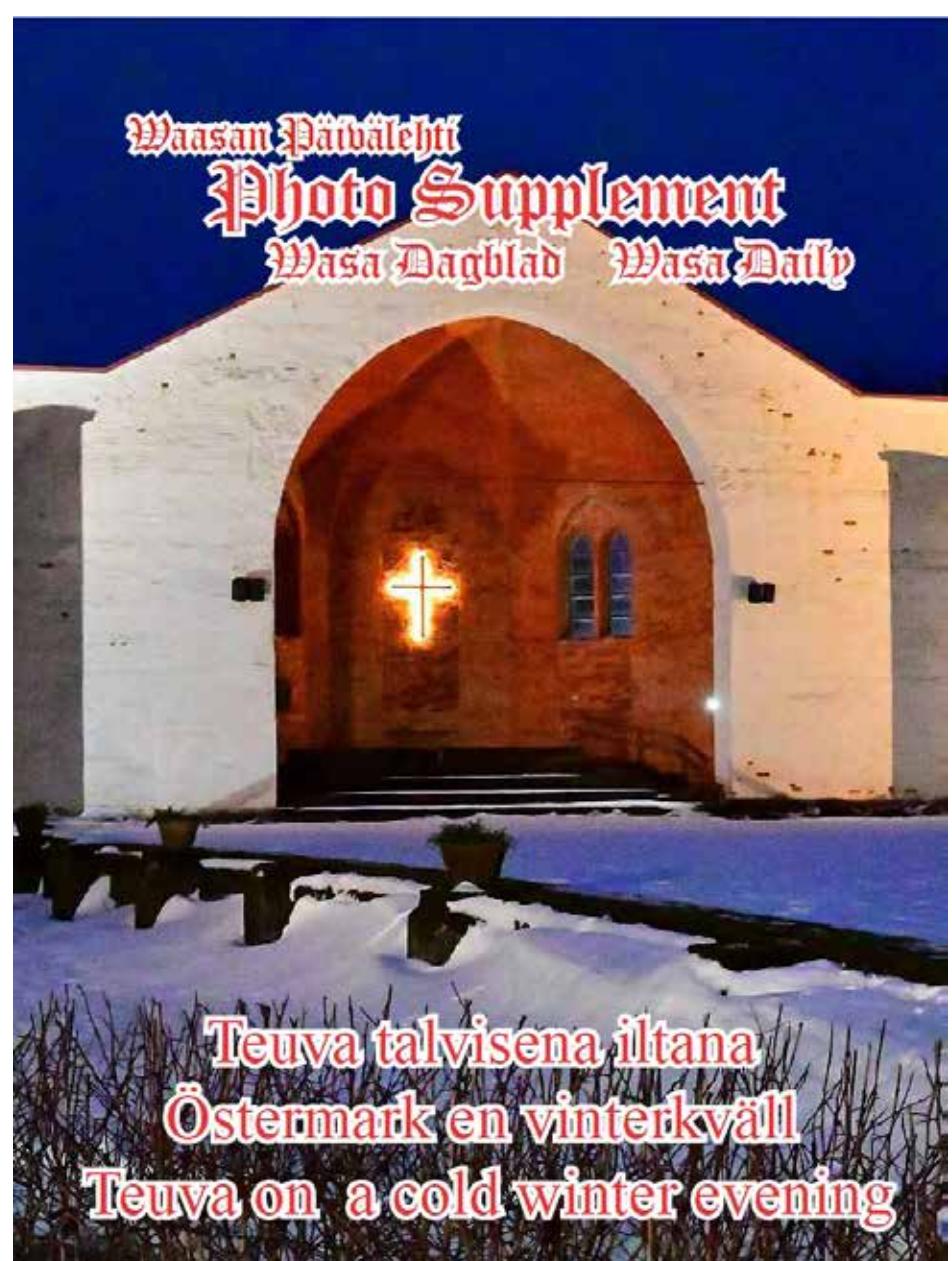


In Helsinki, the Night of Science will be celebrated on January 22, 2026, when dozens of museums, laboratories, and lecture halls open to the public free of charge. The program covers everything from astronomy to robotics and sociology, making science accessible, fun, and understandable. Vaasa is one of Finland's leading student cities relative to its size, boasting six higher education units, numerous top researchers, and a world-class energy technology cluster. Yet, research often happens behind closed doors, far from the daily lives of ordinary citizens.

A Night of Science in Vaasa would be more than just an academic exercise. It would be an opportunity

to show children and young people what is actually being studied in their hometown, potentially inspiring a new generation. Imagine the Palosaari campus glowing in the January frost: laboratories showcasing renewable energy, historians telling tales of shipwrecks, and psychologists uncovering the mysteries of the human mind—all in an approachable format. We already have the infrastructure and the expertise. All that is needed is the will to bring science out of the ivory towers and invite the public in. If the Night of the Arts can fill the city on a rainy autumn evening, a Night of Science can bring light and discovery to the dark of January. Let's turn knowledge into a festival for everyone.

Photo Supplement



TAMMISUNNUNTAI

Miksi vietämme Tammisunnuntaita?



Mannerheim.. Eero Järnefelt, 1933

January Sunday, commemorated annually on the last Sunday of January, is one of Finland's most symbolically significant historical remembrance days. Although it is not an official flag day, it holds a strong position, particularly in the historical memory of the early stages of independence and the events of 1918. January Sunday is decisively linked to the outbreak of Finland's Civil War (1918) and especially to the White side's armed organization and seizure of power in Ostrobothnia.

The significance of this day is not limited to a single military event, but rather opens a view into the un-stable period following Finland's independence, societal tensions, and the choices that led to armed conflict. January Sunday thus functions as a historical landmark between peaceful state-building and civil war – a moment when hopes for reconciliation were crushed and the country plunged toward a tragic civil war.

Historical Background: Finland After Independence

Finland declared itself independent on December 6, 1917, as a consequence of the Russian Empire's collapse. Independence was a dream that had matured over decades, but its realization did not bring the desired stability. On the contrary – the young state was deeply divided socially, economically, and politically.

The labor movement and bourgeois forces viewed each other with growing suspicion. Industrialization and urbanization had created a new working class that felt discriminated against and subordinate. At the same time, the bourgeoisie feared revolution and the collapse of the social order following the Bolshevik model in Russia. The influence of the Russian Revolution extended powerfully to Finland as well, and many saw in these events both an opportunity and a threat.

A central problem was the lack of law enforcement authority. Russian troops were still in the country, but their discipline was weak and their status unclear. The police force had practically collapsed with the fall of the empire, and the new state had no functioning law enforcement apparatus.

To fill this power vacuum, armed citizen guard-type forces emerged: the working class's Red Guards and the bourgeoisie's population's White Guards (Protection Corps).

Both sides armed themselves for the worst. The Red Guard armed itself with weapons from Russia and organized militarily in the growing cities. The White Guards, in turn, built their organization in rural areas and smaller towns,

particularly strongly in Ostrobothnia. Both sides saw themselves as defenders and the opposing side as a threat. The atmosphere was electric, and even the smallest spark could ignite a larger conflict.

The Events of January Sunday, January 28, 1918

January Sunday refers to Sunday, January 28, 1918. On that day, the White government, that is, the Senate, officially decreed that the White Guards would function as the government's armed forces. This was a crucial political decision that legitimized the White Guards' activities and placed them in the position of the state's official law enforcement authority.

That same evening, the White Guards initiated a large-scale operation in Southern Ostrobothnia to disarm Russian garrisons. The objective was to take control of Russian weapons depots and prevent these weapons from falling into the hands of the Red Guards. The operation was carefully planned and executed simultaneously in several cities.

Already the evening before, on January 27, fighting had taken place in Laihia, and there fell this war's first casualties. The battles in Laihia were an inevitable release of the tense situation – the first step toward a larger conflict that would claim tens of thousands of lives.

A central location was Vaasa, which became the administrative center of White Finland and the Senate's place of refuge. In Vaasa, the disarmament was carried out quickly and largely without extensive bloodshed, which was the result of both careful planning and the Russian troops' poor morale and organization.

However, the political significance of the disarmament was enormous. In practice, this meant the beginning of an open armed conflict – there was no way back.

The following day, January 29, the Reds launched their own revolution in Helsinki and took control of the capital's central locations. The civil war was a fact. The country had divided into two camps, and both now had both weapons and organization to enforce their will through violence.

January Sunday has traditionally been regarded as the beginning of the civil war specifically from the White perspective. It symbolizes an organized seizure of power and the birth of a state army in a situation where the state's existence was felt to be threatened. For the Red side, naturally, the decisive date was January 29, when their revolution began in Helsinki.

The White Guards and Mannerheim's Role

The events of January Sunday are closely connected to General Carl Gustaf Emil Mannerheim, who had been appointed commander-in-chief of the

From page 1

The afternoon program at the Alavus School Centre includes a communal lunch and a main celebration starting at 12:30 PM. The keynote speech will be delivered by Ilmari Käihkö, Docent of Military Strategy. The event boasts a rich cultural program with music by the Navy Band Brass Quintet, folk dancing by the Tulkipuna Trio, and performances by local students.



Tammisunnuntai commemorates the beginning of the 1918 War of Independence. The event is open to the public, and guests are kindly asked to be seated by 12:25 PM to ensure a prompt start to the festivities.

PHOTO: Memorial at Hulmi, Laihia, commemorating the first battle of the war of 1918. The monument was unveiled on August 7, 1938.

On the monument are the names of the five men from Laihia who died in battle. Sculptor: Urho Kaarlo Lamminheimo

VAASA

Savimaja: A New Creative Hub for Ceramics Opens in Vaasa



A new ceramic studio, Savimaja, has opened its doors in the heart of Vaasa. It offers a unique space for people of all ages to explore their creativity and experience the therapeutic touch of clay in a relaxed environment.

Savimaja provides a variety of courses ranging from beginner workshops to advanced techniques. Visitors can try their hand at pottery wheel throwing or hand-building during one-off sessions or longer courses. The studio also features an open-access space for independent work. The aim is to foster a community-driven environment where the rush of daily life slows down. Whether you're looking to pick up a new hobby or simply unwind with friends, Savimaja welcomes everyone to discover the joy of ceramics.

<https://savimaja.fi/>

VAASA

Seniors on the move!

The free Go for Healthy Years event, which offers inspiration for walking and well-being, is organised by the City of Vaasa for seniors. The sports event will be held on Friday 16 January 2026 at 13–15.30 on the second floor of Vaasan Sähkö Arena.

Participants can test their balance, participate in gymnastics sessions and get expert advice on how to prevent falls. Local exercise opportunities will also be presented during the day. The aim is to promote both physical health and community among older residents. It's a great opportunity to find new ways to move and be inspired together with others. Welcome!

Source: vaasa.fi

LIDL

Eating Healthy is Now Easy – Fruits and Vegetables Up to 30% Off

Lidl kicks off 2026 with a record-breaking campaign, offering discounts across the entire produce section throughout January.

The New Year often brings resolutions for a healthier lifestyle. To support this change, Lidl is slashing prices on all fruits and vegetables for the duration of January. These discounts are substantial, with some items priced up to 30% lower than usual. The promotion applies to the entire fruit and vegetable department in all Lidl stores across Finland.

Promoting a healthy diet is part of Lidl's broader goal to

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Raastuvankatu 1918

remembrance of the civil war gradually began to take on a more multifaceted and critical character.

The terminology also changed significantly. Where the White side had long spoken of the "War of Liberation" and the Red side of the "Class War" or "Revolution," historical research began using the more neutral term "Civil War," which acknowledged the conflict's tragic nature as a war between citizens.

In today's Finland, January Sunday is not widely known or officially recognized at the national level. However, it still lives on as part of historical discussion and especially local traditions, particularly in Ostrobothnia and Vaasa, where the events of January Sunday were concretely present and where the White movement was strongest.

Historical Significance and Interpretations

The significance of January Sunday is not unambiguous, nor can it be. The events can be examined from many different perspectives, and each interpretation reveals its own truth about history's complex reality.

January Sunday can be seen as a legal government's self-defense: the Senate, which was Finland's only legal government at the time, sought to secure order and the state's independence in a situation where both internal and external threats were real. The disarmament of Russian troops was a necessary measure to prevent these weapons from falling into revolutionaries' hands and so that the young state could secure its right to self-determination.

On the other hand, January Sunday was also a step toward a tragic civil war that claimed approximately 36,000-37,000 lives. This is an enormous number in a small country of about three million inhabitants – almost one percent of the entire population died as a consequence of the war. Additionally, tens of thousands became widows or orphans, and the war's traces were visible in Finnish society for decades to come.

Modern historical research emphasizes the multilayered nature of events and strives to understand both sides' motives without simplifying oppositions. Research has shown that both sides had both justified concerns and factors that drove toward an armed solution.

The working class's living conditions were often miserable, and their political influence was minimal. The bourgeoisie, in turn, justifiably feared a Bolshevik revolution and the collapse of social order.

However, it is important to recognize that perspectives vary geographically. In southern Finland, where the industrial working class was large and class contradictions sharp, the civil war had a stronger class war character. In Ostrobothnia, the situation was different. Here, for many, it was primarily about a war of liberation – a struggle against Russian military presence and to secure our country's fresh independence. The disarmament of Russian garrisons was seen as a necessary measure to prevent Russian influence and a possible new occupation.

This difference in perspectives is important to understand. Where in Helsinki people fought over power and social order, in Vaasa and Ostrobothnia, according to many, people fought primarily over independence and removing foreign troops from the country. Both interpretations contain truth – history is always polyphonic.

Why Should January Sunday Be Remembered?

We could pause for a moment and consider what Finland would be like if defeat had

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encourage plant-based eating. In collaboration with WWF Finland, stores have also added guidance to help customers make choices that are better for both their health and the environment. Lower prices make it easier and more affordable to follow national nutritional guidelines, which recommend consuming about 800 grams of fruits and vegetables daily.

KORSNÄS**Seabed Surveys Completed – Major Progress for Korsnäs Offshore Wind Project**

The extensive seabed surveys at the Korsnäs offshore wind project area have now been successfully completed, despite challenging conditions in the Gulf of Bothnia. The data collected over more than seven months is a crucial milestone for planning and environmental assessments of the planned wind farm.

Survey teams used sonar, magnetic measurements and ultra-high-resolution seismic mapping to chart the sea floor "stone by stone." In addition, 30 sediment samples were taken to analyze bottom composition and grain size – information vital for designing foundations and cable routes. Although the seabed proved rockier than anticipated, no major obstacles were identified, and the high-quality data gives engineers confidence moving into the next stages of the project. The results will inform foundation design, environmental assessments, and further technical planning. Reference: Metsähallitus, press release

VAASA/KORSHOLM**Liftis Fare Prices Stay the Same Despite VAT Reduction**

Although Finland will reduce the value-added tax on public transport from 14% to 13.5% effective January 1, 2026, Liftis ticket prices will not be lowered. The joint public transport committee of the City of Vaasa and Korsholm made this decision on December 18, 2025.

Officials explained that the VAT cut is too small to justify adjusting the existing fare structure – rounding changes could cause confusion. Rising overall operating costs for public transport also weighed into the decision.

For passengers, this means that despite a modest tax relief on paper, Liftis fares will remain unchanged going into the new year.

Source: City of Vaasa / Korsholm press release, 22 December 2025

MALAX**Move a little, feel a lot better – Malax launches fitness challenge**

Residents of Malax are being encouraged to get moving with the I Form for live fitness campaign, designed to promote everyday physical activity. The idea is simple: 30 minutes of exercise earns one check on a fitness card.

The campaign runs from December 1, 2025, to May 31, 2026, and will now be held twice a year. Participants return their completed cards to collection boxes placed in local shops. A prize draw will be held in June for everyone who takes part.

The goal is to make exercise accessible and show that regular, moderate movement can make a big difference to long-term health.

Source: Malax.fi

MALAX**Träffpunkt Named "Star of the Year" in Malax**

In Malax, the psychosocial association Träffpunkt r.f. has been honored as Star of the Year 2025. The award was presented on December 3, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, following a community vote organized by the Council for People with Disabilities. Träffpunkt received 38 percent of the votes, beating other nominees.

The association was recognized for its inclusive environment, dedicated staff, and varied programs that support people with disabilities and enhance quality of life. Träffpunkt is described as a welcoming space where participants can be themselves.

The prize was accepted by board member Klaus Wiberg and highlights the value of local volunteer work that strengthens community well-being.

Source: Malax kommun, Malax.fi

NIGHT OF SCIENCE**The Night of Science – when will one come to Vaasa?**

On 22 January 2026, Helsinki hosts the Night of Science with lectures, workshops, and experiments that make research alive and accessible.

Vaasa, however, still lacks a similar event despite having two universities and many researchers. Science should not stay behind university gates – it should be seen, heard, and experienced by everyone.

When will Vasa take the initiative? When will we have our own Night of Science, a celebration of curiosity, learning, and inspiration?

FINLAND**MATERNITY GRANT****Finnish Maternity Grant Increased by 40 Euros – Boost for Families**

The Finnish government has approved a 40-euro increase to the maternity grant. The new grant amount is 210 euros, up from the previous 170 euros. This boost aims to strengthen the purchasing power of families and help cover the essential costs of welcoming a new baby during demanding economic times.

Parents can still choose between the cash grant and the iconic maternity package (baby box), which continues to be updated regularly. The change applies to all eligible parents whose right to the grant begins after the new legislation takes effect. This increase provides meaningful support for families, ensuring better resources for the first steps of a child's life.

Source: Valtioneuvosto / Finnish Government

MATERNITY GRANT**Maternity Package or Cash?**

Experts suggest different choices based on your family's situation:

- Choose the Maternity Package if... you are a first-time parent. The market value of the items inside is much higher than the cash grant. In 2026, the package is valued at 210 euros and contains about 50 high-quality, essential items for the baby.

- Choose the Cash Grant if... you already have children and still have the basic clothes and gear. The cash offers flexibility to buy specific items you might lack, such as a new car seat or specialized nursery equipment.

- Special 2026 Tip: If your due date is after April 1, 2026, and you opt for the 2025 version of the box (while stocks last), you will receive an additional 40 euros in cash to account for the grant's value increase.

Source: Kela

GOVERNMENT**Pharmacy Reform Moves Forward: Major Changes to Drug Prices**

The Finnish government's reform of pharmacy economics is advancing. The primary goals are to ensure medicine availability nationwide while lowering costs for consumers.

The reform focuses on updating the pharmacy tax and margin models to better reflect modern service needs and achieve savings in public pharmaceutical spending. While concerns have been raised regarding the viability of small rural pharmacies, the government emphasizes that a comprehensive service network remains a priority. This structural change aims to create a modern, economically sustainable pharmacy system that prioritizes patient interests and medicine safety above all.

Source: Finnish Government

PHARMACIES**The Finnish Pharmacists' Association warns: The reform undermines the nationwide network**

The Association of Finnish Pharmacies has raised a serious alarm regarding the government's proposed pharmacy reform. According to the association, cutting medicine prices and narrowing pharmacy margins will erode the nationwide service network that citizens rely on.

Small pharmacies and those in rural areas are particularly at risk, which could lead to closures and weaken medicine safety. While the reform aims to reduce public pharmaceutical spending, the association warns that the ultimate cost could be reduced access to professional health advice. They emphasize that pharmacies are a critical part of national healthcare security, which should not be jeopardized by hasty budget cuts.

Source: Pharmacy Association

ICEBREAKERS**Icebreaker Orders Send Strong Economic Signal – Boost for Finland's Maritime Sector**

Minister of Economic Affairs Wille Puisto emphasizes that progress in ordering new icebreakers is a significant economic signal for Finland. The project not only secures Finland's security of supply and the continuity of winter navigation but also showcases the global competitiveness of the domestic maritime industry.

The new icebreakers represent cutting-edge technology, and their construction provides substantial employment for domestic shipyards and an extensive subcontractor network. According to Minister Puisto, investing in a clean and efficient icebreaker fleet strengthens Finland's position as a leader in Arctic expertise. These orders support the green transition in shipping and ensure that Finland's exports and imports move smoothly even in harsh ice conditions. This project is a strategic investment in future growth and export potential.

SOURCE: TEM

UNEMPLOYMENT**Statistics Finland: Unemployment Deepened Towards Year-End**

The Finnish labor market has tightened further as the year draws to a close. According to the latest Labour Force Survey by Statistics Finland, the unemployment rate in November was significantly higher than a year ago, while the employment rate trended downwards.

The number of unemployed persons saw a notable increase compared to the previous year, with the downturn particularly visible in the construction and service sectors. Simultaneously, the number of job vacancies has declined, making it harder for seekers to find work. Analysts suggest that economic uncertainty is now impacting the labor market with a delay. There are concerns that unemployment will remain elevated through the early part of next year, highlighting the need for strategic measures to support employment and economic growth.

DEFENCE**Finland Extends Reservist Age to 65 to Boost Defence Capacity**

Finland has raised the maximum reservist age to 65, effective January 1, 2026, in a major update to its defence legislation. Previously, enlisted personnel remained in the reserve until age 50 and officers until age 60. The new law standardizes the upper age limit at 65 for conscripts across ranks, aiming to strengthen national defence in an increasingly uncertain security environment.

According to the Ministry of Defence, the reform will add around 125,000 more reservists to Finland's defence pool. The government's target is to build a reserve force of roughly one million people by 2031, reinforcing the country's mobilization potential.

Defence Minister Antti Häkkinen emphasizes that the change does not mean automatic mobilisation but expands the pool of experienced personnel who may be called upon in emergencies. The move reflects Finland's ongoing strategic adaptation to regional threats and the need to maintain robust territorial defence.

Reference: Finnish Ministry of Defence press material.

CULTURE**NETFLIX****Netflix Buys Warner Bros – A Game Changer for Streaming Viewers**

Netflix has announced a landmark deal to acquire Warner Bros, including its film and television studios as well as HBO and HBO Max. The acquisition brings together some of the most iconic franchises in entertainment history under a single corporate roof.

The deal includes globally recognized titles such as Harry Potter, Friends, Game of Thrones, the entire DC universe, and classics like Casablanca. These will sit alongside Netflix originals including Stranger Things, Wednesday, Squid Game, and Bridgerton, creating an unprecedented content portfolio.

For now, viewers will not notice immediate changes. Netflix and HBO Max will continue to operate as separate platforms, and existing subscriptions remain valid. The transaction still requires regulatory and shareholder approval. In the long term, however, the merger could reshape how audiences access content, potentially offering broader libraries—while also raising questions about pricing, competition, and consumer choice in the global streaming market.

Reference: Netflix / Warner Bros corporate announcement

MUSIC**PRESS**

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ART

A National Treasure Awakens: Restaurant Taulu Brings the Magic of Koli to Helsinki Central Station

Helsinki Central Station has always been more than just a transit hub; it is a crossroads of architecture and history. Now, a new gem has opened within the station's historic walls: Restaurant Taulu (Finnish for "The Painting"). This venue uniquely bridges the gap between Finland's golden age of art and modern gastronomy.

A Century of History in a New Light'

The heart and namesake of the restaurant is the monumental landscape painting of Koli. Created by the legendary Eero Järnefelt and his artist friends, the masterpiece has graced the station's premises for over a hundred years. However, the passage of time and decades of city air had dimmed the brilliance of this national treasure.

To coincide with the restaurant's opening, the painting has undergone an extensive and meticulous restoration. With the grime of a century removed, Järnefelt's depiction of the Koli hills now greets visitors with a clarity and vibrancy not seen in generations. The play of light and shadow in the work once spoke to a rising Finnish identity; today, it provides a breathtaking backdrop for diners.

Gastronomy Meets Fine Art
Restaurant Taulu is far more than a gallery space; it is a vibrant meeting point. The culinary philosophy reflects the spirit of the artwork: honest ingredients, Finnish heritage, and a touch of international elegance. The historic setting has been renovated with profound respect for Eliel Saarinen's original architecture, while the service

and comfort have been elevated to meet modern standards. "We want travelers and locals alike to step inside and feel part of a continuity that began over a century ago," say the representatives of the restaurant. It is a space designed for the rush of the city to come to a standstill.

A Cultural Act in the Heart of the City

The opening of Restaurant Taulu is a significant cultural contribution to Helsinki. By bringing art out of the silence of museums and into a bustling public space, it allows Järnefelt's masterpiece to be part of daily life once again. It restores the original grandeur of the station, harkening back to an era when rail-way restaurants were the social centers of the city. Further information regarding the menu, reservations, and the history of the painting can be found at www.ravintolataulu.fi.

Whether you are embarking on a long journey or simply seeking the most beautiful lunch spot in Helsinki, Restaurant Taulu offers a view that was painted on hundred years ago.



VAASA

Vaasa Awarded UNICEF "Child-Friendly Municipality" Recognition for Advancing Children's Rights

The City of Vaasa has been officially recognized as a Child-Friendly Municipality by UNICEF Finland, affirming its comprehensive efforts to embed children's rights into local policy, services, and civic engagement. The recognition reflects the successful achievement of all key targets set out in the city's multi-year action plan.

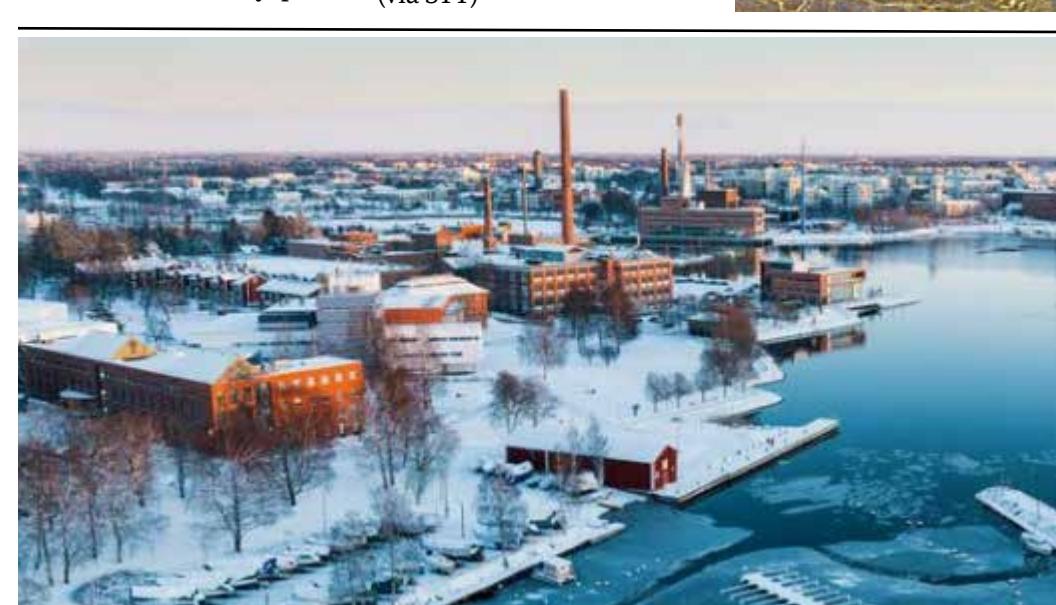
UNICEF's Child-Friendly Municipality model, grounded in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, provides a framework for municipalities to ensure that decisions affecting children consider their best interests. Vaasa has completed five strategic goals, including the implementation of systematic child impact assessments, broad training on children's rights for municipal staff, expanded leisure and cultural opportunities for youth, and enhanced public transport and cycling infrastructure tailored to families' needs.

UNICEF's commendation highlights Vaasa's integration of child-friendly principles into its strategic plan for 2026-2030 and its active collaboration with the city's youth council. In addition, the municipality has developed inclusive structures that amplify the perspectives of children and young people in planning and service development.

The recognition is valid for two years, and city officials emphasize that it marks a milestone rather than an endpoint. Vaasa will continue to refine its approaches, update baseline assessments, and strengthen mechanisms for youth participation across all sectors of municipal life.

Vaasa's achievement aligns with broader national efforts in Finland, where many municipalities are advancing child-friendly practices through UNICEF's model, reaching a significant proportion of the country's children.

Source: Press release from City of Vaasa and UNICEF (via STT)



VAASA

€2.5 Million Windfall for University of Vaasa – To Recruit International Top Experts!

The University of Vaasa has secured a staggering €2.5 million in strategic funding from the Research Council of Finland.

This major investment is earmarked for research in sustainable finance and business,

allowing the university to recruit a world-class international expert to lead the field. The goal is to solidify Vaasa's position as a global pioneer in sustainable economics. This funding boost is a massive vote of confidence in the university's research

impact and is expected to attract more global talent to the Finnish coast.

Source: University of Vaasa

Photo: University of Vaasa. Image freely available.

From page 3

VASABLADET

170 years of communication: Vasabladet celebrates a historic milestone

WASABLADET.

Den 7 Maj

1856.

Det var här, här varat kriget. Detta är sommar förvarvarens val för allt det allmänna som miljöns enskilda nog kännerforster. Knapp hundra visstades pressmeddelanden med 70 koppar silver i höktrycket. Annonsor införas mot 2 koppar, rad, men för sådana, som icke utgöra 3 rader, erlägges 5 koppar. Tidningsgivnaden om giftvaror och dödfall införas utan avgift.

Wes, den 30 April.

Ett tryckningsverk på den svenska församlingen sedan Bonnierska slätten upphörde att rymma några "nöjelit" från dens landskap. Om och göra herr var af naturliga skäl möger och torr, så präglade han stundom den svenska landskapet. Här förfogar vi Bif man just icke alltid deral mycket uppbyggd, så fick man dock åminneste i sitt gästgivande, att som skie-egare, men sistafrönden seckat sig som skie-egare, men i stigen. Gladjöra för det och, att de fleste aldré skräppredare intresserat sig för den nya bolaget med sitt tillgångar och sitt förtur. Detta är en del av den allmänna saknaden som väcktes åt orten efter den gamla smedens hänsyn. Allmänhet osäkra man varit, att orten hoya skulle utvecklas till en stor handelsort, men det var deras farmitit personer, hvilkas minst tid kan egna ihjäl det att jagas ut i trädgård Wasabladet. En frön önskar att de är ännu dessamma kommer att ahanlägga, måtte i allmänhet innehålla något af intresset. Detta är en del av den allmänna saknaden, dess utseende och förhoppningar är derföre ljusare än den gamla hirntränen. Minns man föredriva arbetsorten, hvilken måde under kriget den svenska tiden, hvilken måde sedan dess i staden hörde sätta sitt huvud. Med innerlig tackslag mot den Allmänhetens gästgivare och Hans Smördes omotoga Fredhäll

The Vaasa-based newspaper Vasabladet is celebrating its 170th anniversary this year. Founded in 1856, the newspaper is the second oldest newspaper still published in Finland, right after Åbo Utrittsblad. It has established itself as an important voice for the Swedish-speaking population of Ostrobothnia and as a regional identity builder.

Over the decades, Vasabladet has reported on events in the world and in the local community over three different centuries. The magazine has survived both historical crises and media change, successfully transitioning from the printed word to the digital era as part of HSS Media. A year ago, the Swedish newspaper Bonnier News bought the newspaper. The anniversary year is not only a look at the past, but it highlights the importance of local journalism as a pillar of free information. Vasabladet will continue its work to satisfy the news demand in the region, providing its readers with reliable information and in-depth analysis of local phenomena in the future as well.

The picture shows the first issue of the magazine, which was published on May 7, 1856. The magazine was small. It was about a new shipping company, and an interesting column included a short story about a student who moved to a big city. The newspaper had four pages, was printed at the printing house of A.A. Levon, and on the last page there were advertisements, including a request Enkefri Bäck would rent a hall with a room and a woodshed.

Source: Wikipedia

HELSINGIN SANOMAT

How HS uses AI in newsroom work

Artificial intelligence supports journalists at Helsingin Sanomat – but editorial responsibility always remains with people. The newsroom explains how AI is used and why.

Helsingin Sanomat has adopted artificial intelligence as a practical tool in news production, under strict editorial principles. AI is designed to assist journalists, not replace them.

AI is currently used for

- translations, with all output reviewed and edited by journalists
- drafting news items, for example from press releases
- spotting newsworthy topics, by filtering tips and incoming material
- testing story ideas, using reader data and audience research
- text processing, such as refining notes into clearer drafts
- searching large datasets, including reports and databases
- understanding audience needs, by analysing reading habits

A single rule governs all use: humans are always accountable for published content. AI does not make editorial decisions or publish news independently. Helsingin Sanomat commits to transparency and maintains a publicly available, regularly updated statement describing how AI is used in its newsroom.

Source: HS 23-12-2025

E-LIBRARY

E-library's (e-kirjasto) Magazine Selection to Diversify in 2026

"Rolling Stones" in English



SPACETRAVEL

These Astronauts Will Go Around the Moon in Spring

The air in Florida hums with a different kind of electricity this spring. On the launchpad, the Space Launch System (SLS) rocket stands like a silver monument to human ambition.

After decades of waiting, the Artemis II mission is ready to shatter the ceiling of Low Earth Orbit. Four pioneers—Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen—are strapped into the Orion capsule, prepared to become the first humans in over fifty years to venture into the deep void of cislunar space.

The engines ignite with a roar that shakes the very bedrock of the Kennedy Space Center. As they punch through the atmosphere, the sky transitions from azure to a velvet, star-studded black. Their destination isn't the lunar surface—not yet—but a high-speed slingshot around the far side of the Moon. As they swing behind the lunar disc, they will experience a profound silence, cut off from all radio contact with Earth, staring out at a cratered wilderness that no human eye has seen in person since 1972.

The Road to the Stars: Future Horizons



NASA/Josh Valcarcel

Artemis II is the vital spark that ignites a series of increasingly daring missions:

Artemis III: Scheduled to follow shortly after, this mission will mark the historic return to the lunar surface. It will land the first woman and the first person of color at the lunar South Pole, a region rich in water ice.

The Lunar Gateway: Just as the ISS orbits Earth, NASA and its

international partners will build the Gateway—a small space station orbiting the Moon. It will serve as a staging post for surface missions and a laboratory for deep-space research.

Artemis IV and Beyond: These missions will focus on "Sustainable Lunar Exploration." By establishing the Artemis Base Camp, humanity will learn to live and work on another world, using lunar re-

Sources to prepare for the ultimate leap: sending the first crewed mission to Mars.

This spring, as Orion rounds the lunar far side, the "Earthrise" those four astronauts witness will represent more than a photo—it will be the dawn of a multi-planetary future.

Source: NASA.

From page 4

Digital reading is becoming even more accessible as the national E-library expands its offerings. Starting in 2026, readers can expect an even wider range of popular magazines directly on their tablets or smartphones.

The E-library has revolutionized how we stay updated on news and trends. This free service is already available in many Finnish municipalities, such as Vaasa, providing a vast selection of reading material anytime, anywhere. Through the E-library app, browsing magazines is effortless, and the upcoming contract period will bring long-awaited additions to the selection.

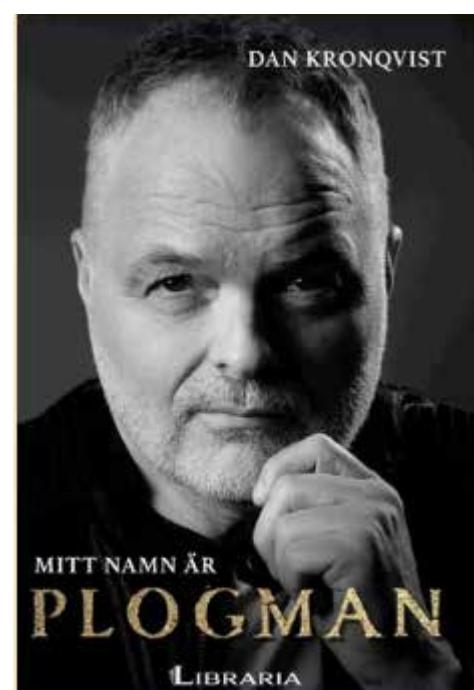
To use the service, users simply need to complete a strong authentication in the app once. After that, your favorite magazines are always with you—whether you're traveling or relaxing on your sofa. The expanding collection ensures that there is engaging content for everyone, completely free of charge.

New magazines 2026
Aftonbladet (Swedish)
Alt om hobby (Swedish)
Eläinten ystävä (Finnish)
Kamera & Bild (Swedish)
Pets (Finnish)
Rolling Stone (English)
Skrolle (Finnish)
Tunne & Mieli (Finnish)

project ensures that our shared heritage remains searchable and accessible to everyone. In 2025, improved search features and high-resolution digital facsimiles have led to record-breaking traffic, proving that classic literature is more relevant than ever. <https://runeberg.org/>

CHARLES PLOGMAN

Chali Plogman Unfiltered – A Star's Journey Through Fame and Darkness



From a small village in Ostrobothnia to becoming a chart-topping sensation, Charles "Chali" Plogman is finally telling his story. In the biography *Mitt namn är Plogman*, in Swedish and Finnish, the artist opens up about the immense pressure of fame, the evolution of the Finnish schlager scene, and the personal struggles behind the smile. As a pioneer of bilingual dance music, Chali shares both his professional triumphs and his darkest moments. Featuring honest accounts from family and industry colleagues, this is a raw look at a beloved entertainer's life on and off the stage.

Photo: Libraria

LITERATURE

PROJECT RUNEBERG

The Nordic Digital Treasure Trove Expands – Project Runeberg Celebrates a Successful 2025!

While AI dominates the headlines, one of the internet's oldest cultural initiatives has quietly reached new heights this year.

2025 has been a banner year for Project Runeberg, with thousands of newly scanned pages and a surge in volunteer proofreaders. The site continues to be the most vital digital archive for Nordic literature and cultural history.

What is Project Runeberg? Founded in 1992 at Linköping University, Sweden, Project Runeberg is a non-profit initiative inspired by the global Project Gutenberg. Its mission is to digitize and provide free access to classic Nordic literature and art that is no longer protected by copyright. By hosting everything from massive historical encyclopedias to the works of iconic authors like Strindberg and Topelius, the

LITERATURE

Adlibris bestseller 2025: Dan Brown in first place – Finnish

ASTRONOMY

A Celestial Spectacle: Witnessing the Quadrantids Meteor Shower in Ostrobothnia



Meteorite shower according to an AI artist

The Quadrantids meteor shower, one of the most prolific celestial events of the year, is currently gracing the skies of Ostrobothnia and will continue to do so until January 12th. This annual astronomical phenomenon offers a breathtaking display of shooting stars, captivating skywatchers with its brilliance.

A Brief History of the Quadrantids

The Quadrantids are unique in several ways. Unlike most meteor showers that originate from comets, their parent body is believed to be an aste-

roid, 2003 EH1. This asteroid, a near-Earth object, is thought to be the remnant of a long-dead comet.

The shower's name stems from its radiant point, the apparent origin of the meteors in the sky. This radiant point lies within the former constellation Quadrans Muralis, which is now part of the constellation Boötes.

Observing the Quadrantids in Ostrobothnia

Peak Activity: The Quadrantids typically peak around the first few days of January, pro-

ducing up to 120 meteors per hour under ideal conditions.

Finding the Radiant: Locate the constellation Boötes, easily recognizable by its distinctive kite shape. The radiant point will be near the Big Dipper.

Best Viewing Conditions:

Dark Skies: Find a location away from city lights and artificial illumination.

Clear Weather: Cloudless skies are essential for optimal viewing.

Patience: The shower may not be constant. Be patient and allow your eyes to adjust to the darkness.

Warmth and Comfort: Dress

warmly in layers as temperatures can drop significantly during the night. Bring a blanket or a reclining chair to make your observation more comfortable.

Tips for Observing Meteor Showers:

Arrive Early: Give your eyes ample time to adjust to the darkness.

Be Patient: Meteor showers are unpredictable. Relax and enjoy the experience.

Avoid Looking at Your Phone: The bright light from your phone will diminish your night vision.

authors were strongly in focus

Online bookstore Adlibris published the top lists of best-selling books in 2025, and international suspense author Dan Brown is climbing to the top with his book *The Secret of Secrets*.

At the same time, Finnish authors Satu Rämö and Finlandia Prize winner Monika Fagerholm have a strong presence among best-selling authors. Brown's work was the best-selling novel in both fiction and total sales, while Rämö's detective novel *Tinna* and Fagerholm's Finlandia Prize-winning *Isolation Mode* were both successes at the top of the list.

The wide range of top lists reflects readers' different interests: the categories of fiction, non-fiction, well-being works and children's books are all represented in the most popular books of 2025. The list also included Sauli Niinistö's book on foreign and security policy and a knitting book that combines themes related to crafts and well-being.

This year, readers have been looking for entertaining stories, up-to-date information, and reading experiences related to everyday well-being.

Source: Adlibris Finland Oy press release, 19.12.2025

Vaccine May Reduce Dementia Risk

A recent study published in *Nature* indicates that the widely used herpes zoster (shingles) vaccine may be associated with a lower risk of developing dementia later in life. Researchers took advantage of a rare natural experiment in Wales, where eligibility for the vaccine was strictly determined by date of birth—allowing for a causal comparison rather than simple correlation.

Analyzing health records for over 280,000 individuals, the team found that those eligible for the vaccine in their first year of eligibility had a significantly lower probability of receiving a dementia diagnosis over a seven-year follow-up. The reduction amounted to approximately 3.5 percentage points, corresponding to a 20 percent relative drop in risk. The protective effect appeared more pronounced among women.

The findings were corroborated using additional data on dementia-related deaths in a broader England and Wales population, strengthening the evidence that shingles vaccination could have beneficial effects beyond preventing viral reactivation.

While promising, researchers caution that further work is needed to unravel the underlying biological mechanisms and to evaluate the implications for dementia prevention strategies.

Source: Eting et al., A natural experiment on the effect of herpes zoster vaccination on dementia, *Nature* (April 2, 2025).

HEALTH

OBESITY

Beyond the Scale: New Podcast Reimagines the Conversation on Obesity (in Finnish)



Obesity is a complex and often misunderstood phenomenon. The new *Lihavuustutkijat* (Obesity Researchers) podcast aims to change the narrative by bringing expert insights and scientific evidence to the forefront of the discussion.

Moving past simple talk about weight, the podcast explores broader themes such as overall health, social stigma, and cutting-edge research. The goal is to foster a deeper understanding and dismantle the prejudices that often surround the topic. Experts discuss how biology, environment, and societal structures contribute to weight, emphasizing that it is far more than just a matter of individual willpower. By providing evidence-based information, the podcast invites listeners to look behind the numbers and understand the true complexity of human well-being. It is an essential listen for anyone looking to replace myths with facts.

The first episode of the *Obesity Researchers* podcast has already been released on Spotify. New episodes will be released every two weeks on Wednesdays.

Julia Lautaoja-Kivipelto (University of Oulu) and Johanna Matilainen (University of Helsinki) Photo by Mikko Törmänen.

NICOTINE POUCHES

FDA: Nicotine pouches can help people quit smoking

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has launched a new pilot program to streamline the review process for nicotine pouch applications. This initiative is rooted in the "continuum of risk," recognizing that non-combusted products like nicotine pouches generally pose lower health risks than traditional cigarettes.

Evidence suggests that nicotine pouches can assist adults in switching away from harmful combustible tobacco. By transitioning to lower-risk alternatives, users can significantly reduce their exposure to toxic and carcinogenic chemicals. The FDA aims to balance regulatory efficiency with rigorous scientific standards to evaluate the impact of these products on public health and support smokers in finding less harmful alternatives.

Lähde / Källa / Source: FDA / CTP Newsroom

CRITICAL CARE

THL: Three in Four ICU Patients Survive One Year After Critical Care

A new study by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) finds that about 75 percent of critically ill patients treated in intensive care units (ICUs) are still alive one year after their ICU stay. The research, which included a wide range of patients from multiple hospitals, looked at conditions from post-surgical intensive care to severe infections. The results highlight the effectiveness of modern critical care: while surviving a life-threatening illness can lead to a lengthy recovery, most patients in intensive care make it through the first year. Factors such as age, pre-existing conditions, and timeliness of treatment influence outcomes, but overall survival rates are higher than in previous decades. THL says these findings provide valuable insights for clinicians, patients and health planners alike.

Source: THL research publication

COELIAC DISEASE

Disability Support Changes Proposed – Celiac Disease Recognition for 16–17-Year-Olds

Cont to page 6

ALZHEIMER

New Research Suggests Shingles

LUX HELSINKI

Today we still have time to look at these light works



In Helsinki's dark winter evening, the lights come to life: already tonight, you can experience the extensive light installations of the Lux Helsinki 2026 light art festival in the city centre.

The festival began on 6 January and will continue daily from 5 pm to 10 pm until 11 January, and some of the works will also be on display in the mornings on 8-9 January at 7-9 am. This year, the theme of the festival is "Stop time!" — an invitation to stop and experience being in the moment through light. The works spread widely throughout the heart of Helsinki: from Kansalaistori Square to Narinkatori Square, Hietalahti Square, the Old Church Park and the Espa Stage. In addition, the works can be found in art galleries and the Kanneltalo Cultural Centre. Lux Helsinki is free of charge and open to everyone. More than half a million visitors head to light art every year, as the festival illuminates the darkness of winter with wonderful light phenomena and creative installations. This year, the festival will also expand with permanent light art installations, some of which will remain part of the city's streetscape even after the festival. It is advisable to plan the route for the evening in advance and book warm clothes — the light experience awaits.

Source: Lux Helsinki Light Art Festival 6.-11.1.2026, luxhelsinki.fi.



MUSEUMS

These Are Finland's Most Popular Museums

Museums remain hugely popular destinations for Finns. In 2025, Museokortti holders made 2.5 million museum visits, reflecting continued enthusiasm for cultural experiences across the country.

Here are 15 of the most visited museums in Finland based on the latest data:

Ateneum Art Museum, Helsinki
Amos Rex, Helsinki
Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma, Helsinki
Didrichsen Art Museum, Helsinki
HAM Helsinki Art Museum
Museum Centre Vapriikki, Tampere
Heureka Science Centre, Vantaa
LUOMUS Finnish Museum of Natural History, Helsinki
Exhibition Centre WeeGee, Espoo
Architecture and Design Museum, Helsinki
Sinebrychoff Art Museum, Helsinki

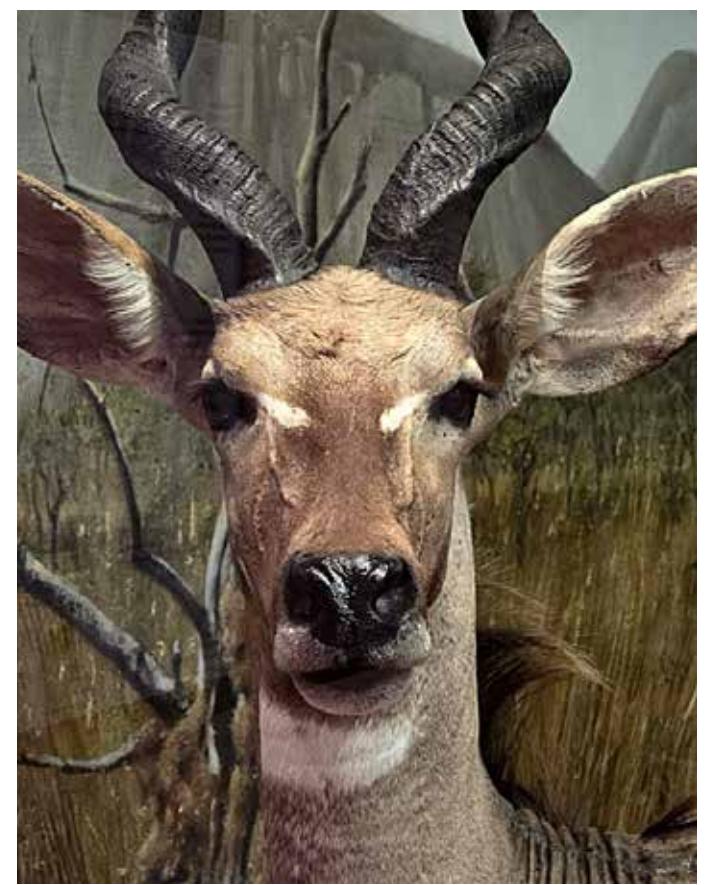
Tampere Art Museum
Turku Art Museum
Helsinki Art Hall
Hakasalmi Villa, Helsinki

The list highlights a mix of art, history, science, and family-friendly museums. While Helsinki's institutions dominate, regional favorites like Vapriikki and Heureka draw visitors throughout the year.

Museokortti offers access to over 360 museums nationwide and continues to be a popular cultural pass for locals and visitors alike. With exciting exhibitions planned for 2026, museum culture in Finland looks set for further growth.

Source: Museokortti: Here are 2025's most popular museums (STT press release, 9 January 2026).

Photo: Luomus-museum



From page 5

The Finnish Government has published a request for comments on proposed reforms to disability benefit rules that would allow 16-17-year-olds with celiac disease to qualify for basic disability support previously limited to younger children or adults.

Under current regulations, the right to certain benefits may end when a young person turns 16, even if their condition still results in additional needs and costs, such as a strict gluten-free diet. The proposed amendments also include raising the age limit for special care allowance for parents caring for seriously ill children, ensuring extended eligibility for families facing long-term care responsibilities.

Advocates have argued that current age limits create unfair gaps in support for youth whose conditions persist beyond childhood. If approved by Parliament, the measures would strengthen social security for affected families and align disability support with real needs.

Source: Government request for statements on changes in disability benefit procedures, 2025.

HEALTH

Ozempic can be dangerous for your eyes

Ozempic, which enjoys great popularity as a diabetes medication and weight loss product, and the ingredient semaglutide it contains received an important warning from the European Medicines Agency (EMA). A possible, albeit very rare, side effect of the drug has been identified as the eye disease NAION (non-arteritic optic neuropathy).

WHAT IS NAION?

NAION is a serious but rare eye disease that damages the optic nerve. It originates from a disturbance in the blood supply to the optic nerve and can lead to sudden and permanent loss of vision in one eye. Usually, impaired vision is the only symptom of the disease and is not accompanied by pain. People with diabetes, high blood pressure or elevated blood lipid levels, for example, are at the highest risk of developing NAION. There is currently no permanent treatment for the disease.

The decision was taken by the EMA's Pharmacovigilance Committee (PRAC) after reviewing available data, including small studies suggesting an increased risk in patients taking semaglutide. It is important to emphasize that this is still a very rare side effect and that the majority of people who use the drug do not have any risk of it.

What does this mean for patients?

The most important thing is to be aware of the possible symptoms. If you experience a sudden decrease in vision, blurred vision or dark areas in your field of vision, contact your family doctor or ophthalmologist immediately. Always mention to your healthcare professional that you are taking a medicine containing semaglutide.

Finally, it can be said that all medications have possible side effects, and it is important to have regular medical check-ups and be aware of the possible risk factors in your own health. Although NAION is rare, it is essential that patients and doctors are aware of this potential connection in order to be able to act quickly if necessary.

WHO

WHO warns of a new wave of antibiotic resistance

According to the World Health Organization, antibiotic-resistant bacteria are spreading faster than before.

According to a recent WHO report, infections caused by antibiotic resistance increased by 15 per cent in Europe over the past three years. Especially in intensive care units, bacterial strains are found against which no known antibiotic is effective. Experts stress that a more prudent use of antibiotics and the development of new drugs are necessary to prevent a "silent pandemic" that could threaten health systems worldwide.

AGING

Japan approves first gene therapy for age-related diseases

New treatment can slow down cell aging. Japan's Ministry of Health has approved the world's first clinical gene therapy targeting biological aging.

The treatment uses a virus-like vector to activate cell repair mechanisms. The first patients are over 60 years old with early signs of memory impairment. The researchers emphasize that it is not a "rejuvenation vaccine", but a form of treatment that can slow down degeneration and improve quality of life. The results are expected within two years.

CRITICAL CARE

THL: Three in Four ICU Patients

Cont on page 8

DRY JANUARY



January Without Any Brandy! What a Month Without Alcohol Really Does to Your Body

The new year often brings resolutions and fresh starts, and for many, it marks the beginning of "Dry January" — a month-long commitment to abstain from alcohol.

While the idea of a January without brandy, wine, beer, or any other alcoholic beverage might seem daunting, the benefits to your body and mind can be transformative. But what exactly happens to your body during this alcohol-free month? Here's a closer look at the science and the potential perks.

Week 1: Detox and Adjustment
The first week of abstaining from alcohol can feel like a challenge, especially if you're used to having a nightly drink. As your body begins to metabolize the residual alcohol in your system, you might experience cravings, irritability, or mild headaches. These symptoms are temporary and are part of your body's natural detoxification process.

During this time, your liver, the body's primary detox organ, starts to recover. Alcohol consumption places significant strain on the liver, so even a short break allows it to repair damaged cells and improve its efficiency. You might also notice that your sleep quality starts to improve. Although alcohol might help you fall asleep initially, it disrupts the REM stage, which is critical for restorative rest. Without alcohol, your sleep cycles normalize, leaving you feeling more refreshed.

Week 2: Clearer Skin and Increased Energy
By the second week, many

people notice visible improvements in their skin. Alcohol dehydrates the body and can exacerbate conditions like redness, puffiness, and acne. Without alcohol, your skin begins to rehydrate and heal, resulting in a clearer and more radiant complexion.

Energy levels also start to increase as your blood sugar stabilizes. Alcohol can cause spikes and crashes in blood glucose levels, leading to fatigue and mood swings. With these fluctuations minimized, you may find it easier to focus and feel more productive throughout the day.

Week 3: Improved Digestion and Mood

The third week often brings noticeable changes to your digestive system. Alcohol can irritate the stomach lining and disrupt gut bacteria balance, leading to bloating and indigestion. A break from alcohol allows your digestive system to reset, reducing discomfort and improving nutrient absorption.

This week also marks significant improvements in mental health. Alcohol is a depressant that can exacerbate feelings of anxiety and sadness. Many participants of Dry January report feeling less anxious and more emotionally stable as their brains adjust to functioning without the influence of alcohol. Increased endorphin production, the body's natural "feel-good" chemicals, further contributes to an uplifted mood.

Week 4: Weight Loss and Lower Blood Pressure

As you approach the end of the month, the cumulative effects of abstaining from alcohol become even more apparent. For many, one of the most significant benefits is weight loss. Alcohol is calorie-dense, and

The Tipsy Truth: Why Alcohol Is Not Your Friend

You might think a glass of wine or a beer is harmless, but the truth is, alcohol can be a sneaky saboteur of your health. It's not just about hangovers, it's about long-term damage.

Here's the lowdown:

Your Liver is a Workhorse: Alcohol is processed primarily by your liver, which works overtime to break it down. Over time, excessive alcohol consumption can lead to fatty liver disease, cirrhosis, and even liver cancer.

Brain Drain: Alcohol affects your brain, impacting memory, concentration, and even your emotional control. Chronic alcohol use can lead to dementia and cognitive decline.

Heartbreak: While a little alcohol might seem to help your heart, excessive consumption is a recipe for disaster. It can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure.

Cancer's Ally: Alcohol is linked to an increased risk of several cancers, including mouth, throat, breast, liver, and colon cancers.

Weight Gain: Alcohol is packed with empty calories, contributing to weight gain and obesity.

It's important to remember:

Moderation is key: If you choose to drink, do so in moderation. For women, that's one drink per day, and for men, two drinks per day.

Know your limits: Everyone has a different tolerance. Pay attention to how alcohol affects you and avoid overindulging.

Don't drink if you're pregnant: Alcohol can have devastating effects on a developing fetus.

The bottom line: Alcohol can be enjoyable in moderation, but it's not worth the risks to your health. So, raise a glass to your health and choose wisely!

its consumption often leads to overeating or unhealthy snacking. Cutting out alcohol eliminates these empty calories and can make it easier to maintain a calorie deficit.

Your heart health also improves. Alcohol raises blood pressure and can contribute to cardiovascular problems. Studies have shown that even a short break can lower blood pressure and reduce levels of harmful cholesterol, promoting better heart function.

Beyond January: Sustained Changes

The end of Dry January doesn't have to mean returning to old habits. Many participants find that the month-long challenge helps them reset their relationship with alcohol, leading to more mindful drinking habits in the future. The insights gained during this period — such as improved energy, better sleep, and enhanced mental clarity — can serve as powerful motivators to continue reducing alcohol consumption.

Is Dry January for Everyone?

While Dry January offers numerous health benefits, it's essential to approach it safely, especially if you're a heavy drinker. Abruptly stopping alcohol after prolonged heavy use can lead to withdrawal symptoms, which may require medical supervision. If you're concerned about your drinking habits, consider consulting a healthcare professional before beginning the challenge.

The Takeaway

January without brandy or other alcoholic drinks is more than just a test of willpower; it's an opportunity to recalibrate your body and mind. From improved liver function to better skin and mood, the benefits of abstaining from alcohol can be profound and long-lasting. So why not give it a try? Your body will thank you, and you might just discover a healthier, happier version of yourself in the process.

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

The Russians Are Exploiting the Weather – The Cold Snap – Trying to Hit as Many of Our Energy Facilities as Possible – Address by the President



9 January 2026 - 19:19

Dear Ukrainians!

Restoration efforts are currently underway in our cities and our communities – in Kyiv and the region, in the Dnipro, Lviv, Kirovohrad, Cherkasy, and Odesa regions. Repair crews are almost constantly working in the Sumy, Chernihiv, and Kharkiv regions. Maximum forces are deployed to restore vital services. The Russians are exploiting the weather – the cold snap – trying to hit as many of our energy facilities as possible. So much for their respect for America and all diplomacy. Last night, over 200 Russian drones were launched, as well as a significant number of

ballistic missiles, primarily targeting Kyiv. Four people were killed – my condolences to their families. Nearly thirty were wounded. Prior to that, there were strikes on Dnipro, Kryyyi Rih, and Zaporižzhia. And before that – Odesa. The main Russian tactic is to try to completely shut cities down. It is crucial that every city administration understands this goal, the goal of the enemy, and prepares for full counteraction, for actual work for the benefit of citizens. The focus should not be on avoiding problems but on solving them, especially when the resources exist to do so – as in Kyiv. It is the best-financed city in Ukraine, and all necessary backup systems must be in place.

Today, I held a special energy meeting with military officials, government representatives, and specialized services to discuss the details of protecting energy facilities and the necessary decisions. Diplomats must be as active as possible – through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and informal diplomatic channels.

Oreshnik was used again – this time against the Lviv region. Once again, it was pointedly close to the borders of the European Union. And in terms of using medium-range ballistic missiles, this poses the same challenge for all: Warsaw, Bucharest, Budapest, and many other capitals as well. Everyone needs to see this

in the same way and with the same seriousness: if the Russians aren't even bothering to come up with a plausible excuse for using such weapons, then no personal connections and no rhetoric will protect anyone from this. What is needed is a system of joint action, a system of collective defense – one that truly works. Does such a system exist now? That's an open question, because across Europe there is the same doubt – whether their capital would be defended if Putin suddenly lost it.

I also want to thank all our people involved in responding to the aftermath of the strikes. This is truly heroic work. In hours, people accomplish what in other countries can take days or weeks. The important thing is that help is available everywhere, repairs are happening everywhere, and maximum effort is being made to restore electricity and heating to the people. I have tasked government officials with communicating as fully as possible what will be done and within what timeframe. I thank everyone who is helping! I thank everyone who supports our people. I thank all the leaders who have not stayed silent and who are standing with us, with Ukraine.

Glory to Ukraine!

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ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Akseli Gallen-Kallela

1865 Pori/Björneborg
1931 Tukholma/Södermalm
Lemminkäisen äiti Lemminkäisen's mother 1897

George Orwell

1984

15

Everyone kept asking you for razor blades. Actually he had two unused ones which he was hoarding up. There had been a famine of them for months past. At any given moment there was some necessary article which the Party shops were unable to supply. Sometimes it was buttons, sometimes it was darning wool, sometimes it was shoelaces; at present it was razor blades. You could only get hold of them, if at all, by scrapping more or less furtively on the "free" market.

"I've been using the same blade for six weeks," he added untruthfully.

The queue gave another jerk forward. As they halted he turned and faced Syme again. Each of them took a greasy metal tray from a pile at the end of the counter.

"Did you go and see the prisoners hanged yesterday?" said Syme.

"I was working," said Winston indifferently. "I shall see it on the flicks, I suppose."

"A very inadequate substitute," said Syme.

His mocking eyes roved over Winston's face. "I know you," the eyes seemed to say. "I see through you. I know very well why you didn't go to see those prisoners hanged." In an intellectual way, Syme was venomously orthodox. He would talk with a disagreeable gloating satisfaction of



helicopter raids on enemy villages, and trials and confessions of thought-criminals, the executions in the cells of the Ministry of Love. Talking to him was largely a matter of getting him away from such subjects and entangling him, if possible, in the technicalities of Newspeak, on which he was authoritative and interesting. Winston turned his head a little aside to avoid the scrutiny of the large dark eyes.

"It was a good hanging," said Syme remissively. "I think it spoils it when they tie their feet together. I like to see them kicking. And above all, at the end, the tongue sticking right out, and blue—a quite bright blue. That's the detail that appeals to me."

"Nex", please!" yelled the white-aproned prole with the ladle.

Winston and Syme pushed their trays beneath the grille. On to each was dumped swiftly the regulation lunch—a metal pannikin of pinkish-grey stew, a hunk of bread, a cube of cheese, a mug of milkless Victory Coffee, and one saccharine tablet.

"There's a table over there, under that telescreen," said Syme. "Let's pick up a gin on the way."

The gin was served out to them in handleless china mugs. They threaded their way across the crowded room and unpacked their trays on to the metal-topped table, on one corner of which someone had left a pool of stew, a filthy liquid mess that had the appearance of vomit. Winston took up his mug of gin, paused for an instant to collect his nerve, and gulped the oily-tasting stuff down. When he had winced the tears out of his eyes he suddenly discovered that he was hungry. He began swallowing spoonfuls of the stew, which, in among its general sloppiness, had cubes of spongy pinkish stuff which was probably a preparation of meat. Neither of them spoke again till they had emptied their pannikins. From the table at Winston's left, a little behind his back, someone was talking rapidly and continuously, a harsh gabble almost like the quacking of a duck, which preceded the general roar of the room.

"How is the Dictionary getting on?" said Winston, raising his voice to overcome the noise.

"Slowly," said Syme. "I'm on the adjectives. It's fascinating."

He had brightened up immediately at the mention of Newspeak. He pushed his pannikin aside, took up his hunk of bread in one delicate hand and his cheese in the other, and leaned across the table so as to be able to speak without shouting.

"The Eleventh Edition is the definitive edition," he said. "We're getting the language into its final shape—the shape it's going to have when nobody speaks anything else. When we've finished with it, people like you will

have to learn it all over again. You think, I dare say, that our chief job is inventing new words. But not a bit of it! We're destroying words—scores of them, hundreds of them, every day. We're cutting the language down to the bone. The Eleventh Edition won't contain a single word that will become obsolete before the year 2050."

He bit hungrily into his bread and swallowed a couple of mouthfuls, then continued speaking, with a sort of pedant's passion. His thin dark face had become animated, his eyes had lost their mocking expression and grown almost dreamy.

"It's a beautiful thing, the destruction of words. Of course the great wastage is in the verbs and adjectives, but there are hundreds of nouns that can be got rid of as well. It isn't only the synonyms; there are also the antonyms. After all, what justification is there for a word which is simply the opposite of some other word? A word contains its opposite in itself. Take "good", for instance. If you have a word like "good", what need is there for a word like "bad"? "Ungood" will do just as well—better, because it's an exact opposite, which the other is not. Or again, if you want a stronger version of "good", what sense is there in having a whole string of vague useless words like "excellent" and "splendid" and all the rest of them? "Plusgood" covers the meaning, or "doubleplusgood" if you want something stronger still. Of course we use those forms already, but in the final version of Newspeak there'll be nothing else. In the end the whole notion of goodness and badness will be covered by only six words—in reality, only one word. Don't you see the beauty of that, Winston? It was B.B.'s idea originally, of course," he added as an afterthought.

A sort of vapid eagerness flitted across Winston's face at the mention of Big Brother. Nevertheless Syme immediately detected a certain lack of enthusiasm.

"You haven't a real appreciation of Newspeak, Winston," he said almost sadly. "Even when you write it you're still thinking in Oldspeak. I've read some of those pieces that you write in 'The Times' occasionally. They're good enough, but they're translations. In your heart you'd prefer to stick to Oldspeak, with all its vagueness and its useless shades of meaning. You don't grasp the beauty of the destruction of words."

Survive One Year After Critical Care

A new study by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL) finds that about 75 percent of critically ill patients treated in intensive care units (ICUs) are still alive one year after their ICU stay. The research, which included a wide range of patients from multiple hospitals, looked at conditions from post-surgical intensive care to severe infections. The results highlight the effectiveness of modern critical care: while surviving a life-threatening illness can lead to a lengthy recovery, most patients in intensive care make it through the first year. Factors such as age, pre-existing conditions, and timeliness of treatment influence outcomes, but overall survival rates are higher than in previous decades. THL says these findings provide valuable insights for clinicians, patients and health planners alike. Source: THL research publication

OBESITY

Sugar-free drinks do not reduce obesity

Extensive meta-analysis surprises nutrition researchers A new international study claims that light soft drinks do not prevent weight gain.

Researchers at Harvard University and Sydney University reviewed 20 years of research and found that consuming sugar-free beverages was just as often linked to weight gain as regular soda consumption. The explanation may lie in the fact that sweeteners increase the craving for sweets and the appetite. The researchers' recommendation is clear: the best drink for both weight management and health

AI

GEMINI

Gmail Enters the "Gemini Era": Your Inbox is Now an Assistant

For over twenty years, managing an inbox has felt like a chore—a never-ending cycle of sorting, sear-ching, and drafting. But as of January 2026, Google has officially moved Gmail into the "Gemini Era," transforming the platform from a simple list of messages into a proactive, intelligent personal as-sistant. Powered by the latest Gemini 3 Flash model, these updates aim to eliminate "inbox fatigue" by doing the heavy lifting for you. Here is a look at how Gemini is reshaping the way we use Gmail.

The AI Inbox: A Personal Daily Briefing
The most radical change is the transition from a chronological list to the AI Inbox. Currently rolling out to trusted testers and premium subscribers, this feature replaces the traditional wall of emails with a curated dashboard:

- Priority Clusters: Automatically groups emails into "to-dos," such as bills to pay, appointments to schedule, or urgent replies.

- "Catch Me Up" Summaries: Instead of scrolling, you get a quick overview of what happened while you were away, highlighting shipping updates, receipts, and key mentions. 2. "Ask Your Inbox": Natural Language Search Forget trying to remember the exact keyword for an email from six months ago. With the new AI Overviews integration in the search bar, you can ask Gmail questions like: "What was the quote from the plumber last August?" "When does my flight land on Tuesday, and what is the hotel address?"

Gemini scans your history, extracts the specific answer, and provides a direct link to the source email for verification.

3. Smarter Writing: Help Me Write & Proofread

Drafting emails is no longer a "blank page" struggle. Google has expanded these tools to be more in-tuitive:

- Help Me Write (Free for all): Generates full drafts from simple prompts. Whether it's a for-mal resignation or a friendly party invite, Gemini provides a polished starting point.

- Contextual Suggested Replies: Unlike the old "Thanks!" or "Received" buttons, these new suggestions are tailored to your writing style and the specific context of the conversation.

- Proofread (Premium): Beyond basic spellcheck, this acts as a built-in editor, suggesting im-provements for tone, clarity, and sentence structure to ensure your message hits the right note.

Privacy in the AI Era

With great power comes great concern over data privacy. Google has addressed this by implementing an "Engineering Privacy" barrier. Similar to "Incognito Mode," certain

interactions with Gemini are handled as one-off conversations that are not retained or used to train the underlying models. Users also have the option to disable AI features entirely if they prefer a traditional experience. The Bottom Line

The "Gemini Era" marks a shift in expectations. In a world where your inbox can summarize a 50-email thread in three seconds or draft a complex response in your own voice, the goal is no longer just "getting to Inbox Zero"—it's about having the time to focus on the work that actually matters.

Would you like me to draft a specific prompt you can use with "Help Me Write" to handle a difficult work email or a complex scheduling request?

GEMINI 3

Gemini 3 - a large step ahead in AI

Prepare to be amazed! Google has just unveiled the latest iteration of its groundbreaking AI model, Ge-mini 3, and it's nothing short of revolutionary. This isn't just an update; it's a massive leap forward in artificial intelligence, pushing the boundaries of what we thought was possible.

One of the most astonishing new features is its massively expanded context window. Imagine an AI that can understand and process incredibly long, complex inputs – entire books, hours of video, or vast data-sets – all at once, without losing its grasp on the details. Gemini 3 can do just that, leading to far more coherent, nuanced, and insightful responses than ever before. This is a game-changer for everything from complex coding projects to in-depth research and creative writing.

But the innovations don't stop there. Gemini 3 boasts enhanced multimodal capabilities, meaning it doesn't just understand text; it truly comprehends and seamlessly integrates information from images, audio, and video. You can feed it a document, a recording of a meeting, and a relevant image, and it will draw connections and provide summaries that are shockingly accurate and intelligent.

This new version is designed to be more intuitive, more powerful, and ultimately, more helpful across a dizzying array of applications. It promises to transform how we interact with AI, making complex tasks simpler and opening doors to entirely new forms of innovation. Get ready, because the future of AI is here, and it's called Gemini 3!

EKONOMY

WORLD ECONOMY

A Review of the 2025 Global Economy

The global economy in 2025 has been a story of "tenuous resilience." Despite early-year fears of a significant downturn, global growth remained steady at approximately 3.2%. While the world avoided a broad recession, the year was defined by a shift toward protectionism and the cooling of post-pandemic momentum.

The Three Most Interesting Changes: The Rise of "Front-Loading" Trade: Anticipating a sharp rise in global tariffs and trade barriers, businesses spent the first half of 2025 "front-loading" shipments. This led to a temporary surge in trade volumes and industrial production before activity cooled in the latter half of the year as new protectionist policies took hold.

AI Investment Decouples from Mainstream Tech: While traditional tech spending faced headwinds, investment in Artificial Intelligence reached a fever pitch. NVIDIA and Microsoft both crossed the \$4 trillion market cap threshold this year, signaling that AI has moved from a speculative trend to the primary engine of capital expenditure in advanced economies.

Divergent Disinflation: The "great cooling" of prices wasn't universal. While the Eurozone reached its 2% inflation target earlier than expected, the United States struggled with "sticky" inflation due to persistent service costs and the pass-through effects of new trade tariffs, leading to a notable split in how central banks managed interest rates.

Reference: IMF World Economic Outlook (October 2025) and World Bank Economic Blogs.

HUMOUR ONE

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

THE FIRST LOUDSPEAKER

He: The first speaker was made from a bone.

She: Is that possible?

He: Yes, from Adam's rib.

AS YOU SEE AND NOT SEE

Teacher: Things you see are called concrete or real, things you don't see are called, — Well Lisa O-o-o-

Lisa: Indecent.

PAINTER OR POET

- I don't know if I'm going to be a poet or a painter.

- Be a painter.

- Have you seen any of my paintings?

- No, man, I've read a couple of your poems.

THIRTEEN AT THE TABLE

Do you mind if there are thirteen at the table?

- Yes, if there's only food for twelve.

ROLLS-ROYCE

Anna: — Was it love at first sight? Dagny: — Absolutely. Right when I saw him in his new Rolls-Royce.

WORK KILLS NO ONE

— Why don't you work?

Hard work kills no one.

— You're mistaken, my wife. I lost both my wives that way.

THE RUNNER-UP

— Does the boy have any special marks by which one can recognize him, the police constable asked the father whose son had run away. — No, not yet, but if I can just get a hold of him it won't be long before that is the case.

APPENDIX

— That doctor must have sent a rudely large bill. But it will probably be the last time he gets to operate on my appendix.

COMMUNISM

— If you had two houses, would you give one to me?

— Yes.

— If you had two horses, would you give one to me?

- Of course!

— You have a liter of alcohol at home. Give me half a liter!

— You crazy, human! Never!



Astronomic picture of the week:

Galactic Dance



Image of the interacting galaxy pair NGC 5394/5 obtained with NSF NOIRLab's Gemini North 8-meter telescope on Hawai'i's Maunakea using the Gemini Multi-Object Spectrograph in imaging mode. This four-color composite image has a total exposure time of 42 minutes

Credit: International Gemini Observatory/NOIRLab/NSF/AURA
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BLOG WRITERS

Join Wasa Daily as a Blog Writer!

Are you passionate about sharing your thoughts, stories, or expertise with the community? Wasa Daily is looking for enthusiastic blog writers to contribute engaging content for our readers.

Whether you love writing about local events, culture, lifestyle, business, or personal experiences, we welcome your voice!

Writing for Wasa Daily is a great opportunity to reach a wider audience, connect with fellow locals, and showcase your creativity. No prior experience is needed—just bring your ideas and enthusiasm! We value diverse perspectives and fresh voices that reflect the vibrant spirit of our community.

Interested? Send us your blog pitch or a short sample, and let's get your words published! Join us in making Wasa Daily a platform for meaningful conversations and inspiring stories. Contact us at wasadagblad@gmail.com for more details. We can't wait to hear from you!

Wasa Daily

A modern newspaper with a layout with features of the press of the 1870s. Back then, newspapers had only 4-8 pages. Lots of text, but no images at all, so there's a lot to read on a few pages. Our paper is one of the very few newspapers in English serving English-speaking inhabitants in the Ostrobothnia region.

The magazine contains quotations from old daily newspapers taken from the National Archives (digi.kansalliskirjasto.fi). GPT3, Gemini, Aria and Monica do some of the routine editing work, such as translation, corrector reading, and short notice writing. All texts have been checked by journalists and the editorial staff is responsible for all the content of the texts. Wasa Daily is a daily newspaper type publication, so far it is published on Sunday mornings. But our goal is for it to come out every morning in the future.

The magazine is available online for free.

Editor-in-chief Hans Björknäs. Readers' writings are welcome! The magazine is locally owned and will remain so. For ever! Editorial office: Wasa Daily, Koulukatu 37 B 7, 65100 Vaasa, tel. +358-40-5462455. Helsinki editorial office: Wasa Daily, Toinen linja 9 B 36, 00530 Helsinki. Phone +358-40-5462455. Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

From our readers

We very much welcome submissions from our readers. Comments, stories, memories, debate, news from home. Probably this will be the most important part of this spring paper. But space is limited, so please write as short as possible! So please send posts to: wasadagblad@gmail.com

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