



WELFARE COUNTY

Wellbeing Service County Severely Congested – Patients Wait Two Days for Continued Care



The wellbeing services county in Ostrobothnia is currently facing significant congestion in its health and social care service chain, with the strain evident in hospital wards and emergency departments. In some cases, patients have had to wait up to two days for a suitable

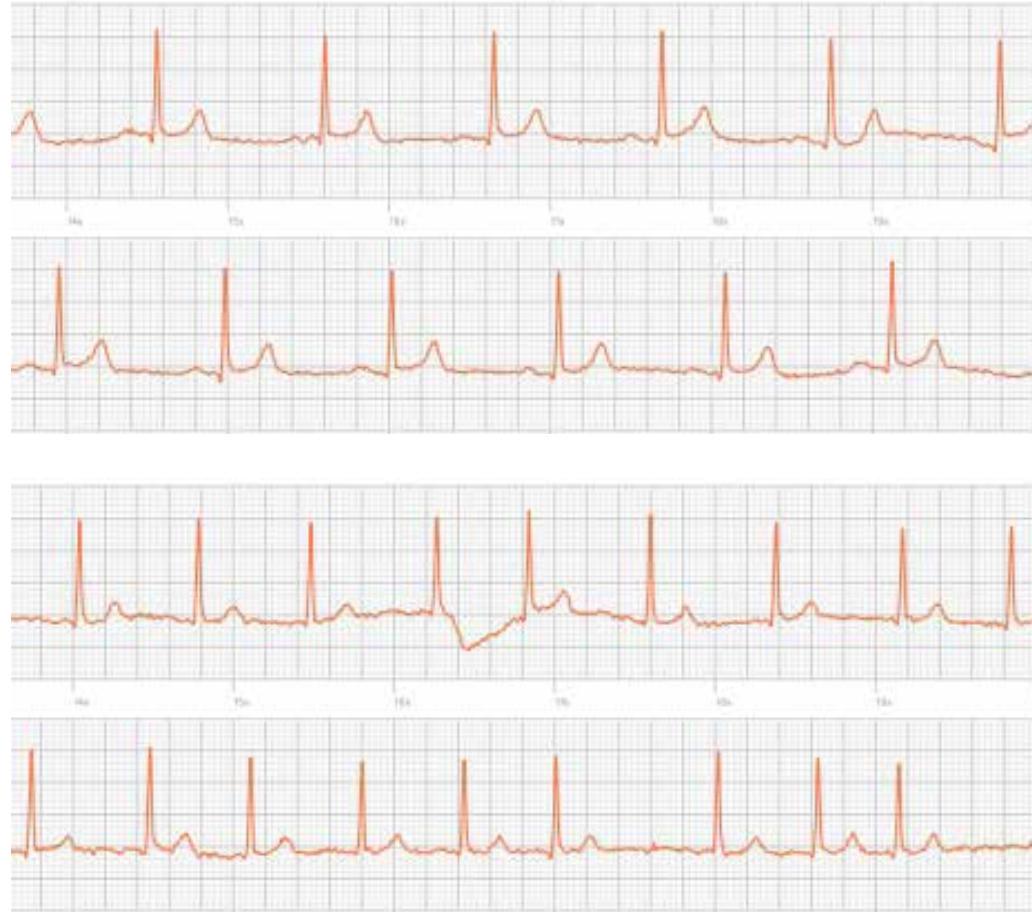
follow-up care placement, as seasonal flu and other urgent care needs have increased demand.

Officials say that several factors contribute to the backlog. A high number of influenza cases, more elderly patients with complex needs, and limited availability of long-term care placements have all

slowed patient flow through the system. To help alleviate the situation, temporary additional beds and extra staffing have been deployed. Christian Palmberg, Director of Hospital Services, emphasizes that while congestion cannot be fully pre-vented, the county has plans and procedures in place to manage peak demand and ensure continuity of care. Effective service coordination aims to match patients with appropriate placements as quickly as possible. Residents are encouraged to use the free national emergency advice line at 116117 first, where healthcare professionals can assess needs and guide callers to the right service — easing pressure on emergency departments. In life-threatening situations, always call 112. Source: Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County / STT press release The wellbeing services county's service chain is congested

HEALTH

Do you use Eliquis? Then your medication has suddenly become much more expensive

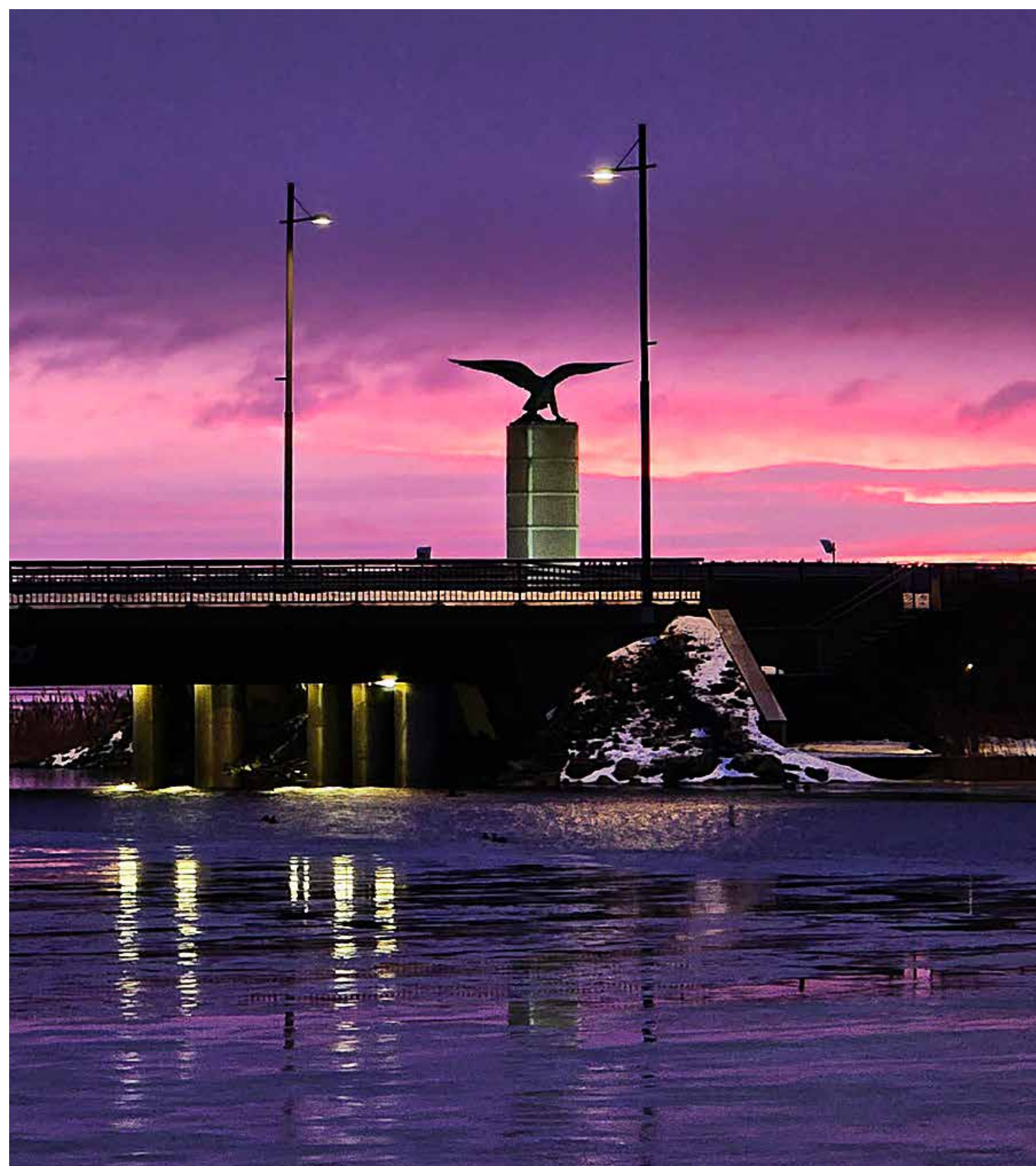


Many Finns who use blood-thinning drugs such as Eliquis (apixaban) have recently been met with an unexpected message at the pharmacy: the cheaper alternative no longer exists – and the drug is not reimbursed by Kela.

The reason is a decision from the Supreme Court, which reinstated the pharmaceutical company BMS's exclusive right to apixaban. Therefore, several parallel preparations have been withdrawn from the market. At present, the original preparation Eliquis is mainly available, as well as an alternative with limited availability. The situation affects about 135,000 patients in Finland, a very large number in all. Many of them are elderly and chronically ill. An application to reinstate the reimbursement has been submitted by the pharmaceutical company and is now being processed by the authorities. The cheaper parallel drugs are no longer available, with one exception.

The fact that there is no reimbursement for Eliquis means that the medicine suddenly becomes about three times as expensive. And in addition, it is not included in the ceiling for medication reimbursements. The message of the healthcare system is clear: absolutely do not end the treatment on your own. Stopping treatment carries a very high risk of a blood clot with disabling consequences. Contact your doctor or pharmacist for advice – and stay up to date on changes. It is of course possible to change medication to another medication with the same effect, e.g. Xarelto. However, this must be done in consultation with the treating physician. The case shows how legal processes and pharmaceutical policy can quickly affect patients' everyday lives – even in Finland, where the supply of medicines is generally stable. After all, patients are completely innocent of this problem, even if they now have to pay for it. **Images:** The top image shows a normal ECG. The lower image shows an irregular pulse typical of atrial fibrillation, which poses a risk of blood clots if left untreated. Source: Fimea, Medicines Information 9.1.2026

Image of the week:



Winter

FERTILITY TREATMENT

Over 4,500 Babies Born at Tays – Now Critical Donor Shortage Holds Up Treatments

At Tampere University Hospital (Tays), fertility treatments at the hormone and infertility clinic have resulted in 4,516 babies over the past decade, including treatments using donated eggs or sperm. In 2024 alone, 628 children were born, 139 with donated gametes.

Tays performs about one-third of all public IVF treatments in Finland, but there is now a critical shortage of donated gametes – especially sperm donors. Waiting times for donated eggs are 8–12 months, and sperm

waits can reach about one year.

Finnish law limits each sperm donor to helping a maximum of five families, and children conceived from donation have the right to learn the donor's identity once they reach adulthood.

Tays is urging healthy young adults to consider donating eggs or sperm, emphasizing that donation can be a life-changing gift for families struggling with infertility.

Source: Pirkanmaa Wellbeing Services County / STT press release (8 Jan 2026).



OSTROBOTHNIA

WELFARE REGION

Unified Menus in Ostrobothnia Aim to Boost Nutrition, Cut Waste

Ostrobothnia's regional welfare service has introduced standardized menus across all care units, service homes and day programs starting January 1, 2026. The initiative focuses on healthier meals, better nutrition and reduced food waste, aligning meal planning with national nutritional guidelines.

Previously, a wide variety of portion sizes and choices led to unnecessary waste, especially in hospital kitchens where food is prepared and portioned on site. The new approach ensures consistent meal structure across the region, including a side of salad or warm vegetables with every meal and designated days for desserts. Special diets and allergies are carefully integrated into meal plans, with a particular emphasis on how food contributes to recovery and wellbeing.

A core element of the reform is individualized portion sizing at admission and throughout a patient's stay – a change expected to significantly reduce surplus food while tailoring nourishment to personal needs. The range of available snack options, such as various yogurts, biscuits and sugary drinks, has been streamlined to emphasize nutritional quality and consistency.

Importantly, traditional Finnish holiday foods remain part of the menu, and opportunities for resident activities like baking workshops continue to be supported, preserving cultural tastes and social interaction.

This shift marks a step toward smarter, healthier and more sustainable food service in public care settings. Source: Österbottens välfärdsområde

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

THE JANUARY SUNDAY

Traditional Tammisunnuntai Celebration Brings Vaasa Together

Vaasa's annual Tammisunday celebration takes place on Saturday, January 6, beginning with a wreath-laying ceremony at 4:00 p.m. at the Kasarmi Square Memorial Wall. The ceremony includes honour guards and a flag procession from defence organisations. Later, at 5:30 p.m., the official programme continues in the Vaasa City Hall's ceremonial

hall with speeches and reflections on Finnish history and independence. The event is open to all and forms part of the city's winter tradition.

Source: City of Vaasa – Tammisunnuntai juhla

WIND POWER

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

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.

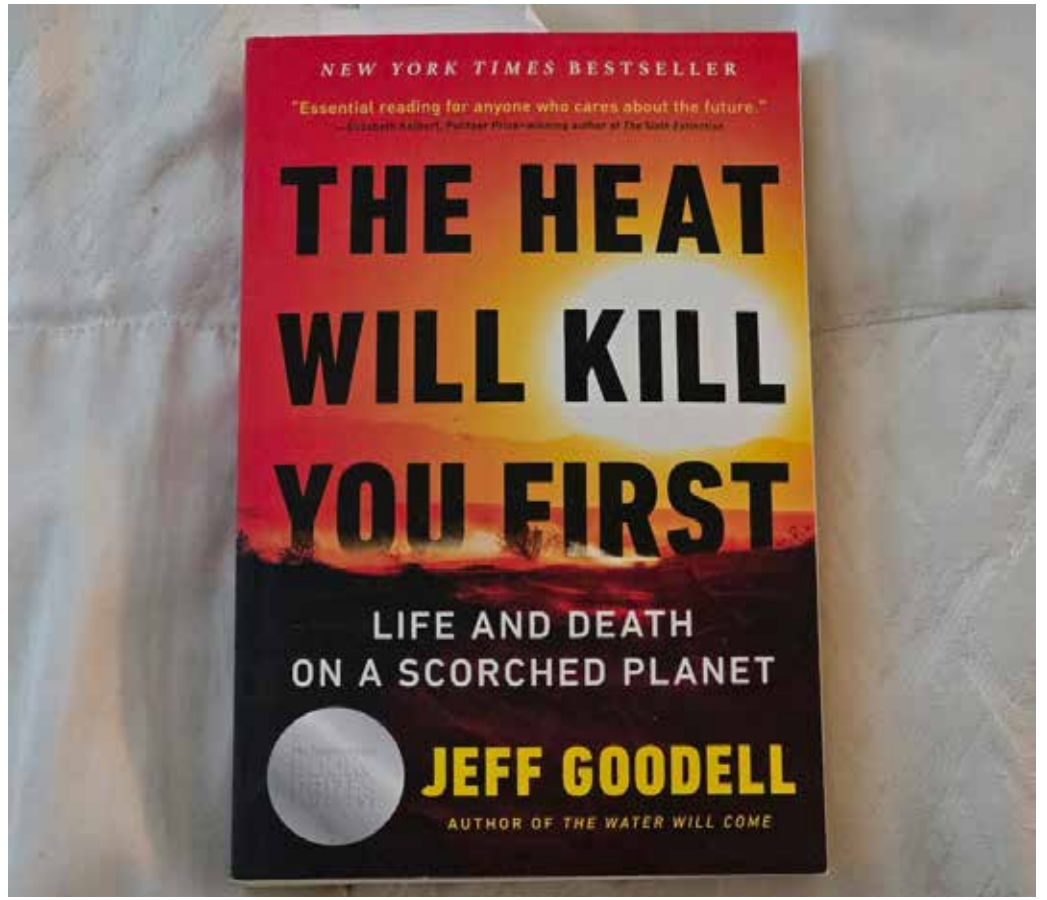
While Helsinki celebrates research with dozens of events, the city of Vaasa – a hub of students, researchers, and academic institutions – still lacks a similar festival. Despite its rich intellectual landscape, the doors to local research often remain closed to the general public. As Helsinki gears up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

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EDITORIAL

When the Planet Boils – Heat Is No Longer Tomorrow’s Threat

Latest data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service reveal that 2025 was the third warmest year on record, part of an unprecedented run where the average global temperature for 2023–2025 exceeded 1.5 °C above pre-industrial levels for the first time.



This is not abstract climate science. It is an urgent crisis already unfolding. In *The Heat Will Kill You First*, journalist Jeff Goodell argues that the term “global warming” is too mild. It fails to convey the brutal reality: heat kills. He recounts how heatwaves in Europe and North America have claimed tens of thousands of lives, exposing the vulnerability of cities and communities unprepared for the extreme temperatures that are now becoming ordinary.

Copernicus data also paint a stark picture of warming at the poles, with sea ice retreating and atmospheric heat anomalies spreading across continents. These trends are linked to rising greenhouse gas concentrations that trap heat in the atmosphere, driving more frequent and intense heatwaves, wildfires, droughts and floods worldwide.

Goodell’s reporting goes further: he shows how societies reliant on air conditioning have inadvertently exacerbated the problem, increasing energy consumption and emissions even as temperatures climb.

This is a public health emergency, a social justice issue and a planetary crisis. Leaders repeatedly pledge action, yet emissions continue to rise and climate policies lag. The world is already living in a hotter reality — one where ordinary summers can become deadly, and the promise of limiting warming to 1.5 °C slips further from reach.

Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service Global Climate Highlights 2025; Jeff Goodell, *The Heat Will Kill You First*.

MUSEUMS IN VAASA

From Body Politics to Apocalypse: Vaasa Unveils an Ambitious Museum Year for 2026



Marja Pirilä: In Strindbergs room 34, 2017



Vaasa’s museums have announced a rich and forward-looking exhibition programme for 2026, combining contemporary art, photography and socially engaged themes from Finland and abroad. One of the year’s highlights is a major solo exhibition by Finnish photographer Marja Pirilä, whose acclaimed Camera obscura series opens at Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art in September.

The year begins with Body Politics, drawn from the Miettinen Collection, examining power, identity and the human body through contemporary art. In summer, Kuntsi presents Apocalypse Now, a joint exhibition by Vaasa-based artist Marcus Lerviks and German artist Florian Tuercke, exploring global uncertainty, conflict and future visions.

At the Ostrobothnian Museum, visitors encounter Nordic perspectives on landscape in Lay Of(f) the Land, while the Terranova exhibition Walkers of Night and Day focuses on nature photography. Regional voices are brought forward in the nabbteeri collective’s summer exhibition, followed by Working Title: Gaming, which delves into digital culture and interactive media.

Tikanoja Art Home continues the programme with contemporary illustration and art history, while the Old Vaasa Museum marks a major milestone with an exhibition celebrating the 250th anniversary of the Vaasa Court of Appeal.

Altogether, the 2026 programme positions Vaasa as a vibrant cultural hub where art meets society, history and the present moment.

EXHIBITION CALENDAR

Kuntsi Museum of Modern Art
Miettinen Collection: Body Politics 24.1.–4.4.2026
Marcus Lerviks and Florian Tuercke: Apocalypse Now 16.5.–29.8.2026
Marja Pirilä: Camera obscura: 19.9.2026–9.1.2027

Museum of Ostrobothnia
Lay Of(f) the Land: Nordic group exhibition 29.11.2025–12.4.2026
Night and day wanderers (Terranova) 3.12.2025–29.3.2026
nabbteeri: The Garden of the Dead Animals solo exhibition 9.5.–20.9.2026
Working title: Gaming -group exhibition 7.11.2026–7.3.2027

Tikanoja Art Home
I am not afraid – Finnish contemporary illustrators until 23.5.2026
Working title: Önnungeby artist colony 10.10.2026–20.2.2027

Old Vaasa Museum
Vaasa Court of Appeal 250 years 7.5.–29.8.2026

Traveling exhibitions 2026
Jan Olof Mallander – photographs The Ostrobothnia of the Lundgren sisters
Changes to the exhibition program are possible.
Source: City of Vaasa / STT Info

Cont from page 1

JANUARY SUNDAY

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

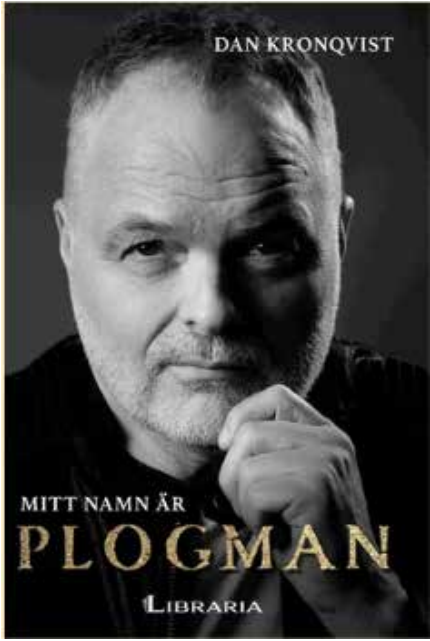
The regional commemoration of Tammisunnuntai will take place in Alavus on January 25th, 2026. This significant historical anniversary begins at 10:00 AM with a service at Alavus Church, featuring a sermon by Bishop Matti Salomäki, followed by a formal wreath-laying ceremony. The afternoon program at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

CHARES PLOGMAN

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



Iskelmä-Finlandia-voittaja Charles Plogman vierailee Vaasan

pääkirjastossa maanantaina 2.2. klo 18.00. Pian 60 vuotta täyttävä artisti avaa elämänsä tuoreen Nimeni on Plogman -elämäkerran kautta. Alavetelin kasvatista tuli koko Suomen tuntema tähti, jonka matka on sisältänyt niin suuria voittoja kuin kipeitä vastoinkäymisiä. Draamasalissa kuullaan tarinoita 40-vuotisen uran varrelta ja kurkistetaan tulevaan juhlaruundiin. Vapaa pääsy!
Image: Libraria

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 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

NIGHT OF SCIENCE

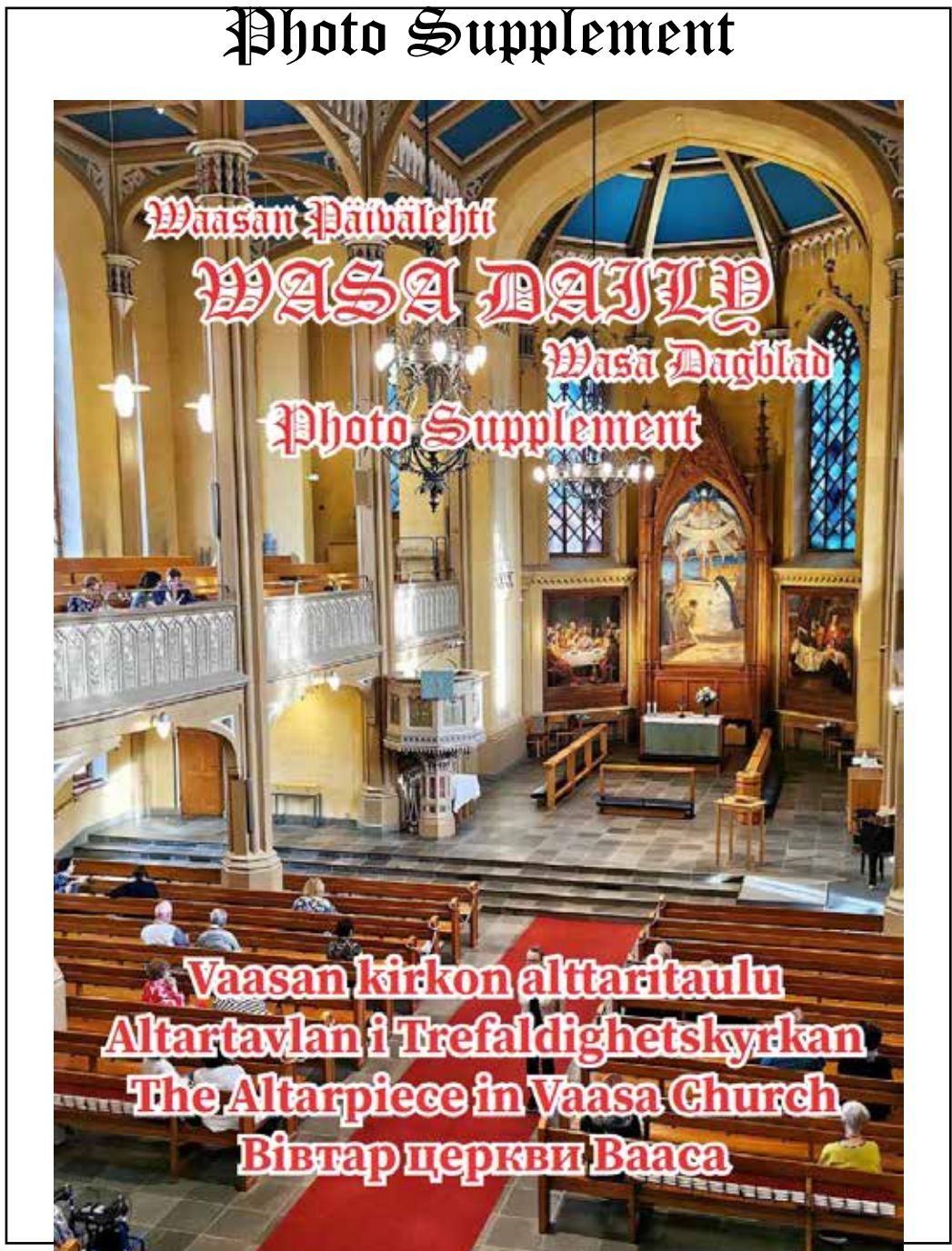
The Night of Science – when will one come to Vaasa?

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



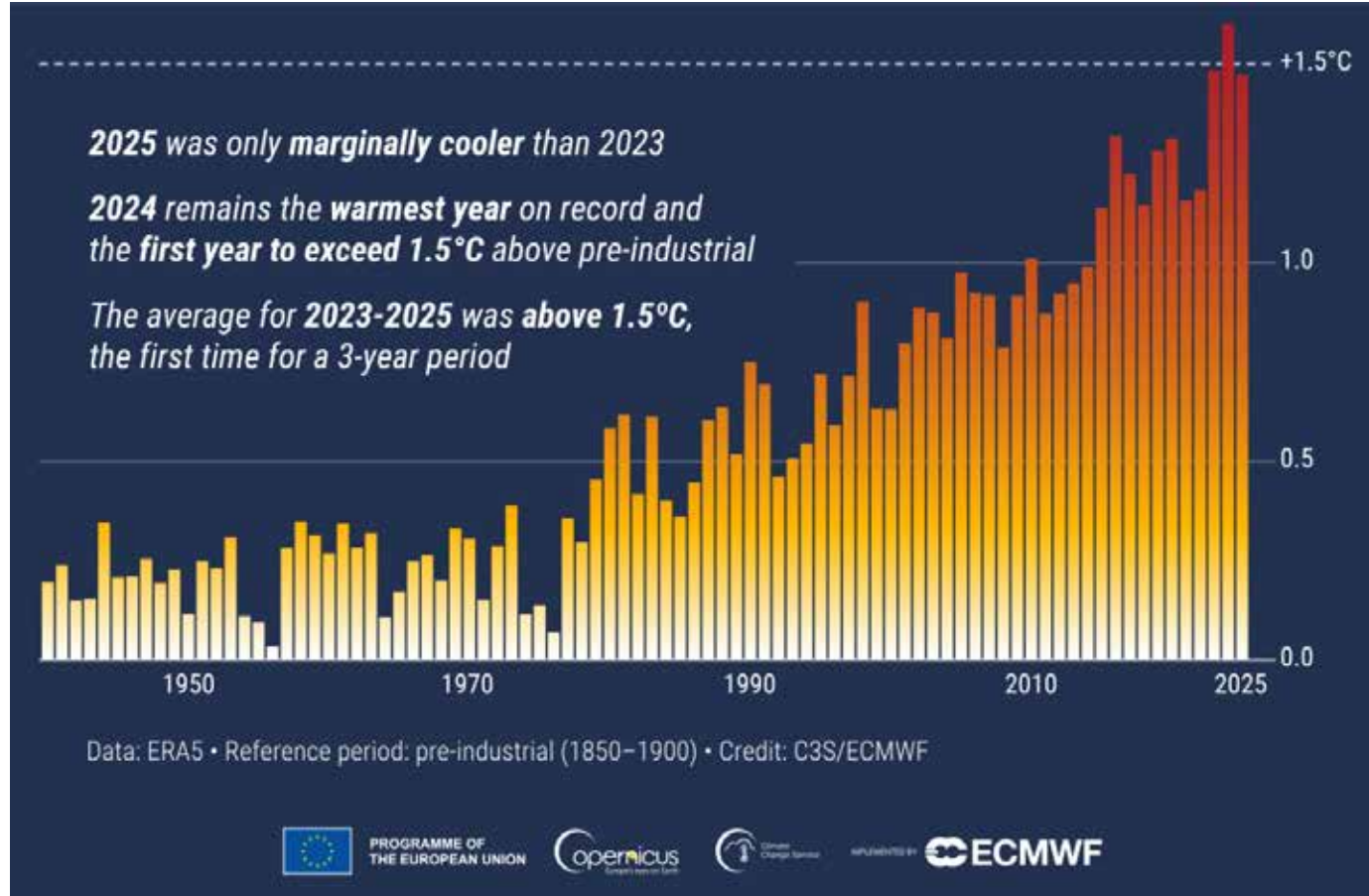
Vaasa, however, still lacks a similar event despite having two universities and many researchers. Science should not stay behind university gates – it should be seen, heard, and experienced by everyone.

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



CLIMATE CHANGE

Copernicus: 2025 Third Warmest Year on Record



The year 2025 ranked as the third warmest on record, according to the Copernicus Climate Change Service, part of the EU's Earth observation programme. This continues an alarming trend — the 11 warmest years in history have all occurred in the past decade, with 2023, 2024 and 2025 leading the list.

Global average surface temperatures in 2025 were 14.97 °C, approximately 1.47 °C above pre-industrial levels (1850–1900). Although 2024 retains the title of warmest year ever, 2025 trailed by a minuscule 0.13 °C, illustrating a persistent escalation in planetary heat. Notably, for the first time, the three-year average from 2023–2025 exceeded 1.5 °C — a key

threshold under the Paris Agreement. The Copernicus report attributes the historic heat to human-driven greenhouse gas emissions and ocean temperature dynamics, with higher than average warmth recorded across most regions, including the Arctic and Antarctic. Climate scientists warn that without rapid and deep

reductions in emissions, the world faces ever-more frequent and severe extreme weather events — from heatwaves and droughts to floods and wildfires — and that the Paris climate goals are at risk of being breached before 2030. Source: Copernicus Climate Change Service / ECMWF, Global Climate Highlights 2025.

VAASA

What Good Could You Do for the Environment with €50,000? Vaasa Invites Citizen Ideas

The City of Vaasa is asking its residents to propose environmentally beneficial ideas backed by a €50,000 budget as part of its participatory budgeting programme for 2026. The call comes as Vaasa prepares to celebrate its designation as a European Green Leaf City 2026, a recognition of its commitment to sustainable urban development and environmental action.

Ideas can be submitted until 8 February via the city's website or at public service points. After the submission phase, all proposals will be screened and put to a public vote between 11 and 29 March. The winning idea will be announced on 10 April, and its implementation will be followed closely on the city's social media channels.

– Our aim is to inspire citizens to think creatively about how to make Vaasa greener and more livable by proposing practical, impactful projects, says Vaasa Strategy Director Suvi Aho. Projects might include urban gardening initiatives, biodiversity enhancement plans or energy efficiency upgrades—ideas that bring tangible environmental benefits to neighborhoods.

Last year's winning idea of borrowable rowing boats boosted community engagement with local waterways, showing that even relatively modest investments can encourage people to enjoy and care for the natural environment.

As a European Green Leaf City, Vaasa wants to demonstrate how citizen-driven environmental actions can be scaled up and supported at the municipal level. The participatory budgeting initiative reflects a wider trend of empowering communities to shape the future of sustainable cities.

Source: City of Vaasa / STT press release What good deeds for the environment would you do with €50,000?



You can propose your idea online at www.vaasa.fi/osallistuva-budjetointi or submit it at the Citizens' Information and Vähänkryö Public Service Offices.

FINLAND

DRUG PRICES

Prescription Drug Prices Set to Fall as New Pricing Model Takes Effect

As the new year begins, many residents in Finland will see lower prices for prescription medications. The decrease is driven by a new pharmaceutical pricing formula that reduces pharmacy margins, particularly on high-cost drugs. This reform aims to ease the financial burden on patients while lowering public health expenditure. In addition to cheaper prices, there are also updates to the medicine reimbursement system and deductibles. This change marks a significant move toward making healthcare more affordable, focusing specifically on supporting patients who require expensive or long-term medication.

Source: Finnish Government

MATERNITY GRANT

Finnary 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

ICEBRAKERS

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

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 weakened 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

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 standardises 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 emphasises 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.

STATISTICS

Bankruptcies Surge – Finland Sees Worst Year Since 1990s Recession

The number of company bankruptcies in Finland continued to climb in December 2025, with 360 firms entering insolvency proceedings — a 34 percent increase from the same month a year earlier, according to Statistics Finland. Over the whole of 2025, 3,906 bankruptcy filings were made, marking the highest annual total since 1996 and a 12 percent rise from 2024. The total employment affected by these bankruptcies amounted to around 14,300 staff-years.

The current bankruptcy wave, which grew stronger after 2023, shows that economic headwinds continue to weigh heavily on small and medium-sized enterprises across sectors. While bankruptcies in construction have eased from their earlier peak, most other industries have seen upward trends.

Analysts point to subdued demand, rising costs, and economic uncertainty as key pressures facing Finnish companies. Without significant improvements in the business environment and targeted support measures, the high level of bankruptcies may persist into 2026. Source: Statistics Finland, Bankruptcies and business restructuring proceedings 2025 (16 January 2026).

RENTS

Rents Decline Across Finland – Nationwide Drop for First Time

Apartment rents in Finland fell toward the end of 2025, according to Statistics Finland. For the first time in a long period, average rents declined nationwide, recording approximately a 1.0 percent drop compared to the previous year. The downward trend was especially noticeable in major urban areas such as the Helsinki region, where rents cooled after earlier increases. Analysts attribute the fall to a growing rental supply and subdued demand. For many tenants, this marks a welcome relief in living costs as Finland heads into the new year. Source: Statistics Finland

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 only 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.



PRESS

LÄÄKÄRILEHTI

Heidi Ekdahl to become the head of Lääkärilehti

Lääkärilehti has chosen Heidi Ekdahl as its new editor-in-chief. The appointment marks a new chapter in the history of the traditional trade magazine.



Lääkärilehti, published by the Finnish Medical Association, will be led by an experienced expert when Heidi Ekdahl takes up her position. Ekdahl will take over as editor-in-chief in a situation where medical communication and the transformation of healthcare require the media to have an increasingly strong grip and ability to analyse complex structures. In the future, the new editor-in-chief will be responsible for the magazine's content policy and its development in the digital operating environment. Ekdahl's election is believed to strengthen the journal's role as the most important news and information channel for the medical profession and as a social debater. Source: Lääkärilehti

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.

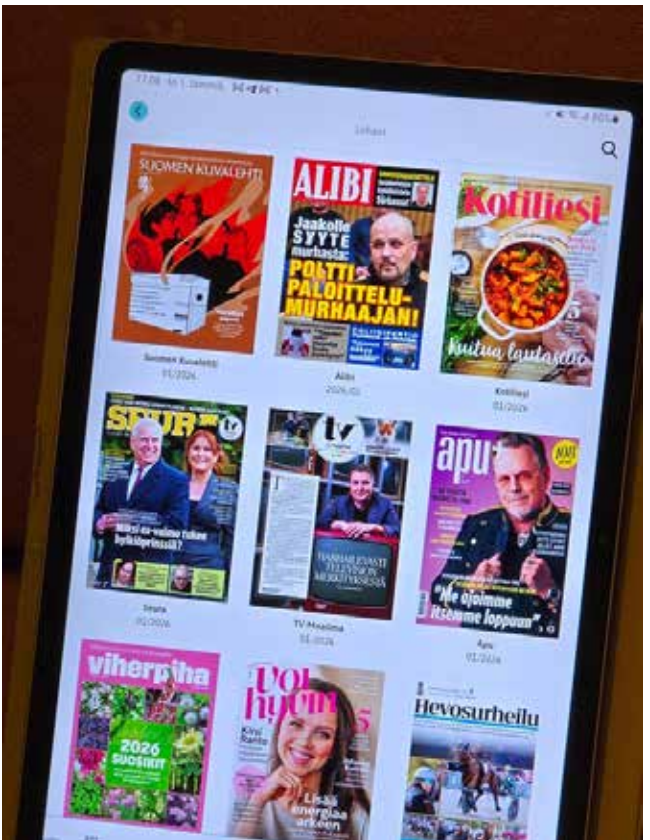
Helsingin Sanomat has adopted artificial intelligence as a practical tool in news production, under strict editorial principles. AI is designed to assist journalists, not replace them.

- 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



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.

JANUARY SUNDAY

Why should we remember the January Sunday?



Mannerheim´s portrait. 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 unstable 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 bourgeois 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

Senate's troops. Mannerheim was an exceptional person in young Finland's leadership. He had a long and distinguished military career in the Russian Imperial Army, and he had participated in several wars and operations from Russian internal unrest to World War I. He brought with him military experience, international perspective, and prestige that the young White Guard organization desperately needed.

The White Guards did not arise from nothing, but had developed as local order troops already during the chaos of 1917–1918. Especially in Ostrobothnia, the White Guards were strong and well-organized, which explains why Southern Ostrobothnia became the White movement's strongest base of support.

January Sunday meant that the White Guards' position was formalized and they were centralized under unified leadership. This was crucial for the course of the war, as it enabled more effective organization, training, and logistics. Instead of scattered local forces, a real army gradually emerged that could conduct coordinated operations and meet the Red Guard's challenge.

Under Mannerheim's leadership, the White Guards received military organization and strategy. His experience and authority were central factors in the White side's eventual victory in the war, despite initially being in a weaker position in many ways than the Reds, who controlled industrial centers and the capital.

January Sunday as a Memorial Day

After the war, January Sunday became especially White Finland's memorial day. It was celebrated annually within White Guard and veteran circles with festive speeches, wreath-laying, parades, and church services. The day symbolized the defense of independent Finland and the preservation of the legal government's power against the threat of chaos and revolution.

The commemoration of the memorial day was particularly visible during the 1920s and 1930s, when the memory of the civil war was fresh and society still divided. The victors' historical interpretation dominated public discussion, and January Sunday was seen as freedom and legality's victory over anarchy and revolution. For the Red side and their descendants, however, the day was a reminder of defeat, shame, and often personal loss.

After World War II and especially after the dissolution of the White Guard organization (1944), the celebration of January Sunday became more subdued. Post-war Finland strove to build national unity, and the open commemoration of the civil war was felt to threaten this unity. The

5 Wasa Daily, January 18, 2026



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

been suffered in the battles of January Sunday. What would our country's fate have been? Would Finland have remained independent, or would it have returned to Russia under Bolshevik leadership? What kind of society would we have now?

These questions are not mere speculation. They remind us that history could have gone differently. Independence was not a given but required difficult choices, sacrifices, and tragic conflicts. January Sunday was one of those decisive moments when Finland's future was weighed in the balance.

However, remembering January Sunday does not require idealizing the war or demonizing one side. On the contrary – it requires understanding history in all its complexity. We must remember that on both sides fought Finns who believed they were doing right and defending something valuable. On both sides there were heroes and victims; on both sides mistakes and crimes were also committed.

January Sunday is above all a reminder of where societal division can lead – and why open discussion, legal institutions, democratic processes, and shared responsibility are so important. When a society is polarized to the extreme and both sides see the opponent as an enemy rather than a fellow human being, the path to violence is short.

In today's Finland, we live in a time when the traumas of the civil war have largely healed. We have built a society where democracy, the rule of law, and social justice are strong. We have institutions that enable the resolution of disagreements without violence. This is an achievement that should not be taken for granted.

Remembering January Sunday is thus also a reminder of what we now have – and what we can lose if we do not care for our society's unity and democracy's pillars. History does not repeat itself exactly the same way, but its lessons are timeless.

January Sunday is commemorated because it represents a turning point in Finland's history – a moment when the independent state's future was decided by arms. It is part of our country's historical memory that deserves to be remembered and understood.

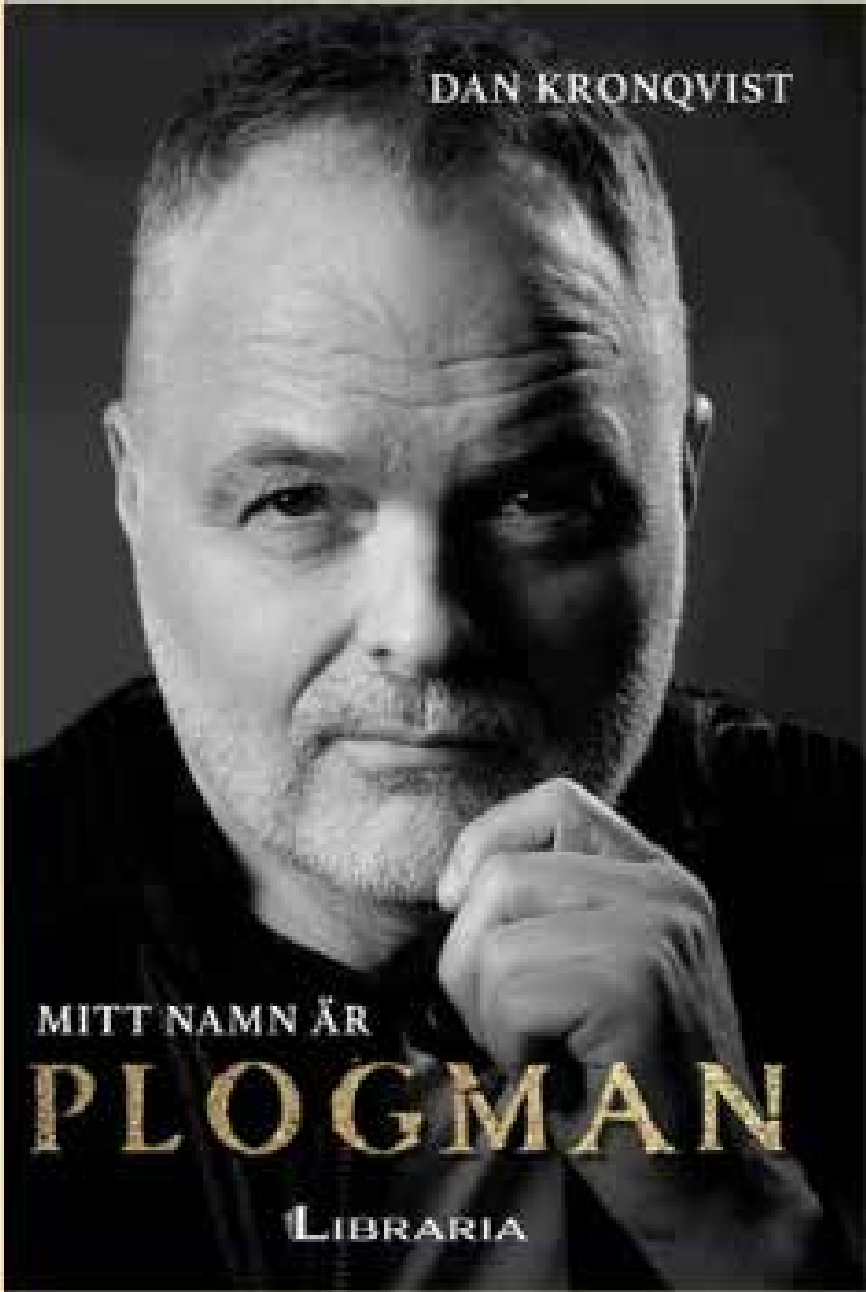
Remembering does not mean proclaiming one truth or reinforcing old dividing lines. It means acknowledging history's complexity and absorbing its lessons. January Sunday reminds us that peace, freedom, and democracy are not givens – they are achievements that we must care for every day.

When we remember January Sunday, we remember all those who had to live through that tragic time. We remember both Whites and Reds, both victors and vanquished, both those who fell at the front and those who died in prison camps. We remember that they were all Finns – and that their tragic fate teaches us something important about society's fragile balance.

History is not just the past – it is also the teacher of the present and future. January Sunday teaches us that society can split if we do not take care of it. But it also teaches us that after division can come healing and reconciliation – if we make a conscious choice to build a better future together.

That is why January Sunday is remembered. Not for the sake of hatred, but for understanding. Not to reinforce dividing lines, but to learn from history. And above all, to remember that peace is always better than war – and that democracy is always better than dictatorship, whether from the right or the left.

CULTURE



CHARES 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

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

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 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/>

LITERATURE

Adlibris bestseller 2025: Dan Brown in first place – Finnish 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

HEALTH

If You Are Over 70, These Drugs Can Affect Your Memory



As we age, our bodies become more susceptible to the effects of medications. For people over 70, certain commonly prescribed drugs may increase the risk of memory loss or cognitive decline, including Alzheimer's disease. Understanding these medications and their potential side effects is crucial for maintaining cognitive health in later years.

How Medications Affect Memory

The brain's complex chemistry is sensitive to disruption, particularly in older adults. Many drugs can interfere with neurotransmitters, reduce oxygen supply to the brain, or cause side effects such as confusion or drowsiness. When these factors persist, they can contribute to memory problems and, in some cases, increase the risk of neurodegenerative diseases.

Drugs Linked to Memory Loss and Cognitive Decline

Here are some categories of medications that may affect memory in older adults:

1. Anticholinergics

Anticholinergic drugs block acetylcholine, a neurotransmitter critical for memory and learning. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to the cognitive effects of these drugs.

Examples: Diphenhydramine (found in over-the-counter sleep aids and allergy medications) Oxybutynin (used for overactive bladder)

Amitriptyline (an antidepressant)

Risks: Chronic use has been linked to an increased risk of

Alzheimer's disease.

2. Benzodiazepines

Benzodiazepines are often prescribed for anxiety, insomnia, or muscle relaxation, but they can significantly affect cognitive function.

Examples: Diazepam (Diapam) Lorazepam (Temesta) Alprazolam (Xanor)

Risks: These drugs can cause drowsiness, confusion, and memory impairments. Long-term use is associated with a higher risk of dementia. And the drowsiness can cause an increased risk of accidents. If you fall at night in your home, you could suffer a hip fracture and be in a wheelchair for many weeks or months.

So, if You are old, please do not use these drugs at least not for any longer period of time, if possible.

3. Statins

Statins are widely used to lower cholesterol, which is crucial for cardiovascular health. However, some studies suggest a potential link to memory issues in certain individuals.

Examples: Atorvastatin (Lipitor) Simvastatin (Zocor)

Risks: While not conclusively proven, some patients report memory fog, particularly with high doses. There is no scientific evidence that statins could cause dementia, only anecdotes. The claim that statins can affect memory gained traction in 2008 when Orli Etingin, then vice chairman of medicine at New York-Presbyterian Hospital, told a newspaper in USA that atorvastatin commonly used also in Finland "makes women stupid."

No evidence really, so don't stop Your statin medication because of this anecdote,

4. Antidepressants

Certain types of antidepressants, particularly tricyclic antidepressants, can have anticholinergic properties that impair memory.

Examples: Nortriptyline Imipramine

Risks: Cognitive effects may be mild but can worsen with long-term use.

5. Opioids

Prescribed for pain relief, opioids can have sedative effects that impair short-term memory and cognitive clarity.

Examples: Oxycodone (OxyContin) Morphine Fentanyl

Risks: Long-term or high-dose use can exacerbate memory issues and increase the risk of delirium.

6. Antihistamines

First-generation antihistamines, commonly found in allergy medications, can cross the blood-brain barrier and affect cognitive function.

Examples: Chlorpheniramine Diphenhydramine (Benadryl)

Risks: Prolonged use can lead to memory fog and confusion, particularly in older adults.

7. Sleeping Aids and Muscle Relaxants

Drugs used to aid sleep or relax muscles often have sedative properties that can impair memory and attention.

Examples: Zolpidem (Ambien) Cyclobenzaprine (Flexeril)

Risks: Persistent use may increase the risk of cognitive decline.

What Can You Do?

1. Review Your Medications If you or a loved one is over 70, regularly review all medications with a healthcare provider. Ask if any drugs can be

replaced with safer alternatives or if the dosage can be adjusted.

2. Be Mindful of Polypharmacy

Taking multiple medications increases the risk of drug interactions and side effects. Consolidating treatments or eliminating unnecessary drugs can reduce these risks.

3. Adopt Non-Pharmaceutical Strategies

In some cases, lifestyle changes can reduce the need for medications that impair memory:

Practice good sleep hygiene instead of relying on sleeping pills.

Manage anxiety or depression through counseling or mindfulness practices.

Address pain with physical therapy or acupuncture.

4. Stay Physically and Mentally Active

Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and cognitive activities (like puzzles or reading) can help mitigate the cognitive effects of medications.

The Importance of Advocacy

As a patient or caregiver, it's important to advocate for optimal care. Speak openly with doctors about any concerns regarding memory or cognition and stay informed about the potential side effects of prescribed drugs.

While many medications can support health and well-being, some carry risks for memory and cognitive function, especially in older adults. By understanding these risks, discussing concerns with healthcare providers, and exploring alternative treatments, it's possible to minimize the impact on memory and maintain a sharp mind well into the golden years.

HEALTH

ALZHEIMER

New Research Suggests Shingles 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: Eytting et al., A natural experiment on the effect of herpes zoster vaccination on dementia, Nature (April 2, 2025).

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.

Juulia 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

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

Study: Daily Walking Reduces Risk of Heart Attack

10,000 steps a day provides significant health benefitsAn extensive study from the United States confirms the importance of daily exercise for heart health.

Researchers at Boston University analyzed health data from nearly 50,000 adults over a period of ten years. The effect was clear: those who walked at least 10,000 steps a day were 40% less likely to develop cardiovascular disease than those who walked less than 4,000. According to experts, short walks during the day are just as effective as a long run – the most important thing is movement, not effort.

OBESITY

New Obesity Drug Outperforms Leading Therapy in Major Trial

A landmark Phase III clinical trial published in The New England Journal of Medicine found that the drug tirzepatide (Mounjaro) produces significantly greater weight loss than semaglutide (Ozempic) in adults with obesity but without diabetes. Over 72 weeks, participants treated with tirzepatide lost about 20.2% of their body weight on average, compared to 13.7% for those on semaglutide.

The study also showed that tirzepatide led to larger reductions in waist circumference, indicating potential cardiovascular benefits. Side effects were mostly mild to moderate, with gastrointestinal symptoms being most common.

These results could influence future obesity treatment guidelines and physician prescribing practices, marking a significant advance in pharmacologic weight management.

Source: The New England Journal of Medicine (doi:10.1056/NEJMoa2416394).

TICK DISEASES

Tick-borne encephalitis on the rise – more and more people were hospitalised

Tick-borne encephalitis (TBE) has become significantly more common in Finland in 2025, and several of the infections have required hospital care. This is stated in a press release published by HUS on December 3, 2025.

Last year, 195 TBE cases were reported in Finland, but by the end of November 2025, 228 new cases had already been registered. In the HUS area, the number of infections has increased from 91 to 120. The factors are considered to be warmer winters and an expanded tick area, among other things. Three out of four of those infected have insufficient vaccination protection – 69% are completely unvaccinated and 13% have not completed or expired their vaccination series. According to a press release by HUS, up to 14% of patients have needed intensive care or intensive care, and some people recovering from intensive care need long rehabilitation before discharge. The TBE virus is typically transmitted from a tick bite, and the only effective way to protect yourself is vaccination. The vaccine prevents infection in about 90% of those vaccinated.

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.

HEALTH

Nicotine pouches – a smoke-free alternative with open-ended questions

In recent years, nicotine pouches have quickly established themselves as a new element in the global nicotine market. They are often marketed as discreet, smoke-free and modern – but what exactly are they, and what role might they play in the future?

What are nicotine pouches?

Nicotine pouches are small pouches that are placed under the upper lip, between the gums and the lip. Unlike traditional snus, they usually do not contain any tobacco. Instead, they consist of nicotine (synthetically produced or extracted from tobacco), plant fiber, flavors, and substances that regulate the pH value to facilitate nicotine absorption. Once the pouch is in place, the nicotine is absorbed through the oral mucosa. No smoke, no steam and no combustion products are generated – which is one of the main reasons why the product is perceived as a "cleaner" alternative.

How are they different from other nicotine products?

Nicotine pouches place somewhere between traditional nicotine remedies (such as chewing gum and patches) and consumer products such as snus and e-cigarettes. They: Requires no inhalation Provides a relatively fast nicotine effect Can be used discreetly in public environments At the same time, they are not classified as pharmaceutical in most countries and are not primarily marketed as aids for smoking cessation.

Risks and uncertainties It is important to emphasize that nicotine pouches are not risk-free. Nicotine is a highly addictive substance that affects the heart, blood pressure and nervous system. In young people, nicotine can negatively affect brain development. The long-term health effects of nicotine pouches are not yet fully understood. Research is ongoing, but since the product is relatively new, long-term data is lacking. Some users report gum irritation, and dental experts are following the development with some concern.

Regulation and social debate The legislation regarding nicotine pouches varies greatly between countries. In some states, they are considered tobacco products, in others as their own nicotine products. Almost everywhere, however, they are subject to age limits. The debate is intense: Proponents see nicotine pouches as a harm reduction tool for adult smokers. Critics warn that the products can serve as a gateway to nicotine addiction, especially for young people.

Looking to the future

The future of nicotine pouches is likely to be decided at the intersection of science, politics and consumer culture. Three possible lines of development can be discerned: Stricter regulationIncreased requirements for content declaration, nicotine capping and marketing – especially to protect young people. Medical re-evaluationIf research shows clear risk reductions compared to smoking, some variants may be integrated into more structured smoking cessation strategies. Normalization – or backlash

hEither nicotine pouches become an everyday substitute for cigarettes, or they are met with the same cultural resistance that tobacco has done in recent decades.

An open question

Nicotine pouches reflect our time's ambivalence towards addictions: the desire to reduce harm without completely abstaining. They are a technically sophisticated answer to an old problem – but there are still no definitive answers to what they mean for public health.

The only thing that is certain is that nicotine pouches are not a passing trend. They are already part of the present – and probably also of the nicotine debate of the future.

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

All Political and Legal Decisions to Increase Electricity Imports Have Already Been Made, and They Must Be Implemented Without Delay – Address by the President



17 January 2026 - 15.31

Dear Ukrainians!
Today I have already held a detailed coordination call on all issues related to the emergency situation in the energy sector after the Russian strikes. There are many tasks, and the situation is extremely difficult after this night and “shahed” hits in the Kyiv region. Bucha, Hostomel, and Irpin – work is ongoing. The consequences of the strikes are also being dealt with in Odesa. Kharkiv – more than four hundred thousand people are facing a difficult situation with electricity, also as a result of the strikes. All repair crews and all necessary forces – everything is deployed. I

am grateful to everyone who is working for restoration, for people, for their city, for their community. It is important that all political and legal decisions to increase electricity imports have already been made, and they must be implemented without delay. This applies to everyone – both state-owned companies and private ones – and I instructed government officials to address this promptly.

I thank every partner who is now ready to help Ukraine with equipment. There are arrangements for the import of generators and other equipment. We are accelerating all decisions as much as possible. Separately – regarding Kyiv. All go-

vernment structures are involved, and the Ministry of Internal Affairs has deployed additional assistance points. There are also decisions concerning everything that may be needed, including hot meals for people – implementation must be significantly more active. Ukraine’s Ministry of Energy, the Ministry for Development of Communities and Territories, and others must verify everything regarding the heating situation in residential buildings, as a significant number of buildings in Kyiv are still without heat.

We spoke with the Minister of Defense of Ukraine about air defense operations, about assessing the consequences of the strikes and

the circumstances of every Russian attack. Everything the enemy does must be analyzed down to every detail – and our countermeasures, our protection, must become significantly stronger. And it will. There will also be decisions that are necessary to change our defense system, including personnel decisions. I thank everyone who is helping right now.

Today the Ukrainian delegation is already in the United States. Rustem Umerov, Kyrylo Budanov, and Davyd Arakhamia. Toward the evening, Kyiv time, I expect the first reports regarding their meetings. The main task for the Ukrainian delegation is to present the full and accurate picture of what is happening and what Russian strikes are causing. Among the consequences of this terror is the discrediting of the diplomatic process: people lose faith in diplomacy, and Russian attacks constantly undermine even the limited opportunities for dialogue that existed before. The American side must understand this. Progress is also needed on the documents that have been in preparation.

Ukraine has never been and will never be a roadblock to peace, and it is now up to our partners to determine whether diplomacy moves forward. I thank everyone who stands with us, who stands with Ukraine.
Glory to Ukraine!

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ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK

Albert Edelfelt
Naishahmoja, Kvinnofigurer, 1900
Finlands Nationalgalleris samling /
Konstmuseet Ateneum

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 scrounging 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 cellars 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 reminiscently. ‘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.’

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, appoint-ments 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?”

EKONOMY

WORLD ECONOMY

A Review of the 2025 Global Economy

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?

Reference: IMF World Economic Outlook (October 2025) and World Bank Econo-

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 revolu-tionary. 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 Econo-

mic Blogs.

RUSSIA

RUSSIA

Lavrov’s Lament: Soviet Withdrawal from East Germany a “Mistake”



Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has sparked debate by characterizing the Soviet Union’s departure from East Germany as a historic betrayal.

In a recent interview on December 15, 2025, Sergey Lavrov claimed that the USSR “betrayed” its allies during its final years. Specifically, he described the unification of Germany as a hostile takeover rather than a merger, lamenting the withdrawal of half a million Soviet troops without compensation. Lavrov argued that the Soviet leadership ignored the opportunity to maintain a military presence in the East, leaving former GDR officials with no future. These remarks signal a continued hardening of Moscow’s stance toward the post-Cold War European order. PHOTO: Wikimedia Commons, US Department of State, Public Domain

RUSSIA

Russia Dismisses Finland’s Wetland Plans as “Fearmongering”

Russia has criticized Finland and Poland over plans to restore wetlands, which Russian media claim are linked to defense against alleged Russian threats. In an interview with Gazeta, Russian MP Andrei Kolesnik, a member of the State Duma’s defense committee, called the measures pointless and politically motivated. According to Kolesnik, Russia has no intention of attacking either Finland or Poland. He argued that Western governments exaggerate security threats to justify public spending and frighten domestic audiences. The comments reflect Moscow’s broader narrative, which routinely downplays NATO-related security concerns in Northern and Eastern Europe. Source: Gazeta.ru

RUSSIA

Russian MFA sparks outrage by likening Finnish war hero to war criminals

Cont on page 8

‘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, passed for an instant to collect his nerve, and gulped the oily-tasting stuff down. When he had winked 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 pierced the general uproar 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.’

Russia’s Foreign Ministry spokesperson Maria Zakharova has triggered strong criticism after comparing Finnish sniper Simo Häyhä to Japanese war criminals of the Second World War. Her comments followed a British newspaper article that portrayed Häyhä as a wartime hero.

Zakharova reacted to a Daily Telegraph feature headlined “I killed 500 Russians,” accusing Western media of “rewriting history” and diminishing the Soviet Union’s role in World War II. She argued that presenting Häyhä as a hero was comparable to how Japanese militarist propaganda once glorified atrocities committed by Imperial Army officers in China. Finnish historians strongly reject the comparison. Häyhä fought exclusively in the Winter War of 1939–1940, defending Finland against a Soviet invasion on Finnish territory. He was a soldier of a democratic state, not linked to Nazism or war crimes, and operated under the laws of war of his time. The remarks are widely seen as part of Russia’s broader effort to reinterpret 20th-century history for present-day political purposes. Reference: Russian Foreign Ministry statements Image: Wikimedia Commons, U.S. Department of State from United States Public domain

WORLD

SYRIA

The Economist: Syria Named Country of the Year: The Fall of a Dictator Sparks Global Hope

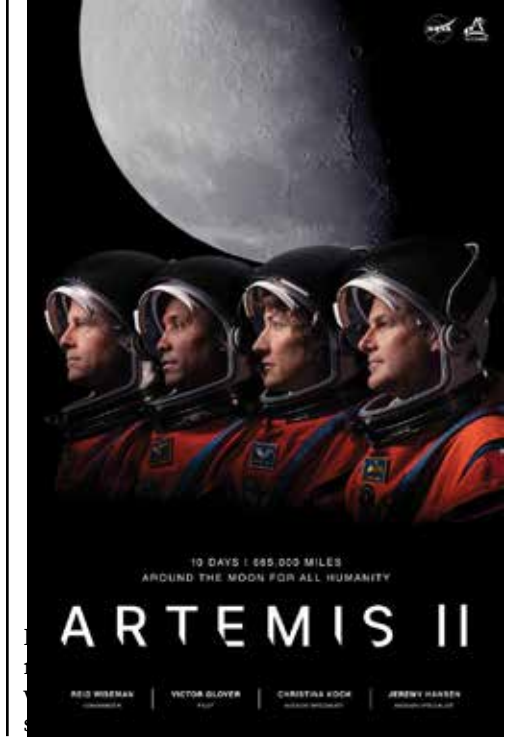


The prestigious magazine The Economist has named Syria its “Country of the Year.” The decision reflects the historic turning point and the collapse of Bashar al-Assad’s decades-long dictatorship in late 2025. The publication justifies the choice by stating that although Syria’s future remains fragile, the fall of the regime represents the most significant positive shift in global affairs in years. The title is not an award for stability, but a recognition of how much the nation has improved following 14 years of brutal civil war. Despite the challenges ahead, the potential for peace, reconstruction, and the return of millions of refugees makes Syria the country that has changed the most for the better. Lähde / Källa / Source: The Economist Map: CIA

SPACE

ARTEMIS

NASA’s Artemis Mission: Why It’s Named That and When It Launches



and a new era of space exploration. The name reflects NASA’s ambition to establish a sustainable human presence around the Moon and eventually reach Mars.

The next mission, Artemis II, is scheduled to launch no earlier than February 6–7, 2026, from Kennedy Space Center in Florida. Four astronauts will orbit the Moon for about ten days aboard the Orion spacecraft without landing, testing systems critical for deeper space travel.

Artemis is the centerpiece of NASA’s long-term strategy to push human spaceflight farther than ever since Apollo.

Source: NASA Artemis program (Wikipedia/ NASA).

SUPERMOON

Celestial Spectacle: Three Supermoons to Grace the Skies in 2026



Skywatchers are in for a treat in 2026 as three consecutive supermoons are set to light up the night sky during the summer and early autumn months.

A supermoon occurs when a full moon coincides with the moon’s closest approach to Earth in its elliptical orbit. This proximity makes the lunar disk appear significantly larger and brighter than usual. In 2026, these events will take place on JAN 3, NOV 23 and on Christmas Eve , DEC 24-. The July supermoon is predicted to be the largest and most brilliant of the trio. For the most dramatic view, enthusiasts should watch the moonrise, when the “moon illusion” makes the satellite appear massive against the horizon. It is an ideal time for both amateur astronomers and photographers to capture the moon in all its glory.

3I/ATLAS

What Do We Know About the Interstellar Comet 3I/ATLAS?



An icy visitor from another star system is currently passing through our solar system. The object, designated 3I/ATLAS, is only the third confirmed interstellar object observed by astronomers. It was discovered on July 1, 2025, by the NASA-funded ATLAS telescope in Chile and follows a hyperbolic trajectory, meaning it will not orbit the Sun but continue outward into interstellar space. Astronomers estimate the comet’s nucleus to be between about 440 meters and 5.6 kilometers across, and it reached its closest point to the Sun on October 30, 2025. At its nearest approach to Earth on December 19, 2025, it remained about 170 million miles away — far too distant to pose any danger. Scientists are closely observing 3I/ATLAS with telescopes such as Hubble and Webb to learn more about its composition and origin. Because it formed around another star, this rare visitor offers a valuable glimpse into the material makeup of distant planetary systems. Reference: NASA Science: 3I/ATLAS Facts and FAQs. Image NASA, ESA, STScI, D. Jewitt (UCLA), M.-T. Hui (Shanghai Astronomical Observatory). Image Processing: J. DePasquale (STScI) Public domain

8 Wasa Daily, January 18, 2026

HUMOUR ONE HUNDRED YEARS AGO

VERY STRANGE
— Tell me, Dad, weren’t you born in Helsinki?
— Yes.
— And I was born in Vaasa?
— Yes.
— And Mom was born in Mariehamn?
— Yes.
— Don’t you think it’s very strange that the three of us have found each other?

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.

LUNDBERG
— Do you know Lundberg? — Yes, of course! I know him so well that I don’t know him anymore.

NOT HOME
Mrs.: Here comes Mrs. Petterson, tell her I’m not home.
Maid: Good, madam.
Mrs.: Well, what did she say?
Maid: Thank God.

FISHING LUCK
— Well, what did you do this summer?
—We’ve been fishing, you know. And when we fish, we always have on liter 96% with us, and for every fish we take a sip, ; and if we get a lot of fish, we go home and take another liter

TWO STREET LAMPS
On the streets of Kemi city, there are two lamps on the same pole.
— Why do you have to be two?
— Well, you see, one must illuminate the other.

APPENDIX
— That doctor must have sent a rudely large bill. But it will

Astronomic picture of the week:

Aurora around Saturn’s North Pole



Are Saturn’s auroras like Earth’s? To help answer this question, the Hubble Space Telescope and the Cassini spacecraft monitored Saturn’s North Pole simultaneously during Cassini’s final orbits around the gas giant in September 2017.

Image Credit: NASA, ESA, Hubble, OPAL Program, J. DePasquale (STScI), L. Lamy (Obs. Paris)
Explanation: Are Saturn’s auroras like Earth’s? To help answer this question, the Hubble Space Telescope

Next week:



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, Toineen 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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