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Wasa Daily

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VAASA

New Year in Vaasa – lights, music and green resolutions

Vaasa welcomes the New Year in a spectacular, colourful and environmentally conscious way.

On New Year's Eve, Tuesday 31 December 2025, residents and visitors will gather in front of Vaasa City Hall for a laser light and music show that combines visual effects with live tones from local musicians. The show, which is about ten minutes long, is played eight times during the evening, starting at 18.00 and with half-hour intervals until 21.30.

It's not just entertainment – Vaasa residents also get the opportunity to celebrate the year in a climate-friendly way



created by Janne Hyöty, Elisa Järvelä and Niklas Rosström, with elements of artists such as Elisa Violinist and Five O Land.

The event is free of charge and the city's streets are filled with community as people can enjoy warm delicacies such as pickled pigs and mulled wine while the light dance draws patterns against the winter darkness.

The New Year's celebration also marks the start of the European Green Leaf year 2026 – an award awarded by Vaasa by the European Commission for its determined work towards a sustainable city, with climate neutrality as a goal in the 2020s. In the coming year, both residents and businesses will be encouraged to take concrete environmental initiatives and make their own environmental pledges for the future.

This will be a New Year's celebration where joy, community and green values go hand in hand, and where Vaasa stands as an example of how cities can celebrate sustainably – with the future in focus.

Source: Vaasa.fi

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

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

Source: Malax kommun, Malax.fi

KORSHOLM

New Year Lights Up Replot Bridge with Dazzling Light Show

The New Year will be welcomed in spectacular fashion in Korsholm as Replot Bridge lights up with a colorful light show on New Year's Eve. The municipality of Korsholm invites residents and visitors to enjoy a unique visual experience in one of the region's most iconic landmarks.

The light show takes place on Wednesday, December 31, 2025, at 6 p.m., 8 p.m., 10 p.m., and at midnight. Each show lasts approximately ten minutes, transforming the bridge into a glowing symbol of celebration.

The event is open to the public and offers a festive and environmentally friendly alternative to traditional fireworks, adding brilliance to the start of the new year.

Source: Korsholm.fi

VAASA

Fresh Sushi Around the Clock – New Vending Machine Launches in Vaasa



Vaasa is getting a taste of the future of fast food as a new sushi and noodle vending machine launches in the city, offering fresh meals day and night. Located on Hietasaarenkatu, between Kauppapuistikko and Teräksenkuja, the machine brings restaurant-quality convenience to one of Vaasa's busiest areas.

The concept is simple: grab, go, and enjoy. With no queues, no waiting times, and no closing hours, customers can pick up fresh sushi and noodle dishes whenever hunger strikes – whether during a late-night stroll or an early morning commute.

The launch reflects a growing demand for flexible dining solutions and automated food services, already popular in major cities worldwide. For Vaasa, the vending machine adds a modern, urban touch while responding to changing lifestyles and expectations around convenience and availability.

The machine is now open and ready to serve customers 24/7. Reference: K.Achi Sushi, launch information, Vaasa

NEW YEAR'S REVUE

Laughter is budding in Pörtom – time for "Grönsaksland"



Pörtom's popular New Year's revue is back. On January 10, 2026, the doors will open for this year's performance, which promises both local humor and sharp observations under the title "Grönsaksland (Vegetable land)".

For decades, the revue in Pörtom has been one of the absolute highlights in the area during the winter months. This year's edition, Grönsaksland, premieres at 19.00 and ticket sales have already started online. The revue is known for attracting large audiences from all over the region thanks to its accurate satire and warm local feel. The organizers of Pörtom UF say that it pays to be out well in advance to secure your place in the crowd.

Source: Pörtom UF (bokning.portomuf.fi)

KORSNÄS

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Image of the week:



A Happy New Year!

And a Happy New Year! A Happy New Year!

VAASA

Award for Bike-Friendly Workplace – City Environment Sector Recognised in Vaasa

Award for Bike-Friendly Workplace – City Environment Sector Recognised in Vaasa

The award was presented by the Fysiikan sajojen & Polkupyörien initiative, which highlights organisations that actively promote cycling among their employees.

Judges praised the sector's practical measures to make cycling a viable choice: expanded bike parking facilities, improved shower and changing areas, and regular cycling education and campaigns for staff. The employer also offers company bikes for short work-related trips and

on-site mobility. These initiatives reflect a broader commitment to employee wellbeing and sustainable transport.

City officials say the award recognises not only infrastructure upgrades but also cultural change that encourages healthy and eco-friendly commuting habits. Supporting cycling reduces environmental impact while promoting physical fitness and workplace morale.

The City Environment Sector hopes its example will inspire other organisations in the region to adopt similar bike-friendly practices.

Reference: STT press release, 23 December 2025



without fireworks, a concept that the city introduced last year and which is now continuing. The festival is officially opened by Jasmin Granholm, Chair of the Vaasa City Board, and the stage is brought to life by music

OSTROBOTHNIA

VAASA/KORSHOLM

Lifitis Fare Prices Stay the Same Despite VAT Reduction



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

Officials explained that the VAT cut is too small to justify adjusting the existing fare structure – rounding changes could cause confusion. Rising overall operating costs for public transport also weighed into the decision. For passengers, this means that despite a modest tax relief on paper, Lifiti fares will remain unchanged going into the new year.

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

MALAX

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

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

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

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

Source: Malax.fi

MALAX

Träffpunkten Named "Star of the Year" in Malax

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

EDITORIAL

The year that passed – between light and shadow



2025 was a year of trials, adaptation and quiet perseverance

As we now leave 2025 behind, it is difficult to sum up the year in one word. It's been a year of contrasts The year that passed – between light and shadow

, where progress and setbacks have coexisted. The world is still living in the aftermath of the pandemic, the war in Ukraine still casts a dark shadow over Europe, and uncertainty in world politics has become the new normal. At the same time, despite economic concerns and increased tensions in other parts of the world, Finland has maintained its position as one of the most stable and functional societies in the world.

Health and well-being – they work, but under pressure

Covid-19 has gone from being a pandemic to being endemic. Society has adapted, and thanks to vaccination, medical advances and increased knowledge, the virus no longer threatens the functions of society. But the pandemic has left its mark. The burden on health care remains high, and the new welfare service districts have faced difficulties in finding their shape.

The debate has largely been characterised by cuts, staff shortages and financial deficits. Less has been said about what works: that those suffering from a serious illness still receive treatment, often of high quality. The welfare state is creaking, but it is still standing.

Economy and defence – difficult priorities

The Finnish economy has remained tight. The national debt has increased, and the government has been forced to make unpopular decisions in the form of increases in taxes and fees. This has been felt by households and businesses, not least at a time when interest rates and the cost of living have already put pressure on the economy.

At the same time, defence spending has increased sharply. Finland's accession to NATO has fundamentally changed the

country's security policy position, and the uncertain situation in the immediate area has made defence a priority. This has meant difficult compromises in which resources have been transferred from other sectors of society. Safety has received a new award.

War and Peace – A Brutal Reality

The war in Ukraine has continued without a clear path to peace. The humanitarian catastrophe is deepening, and Russia's aggression has deeply shaken the European security order. Despite sanctions and widespread support, there are few signs of a willingness to compromise from Moscow. Everything indicates that President Vladimir Putin does not see peace as an option.

In the Middle East, the war in Gaza has continued to claim civilian lives and cause immense suffering. A ceasefire could finally be achieved through American mediation under the leadership of President Donald Trump, but the conflict is far from being resolved. The year 2025 has once again shown how fragile peace is.

Warmer Finland – the climate is felt

The year also marked a clear climatic milestone: for the first time, Finland's average temperature has exceeded pre-industrial levels by 1.5 degrees. It is not an abstract number, but a change that is already noticeable in everyday life.

Winters are getting shorter, snow-sure winters are absent in large parts of the country and the spruce bark beetle is spreading northwards. So far, Finland has avoided real weather disasters, but the signs are still there: heavier rainfall, longer heat waves and changes in ecosystems. The climate crisis is no longer something that waits in the future – it is here.

The fact that the Paris Agreement's 1.5-degree target has now been exceeded is a serious warning signal. Adaptation is necessary, but emission reductions are still crucial if the long-term impacts are to be limited.

What awaits in 2026?

The future is difficult to predict in a world that is changing ever faster. But the experience from 2025 points in a clear direction: cooperation, trust and a long-term perspective will be crucial. Polarization, short-term solutions and simple answers are not enough.

The past year has contained both light and shadow. It has tested society's resilience – and shown that it still exists.

Finland – an oasis in a troubled world

Despite all the challenges, Finland remains one of the most democratic, stable and functioning countries in the world. The high level of trust, the strong community and respect for institutions are assets that we must protect.

NEW YEAR'S EVE GHOST STORY

Ghosts or Everyday Mysteries – London's Success on the Main Stage of the Wasa Theatre



Vaasa's theatre audience can look forward to an exciting experience this winter when the award-winning thriller 02:22 The Ghost Story has its Swedish-language premiere at Wasa Theatre.

The play, which had a big break in London and was awarded Best New Play at the WhatsOnStage Awards, is written by Danny Robins, known for the podcasts Uncanny and The Battersea Poltergeist. In this atmospheric one-act play, we meet Jenny and Sami, a couple

who have recently moved into a newly renovated house where mysterious voices can be heard every night at exactly 2.22 a.m. Sam refuses to believe in anything supernatural, but when friends are invited to dinner, the evening turns into a hunt for truth. With a strong ensemble consisting of Sonia Haga, Jon Henriksen, Markus Lytts and Tove Quickström, led by director Ida Kronholm, the audience will enjoy an intense performance in which questions of faith, doubt and relationships are

at the centre. The premiere took place in mid-November and is performed on the main stage of the Wasa Theatre with subtitles in Swedish, Finnish and English, making it an attractive option for both local audiences and theatre-interested visitors. And you can book tickets on the theatre's website. And among other things – you can celebrate New Year's Eve with this ghost story.

Source: Wasa Theatre's press release.
Photo: Wasa Teater

WASA TEATER

Bold New Play VILD Awarded Wasa Theatre's Top Regional Arts Prize



The innovative theatre production VILD has been honoured with the 2025 Wasa Theatre Foundation Prize for the Promotion of Performing Arts in Ostrobothnia, a distinguished award celebrating outstanding contributions to the region's live theatre scene.

The prize carries a €5,000 award and is granted based on nominations from the public and selection by the Foundation's board.

Created by artists Susanne Marins and Carla Fri, VILD confronts themes of femininity, female sexu-

ality and freedom with a fearless and expressive artistic voice. The play has been widely praised for its emotional power, original music and its ability to spark conversation among audiences. Since its premiere, VILD has toured across Finland and Sweden, earning strong critical and audience acclaim.

The award jury highlighted the production's capacity to engage audiences on both intellectual and emotional levels, strengthen regional cultural identity and bring people together through the shared experience of live

performance. VILD has also been presented on the Wasa Theatre stage, where audiences responded positively to its compelling storytelling and dynamic presence.

In 2026, VILD will return to Wasa Theatre as a guest performance, offering even more theatre-goers the chance to see this powerful work. The recognition underscores the vibrant and evolving performing arts landscape in Ostrobothnia.

Reference and Photo: Wasa Theatre press release.

UNEMPLOYMENT

Unemployment Rises in Ostrobothnia – Job Openings Shrink Amid Cooling Market

Unemployment in the Ostrobothnia employment area increased in November 2025, reversing earlier progress and showing signs of labour market strain

The region, which includes Vaasa, Mustasaari, Korsnäs and Uusikaarlepyy, recorded an unemployment rate of 7.4 percent, up 0.8 percentage points from a year earlier and 0.1 points higher than in October. The total number of unemployed jobseekers rose

by 544 people compared to November 2024, bringing the count to 4,607.

The rise was most pronounced in Vaasa and Mustasaari, where both absolute and percentage gains in unemployment outpaced other municipalities. Only Vörå saw a slight decline in its number of unemployed. While unemployment increased in nearly all age groups, the number of jobseekers under age 25 declined modestly, indicating mixed trends across generations.

Long-term unemployment – those out of work for more than a year – also rose sharply, underscoring persistent challenges for labour

market integration. Meanwhile, opportunities for jobseekers shrank: only 390 new job vacancies were posted in November, nearly 28 percent fewer than in October and over 12 percent fewer than a year earlier. The total number of open positions fell to 709, a drop of more than 14 percent monthly.

Though Ostrobothnia's unemployment rate remains below the national figure, the combination of rising joblessness and falling job openings highlights structural pressures that could affect the region's economic resilience in the months ahead. Reference: Vaasa City / Ostrobothnia employment review, 23 December 2025

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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

CHARITY CONCERT

Still Christmas – Charity Concert for Ukraine in Vaasa

On Tuesday, January 6 at 4 p.m., the Vasa Swedish Parish invites the public to a charity concert for Ukraine titled Still Christmas at Trefaldighetskyrkan in Vaasa. The event features both Ukrainian and Finnish-Swedish performers, including Rymma Bahdasarian, Halyna Luzhetska and the children's choir Dzvinotchky, creating a program of music and solidarity. Admission is 20 euros for adults, while Ukrainian guests and children enter free. After the performance, coffee will be served in the church crypt. All proceeds go directly to supporting young Ukrainians in the Vaasa region and to Ukraine through the local aid organization Kalyna rf, which works on humanitarian aid and integration. The concert highlights local commitment to peace and community support, using music as a bridge between cultures and causes. Source: Vasa Swedish Parish

WORLD HERITAGE

Museum money for the Kvarken World Heritage Site



The Finnish Cultural Heritage Authority has launched a call for grants to support the protection and preservation of Finland's UNESCO World Heritage Site. Owners of the Kvarken Archipelago, whose task is to ensure the preservation of the value of a unique nature site, can also apply for a grant.

The Finnish Heritage Authority supports cultural heritage management Finland ratified the UNESCO World Heritage Convention as early as 1987, and the Finnish Heritage Agency is responsible for its implementation in Finland. The aim is to grant funding for measures that ensure that the sites remain worthy of World Heritage status. Grants are awarded for a wide range of projects:

- * Research and design work
- * Restoration and care
- * Restoration and repair measures

The Finnish Heritage Authority emphasises that World Heritage Sites must serve as examples and promote knowledge of repair methods and materials, which can also be applied to other cultural-historical sites. Finland has a total of six cultural heritage sites and one nature site – the Kvarken Archipelago – that has been included on the UNESCO list. Grants can be applied for by the owners of the sites and the buildings located there.

Grants can be applied for electronically by 30 January 2026 at 4:00 p.m. via the Haeavustuksia.fi service.

KORSHOLM

Korsholm Honors the Memory of Carola Lithén, Long-Serving Municipal Leader

The municipality of Korsholm is mourning the loss of Carola Lithén, a long-serving elected official who played a key role in local governance for nearly four decades. Lithén passed away on December 21, 2025, following a serious illness.

Lithén was active in municipal politics for 37 years. First elected to the municipal council in 1989, she became a member of the municipal executive board in 1991. She served as chair of the council from 2013 to 2021 and as chair of the executive board from 2021 to 2025.

Beyond politics, Lithén was deeply engaged in civil society, particularly in advocating for people with disabilities. Her commitment left a lasting impact at local, regional, and national levels. Source: Korsholm.fi

TIKANOJA

Music in Tikanoja ad Dec 27

At the end of December, Tikanoja Art Home in Vaasa presents the Year End Music Salon 2025 – a refined

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Photo Supplement



Photo Supplement - bpress.obh

CITY THEATRE

Diverse spring culture offerings now on sale – Vaasa City Theatre announces guest programme

Vaasa City Theatre has published a full guest programme for spring 2026, and tickets for all performances are now available at the box office and in the online store

The spring programme covers a wide range of theatre, music, dance and comedy, and it offers both Finnish names and unique performances to Vaasa that appeal to audiences of different ages.

The spring season begins with the musical performance *Katrina* on 15–16 January. The performance is based on Sally Salminen's novel *Katrina* (1936) and tells the story of Katrina's life from Ostrobothnia in Åland. The main role will be played by Erica Back, who has a background in Närpes, and the performance will be accompanied by the Vaasa Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Anna-Maria Helsinki.

During Valentine's Day week, February 13, Diandra, with a wonderful voice, arrives on the Romeo stage to perform love songs and musical classics. As spring progresses, the programme includes a wide range of performances: on 19 March, the Pohjanmaa tanssii event's work *The Floor is Lava* about the meeting of group dance and children's imagination will be shown, and on 25 March, the UMO Helsinki Jazz Orchestra will enter the world of jazz under conductor Mikko Hassinen.

At the end of March, on 31 March, the audience will wake up with laughter and thoughts when the Starman monologue takes up Martti Suosalo's interpretation of biodiversity and its endangered state on stage. In April, on April 10, comedian Sami Hedberg will make people laugh on his Best of Full-Body Man



tour.

The spring programme will culminate on 9 May with a stand-up evening at the Kulma theatre restaurant in Nau-runurkka and on 22–23 May with a guest performance *Stones in Your Pocket* – a beloved production whose long-term success has broken audience records for Finnish theatres.

The program offers something for everyone: from classical theater to touching music, dance experiences and stand-up. This spring is an excellent opportunity to experience Vaasa's cultural life in a diverse and pre-planned way. TICKETS are now on sale – take the chance!

Source: City of Vaasa press release, spring visitor programme now on sale in its entirety,

CITY ORCHESTRA

A rich and diverse spring: The Vaasa City Orchestra transports listeners to the worlds of music from Ravel to Sibelius

The Vaasa City Orchestra's spring 2026 programme has been announced, and it offers a unique selection of classical music, large choral works, musical theatre, international works and performances tinged with Spanish passion.

The programme has been designed to be an appealing whole, where concerts and collaborative projects are combined by a high artistic level and a diverse range of expressions.

The spring season opens on 15–16 January with the musical theatre performance *Katrina*, which is a collaboration between the Vaasa City Theatre and the Åland Cultural Association Katrina. The performance combines theatre and orchestra and brings to the stage the story of Katrina from Ostrobothnia as a powerful and touching whole, in which mezzo-soprano Erica Back shines in the lead role under the baton of conductor Anna-Maria Helsing.

In February, the Instrument Academies will host an evening where young soloists will perform works by Beethoven, Mozart and Elgar. This concert is part of the orchestra's efforts to support young talents and inspire future professionals to pursue classical music. At the same time, it provides an opportunity for the audience to see and hear emerging talents.

During the spring, the programme will also travel to international music scenes: at the Comeback! concert on 5 March, the orchestra's former chief con-

ductor James Lowe will conduct a programme in which the Estonian mezzo-soprano Monika-Evelin Liiv will perform as a soloist. This will be followed by Pasión Flamenco on 13 March, where you will get to know the rhythms of Spain and the joys and fiery nature of flamenco dance.

On 23 April, the orchestra invites listeners to listen to French sounds, as harpist Sivan Magen and Panula Competition winner Félix Benati perform a programme with elegant and lively French works.

The Vaasa City Orchestra's programme is not limited to great soloists and orchestral works. On 20 March, the concert in collaboration with the Seinäjoki Philharmonic Orchestra will feature works by Englund, Tarkiainen and Sibelius, among others, and the Good Friday concert on 19 April will take listeners to silence and devotion with Pärt's *Cantus* and Pauré's *Requiem*.

The spring festival programme will culminate on 15 May, when the Vaasa City Orchestra performs together with the Helsinki Chamber Choir in the main concert of the Vaasa Choir Festival. This collaboration is an example of how the Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra combines local and national choral traditions to offer experiences that will remain in the minds of listeners for a long time.

The performances of the Vaasa City Orchestra promise to be artistically ambitious, experiential and diverse – an unforgettable musical spring awaits.

Source: STT-tiedote The Helsinki Philharmonic Orchestra's spring season offers French and Spanish elements, large choral works and impressive co-productions

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concert series combining classical music and museum ambience.

The concerts take place on Sunday, 27 December, with three performances at 12:00, 14:00 and 16:00. The programme includes works by composers such as Debussy, Satie, Fauré, Kreisler and Pärt, performed by violi-nist Maano Männi and pianist Irina Zahharenkova. Tickets are priced at €26, €15 for students, and €22 for Museum Card holders. The concert lasts about 60 minutes.

It offers a peaceful and elegant way to mark the end of the year — ideal for those seeking culture, reflection and musical beauty.

FIMLAB

Fimlab's Special Holiday Opening Hours During Christmas & New Year

The laboratory network Fimlab has announced adjusted opening hours for its service points in Ostrobothnia during the 2025 holiday season

Specifically, Fimlab's branches in Alaveteli will be closed on 31 December 2025, and in Kruunupyy from 22 to 31 December. Quick blood sampling (Nopsa) at Vaasa Central Hospital, as well as spirometry and ECG ser-vices, will be suspended from 22 December 2025 to 4 January 2026.

All service points will also be closed on Christmas Eve (24 Dec), New Year's Day (1 Jan) and Epiphany (6 Jan). Other branches will maintain normal opening hours — check fimlab.fi for the latest updates.

SAS

The airline SAS will increase the range of routes at Vaasa Airport next spring 2026



Scandinavian Airlines (SAS) announces a significant expansion on the route between Vaasa and Stockholm when the summer schedule goes into effect on March 25, 2026.

With the new timetables, the number of weekly flights will increase from the current six to eleven, and on Wednesdays, Thursdays, Fridays and Sundays, flights will be operated two-

ce a day. This nearly doubled connection will offer passengers more flexibility and better connections to Scandinavia and more widely to Europe and beyond.

The expansion is the result of cooperation between Vaasa Region Development Ltd (VASEK) and SAS, and it is expected to benefit both business and leisure travelers. Peter Källberg, Project Manager at VASEK, says that the additional services will improve the accessibility of the area and strengthen the airport's position as a significant hub. Increasing the number of trunk connections can also further support the region's businesses and international connections.

The new schedules will apply after the Easter holidays, but passengers will soon be able to book their flights for the 2026 season. The situation follows broader growth in the Vaasa airport area, where the aim is to develop air traffic and attract more connections both in Finland and abroad.

Photo: Adrian Pingstone, Wikimedia Commons, Public Domain

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?

WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTY

The indoor air problem in the H building is a mystery



The cause of the indoor air symptoms on the sixth floor of the H-building in Vaasa has not yet been found, although the investigations continue, says the Wellbeing Services County of Ostrobothnia.

The Cancer and Blood Diseases Ward will continue to operate in temporary premises in the S building, but staying in other facilities in the H building has not been found to be harmful to health.

Since May, the studies have focused especially on ventilation and air circulation. Previously, it was suspected that carpets cause symptoms, but this has not been confirmed or ruled out. Measurements made at different times have shown variation in fibre concentrations. Next, the researchers will find out where the fibres may come from – ventilation ducts or structures.

The aim is to get the facilities in the H building in order and use as soon as possible, and the causes of the symptoms are being investigated in close cooperation with the Bothnia High 5 alliance, which was responsible for the construction. The Wellbeing Services County of Ostrobothnia emphasises that although the symptoms are still a mystery, further measures are underway to ensure a safe working environment.

LAIHIA

Nominate Laihia's laureates

The municipality of Laihia invites organisations, associations and private individuals to make proposals for the 2025 awardees and scholarship recipients.

The award winners are sought in several categories: Athlete of the Year, Decent Citizen, Posture Youth, Exemplary Youth and Veteran Athlete of the Year.

Athletes who represent clubs from outside the municipality but live in Laihia can also be taken into account. Proposals must be justified and submitted in writing by 2 January 2026 at 3 p.m. either by post to the registry of the municipality of Laihia (P.O. Box 13, 66401 Laihia) or by email to address laihian.kunta@laihia.fi, with the subject line "Awardees 2025".

More information on making proposals and the rules for awarding scholarships can be found on the municipality's website. The award ceremony will be held in February 2026, when the awardees and scholarship recipients will receive the recognition they deserve. Now is a great opportunity to highlight the sporty and exemplary people of your community!

ALMA

Vaasa Adult Education Centre

Alma: Spring term starts 7.1.2026

Adult Education Centre Alma will start its spring term on Wednesday 7 January 2026 – and there will be about 200 courses available. The list covers a wide range of hobby and skills courses, and there are also places left for several courses that have been running throughout the academic year.

At the institute, it is possible to study languages, civic education, art courses, handicrafts, well-being and many other subjects both in Vaasa and in nearby municipalities such as Likkyrö, Laihia and Isokyrö. The spring courses are open to everyone – whether you have a career, are a student or not – and the courses are suitable for both a new hobby and professional development or additional skills.

Alma emphasizes that study-ing can be just as much for your own enjoyment as for everyday life or working life. Registration is still ongoing, and those interested are encouraged to check out the courses and make their selections soon – spots fill up quickly.

In addition to online registration, you can also register on site or by phone at Alma's service points in Vaasa: Raastuvankatu 31, tel. 0400 868 110 (Mon–Fri 8 am–4 pm) Raastuvankatu 33 / Kirkkoesplanadi 15 (7.1. onwards), tel. 040 6299 133 (Mon–Thu 10 am–2 pm).

On Thursday 11 December at 5.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m., the open event Christmas in Alma will be held at Raastuvankatu 31. In addition to a diverse programme, you can also register for spring courses.

More information about the event: vaasa.fi/alma – Events

WÄRTSILÄ

Wärtsilä extends contract – secures stable electricity supply for major gold deposits in Mauritania



On 18 December 2025, Vaasa-based company Wärtsilä announced that it is extending its O&M agreement with Tasiast Mauritanie Limited S.A., a subsidiary of Kinross Gold Corporation, for a further three years.

The agreement applies to the power plant at the large Tasiast gold mine in northern Mauritania and aims to ensure continued reliable and secure electricity supply that supports the mine's production targets.

The 60 megawatt power plant has been in operation by Wärtsilä since it was commissioned in 2013. The plant is part of an isolated hybrid grid that combines solar power, battery storage and Wärtsilä's engines to provide both baseload power and backup capacity for the stability of the system.

The renewed agreement includes a performance-based component that was introduced in connection with the 2022 expansion, where the focus is on measurable results in line with the mine's commercial and operational goals. This model promotes a shared responsibility between Wärtsilä and the customer to achieve set performance levels.

The extension of the agreement strengthens the long-standing relationship between Wärtsilä and Kinross and contributes to the reliability of one of Africa's most important gold-producing plants.

Reference: Wärtsilä press release, 18 December 2025

Caption: Wärtsilä has renewed its O&M agreement with Tasiast Mauritanie Limited S.A., a subsidiary of the Canadian group Kinross Gold Corporation, for a further three years. © Wärtsilä

FINLAND

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.

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

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HEALTH

Eight Good Habits to Keep Your Brain Young

Aging is a natural process, but the choices we make every day can significantly influence how our bodies and minds age.

Our brain, the control center of all bodily functions and thoughts, is particularly susceptible to aging. Fortunately, research has revealed that adopting certain healthy lifestyle habits can slow down brain aging and reduce the risk of memory-related diseases like dementia. These habits, derived from the American Heart Association’s “Life’s Essential 8” guidelines, promote not only heart health but also the vitality of the brain.

A recent study conducted by researchers at the University of Maryland highlights the importance of these habits. By analyzing the lifestyles and MRI scans of nearly 19,000 participants aged 40 to 69, the study found that individuals adhering to these habits had brains that appeared younger than their chronological age. Each 10-point increase in their lifestyle score corresponded to a brain that was, on average, 113 days younger in terms of white matter health. White matter, which carries messages within the brain, is crucial for efficient information processing and shrinks as we age.

Let us explore these eight essential habits that can keep your brain youthful and resilient.

January 1 is a good day to change some habit.

1. Eat a Healthy Diet

A nutritious diet forms the cornerstone of a healthy body and mind. Focus on foods rich in nutrients, such as:

Fruits and Vegetables: Provide essential vitamins, antioxidants, and fiber.

Whole Grains: Support sustained energy and cognitive health.

Legumes and Beans: Excellent sources of plant-based proteins and fiber.

Nuts and Seeds: Rich in healthy fats and brain-boosting nutrients like omega-3s.

Lean Proteins: Include poultry, fish, and plant-based alternatives to support brain function. Avoid processed foods, sugary snacks, and excessive saturated fats, which can harm both heart and brain health.

2. Get Regular Exercise

Physical activity is a powerful tool for brain health. Engaging in at least 150 minutes of moderate exercise (e.g., brisk walking or swimming) or 75 minutes of vigorous activity (e.g., running) per week boosts blood flow to the brain and promotes the growth of new neural connections. Exercise also reduces stress and enhances memory and mood, which are critical for cognitive well-being.

3. Avoid Tobacco

Smoking and the use of e-cigarettes harm blood vessels, reduce oxygen flow to the brain, and accelerate cognitive decline. Quitting smoking at any stage of life can lead to significant improvements in brain health and overall longevity.

4. Prioritize Sleep

Sleep is essential for brain repair and memory consolidation. Aim for 7-9 hours of quality sleep each night.

Poor sleep or sleep deprivation can lead to problems like impaired memory, mood disorders, and an increased risk of dementia. Establishing a consistent sleep routine and creating a relaxing bedtime environment can help improve sleep quality.

5. Maintain a Healthy Weight

Keeping your body mass index (BMI) under 25 reduces the risk of obesity-related conditions that can harm the brain, such as diabetes and high blood pressure. A healthy weight also supports better mobility and energy levels, enabling an active lifestyle that benefits cognitive function.

6. Control Cholesterol Levels

High levels of “bad” LDL cholesterol can lead to plaque buildup in arteries, restricting blood flow to the brain. Regular check-ups and dietary changes—such as reducing saturated fats and increasing fiber intake—can help maintain healthy cholesterol levels and protect brain health.

7. Manage Blood Sugar Levels

Elevated blood sugar levels can damage blood vessels and nerves, increasing the risk of conditions like diabetes and cognitive decline. Monitoring your blood sugar and consuming a balanced diet with low glycemic index foods can help prevent these issues.

8. Monitor Blood Pressure

High blood pressure, often called the “silent killer,” can lead to strokes and other conditions that negatively affect brain function. Keeping your blood pressure below 120/80 mmHg through lifestyle changes and, if necessary, medication, can protect your brain from damage.

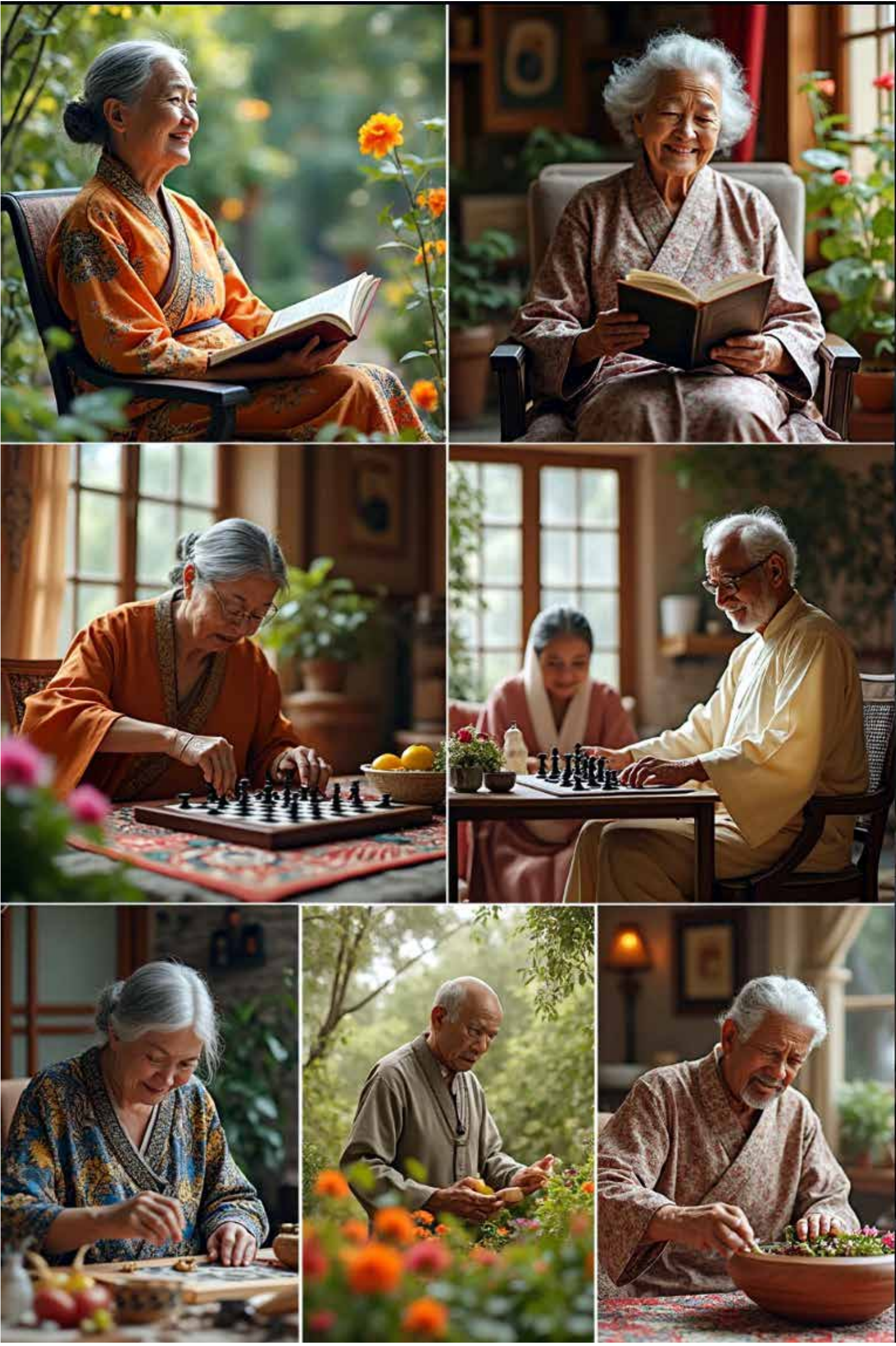
Why These Habits Matter

Following these eight habits not only supports brain health but also contributes to overall well-being. The cumulative effect of eating well, staying active, and managing key health metrics ensures that the brain receives the nutrients, oxygen, and stimulation it needs to stay sharp.

By incorporating these habits into your daily

routine, you can take proactive steps to protect your brain against premature aging and memory-related diseases. Start small—focus on one or two habits and gradually build from there. Over time, these changes can lead to profound benefits, keeping your brain youthful and your

mind agile well into your later years. And January 1 is a good day to change an habit. Your brain is your most valuable asset. Nurture it with care, and it will serve you well throughout your life.



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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.

EKONOMY

CULTURE

NETFLIX

Netflix Buys Warner Bros – A Game Changer for Streaming Viewers

Netflix has announced a landmark deal to acquire Warner Bros, including its film and television studios as well as HBO and HBO Max. The acquisition brings together some of the most iconic franchises in entertainment history under a single corporate roof. The deal includes globally recognized titles such as Harry Potter, Friends, Game of Thrones, the entire DC universe, and classics like Casablanca. These will sit alongside Netflix originals including Stranger Things, Wednesday, Squid Game, and Bridgerton, creating an unprecedented content portfolio. For now, viewers will not notice immediate changes. Netflix and HBO Max will continue to operate as separate platforms, and existing subscriptions remain valid. The transaction still requires regulatory and shareholder approval. In the long term, however, the merger could reshape how audiences access content, potentially offering broader libraries—while also raising questions about pricing, competition, and consumer choice in the global streaming market. Reference: Netflix / Warner Bros corporate announcement

FINNISH ROCK

Finnish rock icon Pate Mustajärvi has died



Pauli “Pate” Mustajärvi, one of the most influential figures in Finnish rock music, has died on December 26, 2025. The news was confirmed via Mustajärvi’s official Instagram account. He was 69 years old.

Mustajärvi was best known as the frontman of Popeda, a band that helped define Finnish rock for more than four decades. With his distinctive voice, direct lyrics and unmistakable stage presence, he became a symbol of working-class rock culture and a household name across Finland. Six months ago, Mustajärvi publicly revealed that he had been diagnosed with cancer. According to his family, he passed away after a period of illness. In their statement, his loved ones ask for privacy and peace during a time of deep grief. Pate Mustajärvi’s music and influence will continue to resonate in Finnish rock for generations to come.

Source: Pauli Mustajärvi’s official Instagram account
Photo: Wikimedia Commons, Cecil, Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike

PRESS

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

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SPACETRAVEL

Send Your Name Around the Moon with the Artemis Space Ship!

The lunar journey of a lifetime awaits – and you are invited to join.

NASA is preparing to return humanity to the Moon, and you can be part of the adventure without ever leaving Earth. For the upcoming Artemis II mission, scheduled to launch as early as February 2026, the space agency is inviting people worldwide to "board" the Orion spacecraft by submitting their names to be carried around the Moon.

Artemis II is a historic 10-day test flight and the first crewed mission under the Artemis program. While four astronauts—Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen—will be physically inside the capsule, thousands of virtual passengers will join them. All submitted names will be stored on a digital memory card tucked safely inside the spacecraft as it loops around the lunar far side, reaching distances further than any human has traveled in over 50 years.

Participating is free and simple. By visiting NASA's website, you can register your name and receive a personalized digital "boarding pass" to keep as a souvenir. It is a symbolic way to connect people across the globe with the next giant leap in space exploration. Be sure to sign up before the deadline on January 21, 2026!



Reference: NASA - Launch Your Name Around Moon in 2026

Image: Credit NASA

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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

NEW FOOD

If you want to eat a little less meat... Snellman launches beef-pea mince as flexitarian alternative



Aimed at consumers who want to reduce their meat intake without giving up familiar dishes, the product offers a practical “step towards plant-based eating”. Snellman says the goal was to create a “prote-rich everyday meal solution” that keeps taste and cooking routines unchanged.

A brief comment: The new hybrid meat and pea product from Snellman is a practical step for those who want to reduce meat consumption without abandoning their usual recipes. At the same time, it illustrates a larger trend: many people are looking for flexible solutions where taste, tradition and sustainability meet.

MEDIESPRÅK

Journalism and class differences in focus when the Swedish-language Media Language Seminar takes place in Turku

On 27–28 January 2026, the media industry will gather in Turku for the seminar Mediespråk (Media Language XXI). In the new Astra building, everything from American politics to how class differences are heard in the Swedish language in our mass media is discussed.

This year's programme is packed with big names such as foreign correspondent Cecilia Uddén and author Mustafa Can. The focus is on the challenges of journalism in a changing world situation and the future of the Nordic media market. The seminar, which is held in Åbo Akademi University's Academy Quarter, offers a unique platform for linguists and journalists to delve into how right-wing populist discourse and linguistic nuances affect today's conversations.
Source: Mediespråk.fi

FAMILY PHYSICIAN

Family doctor for everyone - in Kainuu

Kainuu is the first Finnish wellbeing services county to appoint a family doctor for all its residents, according to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL).

The model is part of the effort to increase the continuity of care and improve the quality of primary health care. With the new family doctor model, each Kainuu resident has a designated doctor and their own care team, who are comprehensively responsible for the patient's health. The aim of the model is to reduce morbidity and mortality, improve the quality of care and patient satisfaction, and curb overall costs. "According to international research evidence, the continuity of the personal care relationship is key to high-quality primary health care," says Sara Launio, Chief Physician at the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare. Seven wellbeing services counties received additional funding from the 2025 Sustainable Growth Programme for the development of family physician models. Kainuu is a pioneer, and other regions intend to gradually expand their models to the entire population. In practice, this means that more and more Finns will be able to have a long-term personal contact with health care in the future, which will improve the quality of care and patient safety.

HEALTH

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.

HEALTH

Ozempic can be dangerous for your eyes

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

WHAT IS NAION?
NAION is a serious but rare eye disease that damages the optic nerve. It originates from a disturbance in the blood supply to the optic nerve and can lead to sudden and permanent loss of vision in one eye. Usually, impaired vision is the only symptom of the disease and is not accompanied by pain. People with diabetes, high blood pressure or elevated blood lipid levels, for example, are at the highest risk of developing NAION. There is currently no permanent treatment for the disease. The decision was taken by the EMA's Pharmacovigilance Committee (PRAC) after reviewing available data, including small studies suggesting an increased risk in patients taking semaglutide. It is important to emphasize that this is still a very rare side effect and that the majority of people who use the drug do not have any risk of it. **What does this mean for patients?**
The most important thing is to be aware of the possible symptoms. If you experience a sudden decrease in vision, blurred vision or dark areas in your field of vision, contact your family doctor or ophthalmologist immediately. Always mention to your healthcare professional that you are taking a medicine containing semaglutide. Finally, it can be said that all medications have possible side effects, and it is important to have regular medical check-ups and be aware of the possible risk factors in your own health. Although NAION is rare, it is essential that patients and doctors are aware of this potential connection in order to be able to act quickly if necessary.

WHO

WHO warns of a new wave of antibiotic resistance

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

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

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.

AGING

Japan approves first gene therapy for age-related diseases

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

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

CRITICAL CARE

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

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

OBESITY

Sugar-free drinks do not reduce obesity

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

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

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

Rising Heat: Arab Region Faces Unprecedented Climate Threats

The Arab region is warming at a rate significantly higher than the global average, triggering a series of escalating environmental and socio-economic crises.

A recent report by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) highlights that the acceleration of temperature increases is placing immense pressure on water resources, food security, and public The Arab region is warming at a rate significantly higher than the global average, triggering a series of escalating environmental and socio-economic crises. health across the Middle East and North Africa. Data reveals that the past decade was the warmest on record for the region, with extreme heatwaves becoming more frequent and intense. These rising temperatures are exacerbating chronic water Scarcity and leading to more severe droughts, which in turn devastate local agriculture. Beyond the heat, the region is also witnessing a rise in sand and dust storms, further impacting air quality and infrastructure. Experts warn that without urgent climate adaptation and international cooperation, the "climate hotspots" within the Arab world could face irreversible ecological damage, threatening the livelihoods of millions.
Reference: World Meteorological Organization

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LUX HELSINKI

Lux Helsinki 8.-12.1.2025: Illuminating the Darkest Days



As the winter tightens its grip on Helsinki, a radiant counterpoint emerges: Lux Helsinki. This annual light festival, taking place from January 6th to 11th, 2026, transforms the city's familiar landscape into a breathtaking canvas of light art.

Lux Helsinki is more than just a spectacle; it's a celebration of creativity and community. For five magical nights, the heart of Helsinki is

bathed in a kaleidoscope of colors and enchanting installations. Public buildings become luminous sculptures, parks morph into ethereal wonderlands, and streetscapes are imbued with an otherworldly glow.

The festival's strength lies in its diversity. From immersive, interactive experiences to awe-inspiring large-scale projections, Lux Helsinki caters to all artistic tastes. Local and international artists come together to showcase

their innovative visions, pushing the boundaries of light as a medium. Wandering through the illuminated city becomes an adventure, with each corner revealing a new marvel.

Lux Helsinki's impact goes beyond aesthetics. It fosters a sense of connection and shared joy during a time of year often associated with darkness and solitude. The festival encourages exploration, inviting residents and visitors alike to rediscover the city under a new light. It's a

reminder that even in the depths of winter, beauty and wonder can be found

Whether you're a seasoned art enthusiast or simply seeking a magical escape from the cold, Lux Helsinki is an experience not to be missed. So bundle up, embrace the crisp winter air, and immerse yourself in the luminous heart of Helsinki. Let Lux Helsinki illuminate your January and ignite your sense of wonder.

THE COURSE OF LIFE

The Empty Nest Syndrome – when children leave from home



It's a time that we all have to confront sooner or later – when the children have moved away from home and the apartment, or house, suddenly feels empty. The Empty Nest Syndrome is a feeling of sadness and loss that many parents experience when their children leave the nest to begin their own lives. But what does this actually mean?

Feelings of loss
Grief: Many parents feel a deep sadness when they realize that their children are no longer part of everyday life. It can be a feeling of emptiness that is difficult to put into words.

Uncertainty: After being a parent for many years, it can be daunting to suddenly face an uncertain future. What to do with all the time that is now left?

Joy: On the other hand, there may also be a sense of joy and pride that the child has grown up and is taking their first steps towards independence.

Dealing with the emptiness
So how do you move on when emptiness sets in? Here are some suggestions:
Create new routines: It can be a good idea to set up new routines to fill the time that was previously used to care for the children.

Hobbies and interests:
Now is a great time to rediscover old interests or try new hobbies. Maybe it's time for painting, gardening or learning to play an instrument?

Travel: Planning trips, both short and long, can be an exciting way to explore the world and enjoy life.

Social activities: Spending time with friends and participating in social activities can help fill the void that arises.

A new beginning
The Empty Nest Syndrome doesn't have to be just a sad time. It can also be seen as an opportunity for new beginnings. Parents now have the chance to rediscover themselves without having to constantly think about their children's needs. It's a time to focus on your own dreams and goals.

So the next time the feeling of emptiness creeps in, remember that it's also a time for self-discovery and curiosity. Life is full of opportunities, and sometimes they come when we least expect it.

Valtonen also highlights the factors behind municipality-specific differences: the age structure, use of public transport and distances may explain why mobile data consumption is higher in certain areas. STT Info In addition, he emphasises that improved devices and networks will further increase data usage: better video quality consumes more, and more and more work, entertainment and is no longer just a privilege for young people.

LITERATURE

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

AI

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, Gemini 3, and it's nothing short of revolutionary. This isn't just an update; it's a massive leap forward in artificial intelligence, pushing the boundaries of what we thought was possible.

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

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

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

WORLD

EDITH PIAF

110 years since Edith Piaf's birth

110 years ago, on December 19, 1915, a girl was born in Paris who bore in her voice the sorrow, longing and defiance of all France. Edith Piaf – "the little sparrow" – grew up in extreme poverty, surrounded by the cruelty of the street and temporary miracles. From the beginning, his life was full of survival.



She first sang about coins on the sidewalks, but his voice was bigger than the street. It carried with it a darkness that could not be resolved: the loss of a child, violent relationships, addiction, illness and constant unhappiness. Every tragedy settled into his songs, as if pain was the fuel that kept him alive.

When Piaf sang *La vie en rose* or *Non, je ne regrette*

rien, it was not a feeling – it was a confession. He sang as if every note could be the last. The audience not only heard a singer, but life burned in front of them.

He died in 1963, only 47 years old, exhausted and broken. Still, Edith Piaf lives on, generation after generation. His voice constantly reminds us that love can be destructive, life can be merciless – and art can be immortal.

Musical Theatre Piaf – I don't regret that anything will continue at City Theatre until spring 2026.

Image: Wikimedia Commons, Studio Harcourt, public domain

RUSSIA

Lavrov Warns of 'Nazi Resurrection' Across European Capitals



In a provocative address, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has claimed that Nazi ideologies are being resurrected within the heart of Europe. Speaking in an interview with the Islamic Republic of Iran Broadcasting corporation on December 15, 2025, Lavrov targeted major political hubs including Brussels, Berlin, London, and Paris, alongside the Baltic States, accusing them of adopting "blatant Nazi-like approaches" in their current geopolitical strategies.

Lavrov drew historical parallels, suggesting that the West's support for the current Ukrainian government mirrors the actions of Adolf Hitler and Napoleon Bonaparte. He criticized European leaders for allegedly ignoring what he described as Nazi practices committed in Ukraine. These statements mark a further hardening of Moscow's rhetoric against the West, framing the ongoing conflict as a fundamental struggle against extremist ideologies. While these claims are highly controversial and rejected by Western officials, they offer a stark insight into the Kremlin's current worldview and the escalating diplomatic rift between Russia and Europe.

Reference: Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation

Photo: Wikimedia Commons, U.S. Department of State, Public

SPACE

SPACETRavel

Humanity's Giant Leap Back to the Moon



NASA's Artemis II mission is set to make history as the first crewed flight to the lunar vicinity in over 50 years.

Scheduled for 2026, the mission will carry four astronauts—Reid Wiseman, Victor Glover, Christina Koch, and Jeremy Hansen—on a high-stakes journey around the Moon. During the 10-day mission, the crew will test the Orion spacecraft's life-support systems and navigation capabilities. While they won't land on the surface this time, the flight serves as a critical bridge toward future permanent lunar bases. This mission marks a new era of exploration, proving that humanity is ready to venture further into deep space than ever before.

Reference: NASA - Artemis II Mission Overview

OUR MAGAZINES

Wasa Daily, Wasa Dagblad and Waasan Päivälehti tree Years Old



Wasa Daily – Your local and locally owned newspaper in English in Vaasa

It is now tree years since our city and the surrounding area received a welcome addition in the form of three new daily newspapers: the Swedish-language Wasa Dagblad, the Finnish-language Waasan Päivälehti and the English-language Wasa Daily, which also regularly publishes material in Ukrainian.

A unique local voice
Wasa Daily is not only an English newspaper – it is also one of the few completely locally owned newspapers in the region. Unlike our larger competitors, who have owners in Stockholm and Seinäjoki, we have our roots here in Vaasa. We are proud to be a magazine that reflects the distinctive character of the Vaasa region and at the same time offers a national and global perspective.

Why choose Wasa Daily?
Experts recommend reading at least two newspapers regularly. In addition to, for example, Vasabladet or Ilkka-Pohja-

lainen, Wasa Daily is a perfect complement. We focus on offering unique reports – news and analysis that you won't always find in other newspapers.

Our areas of expertise include:
Culture: We cover local and national events in the arts, theatre and music.
History: We regularly publish articles that provide an in-depth understanding of both regional and global history.
Climate and environment: We report closely on the impacts of climate change and its significance for our future.
Events: In each issue you will find tips and information about upcoming events in the region.
Despite being a free newspaper, we pride ourselves on maintaining a high journalistic standard. We are politically independent and our goal is to deliver factual and credible journalism.

AI – part of the journalism of the future
Wasa Daily is at the forefront when it comes to using artificial intelligence in editorial work. With the help of advanced AI tools such as ChatGPT and Gemini, drafts are created for fact-checking, translations,



and news compilations. All content is reviewed and edited by our journalists to ensure quality and accuracy. We take full responsibility for everything that is published in the magazine.

A magazine for the future
During our tree years, Wasa Daily has developed at a rapid pace, but we are not satisfied with that. Our long-term goals include starting daily publishing and launching a comprehensive paper magazine on Fridays, with extra content that lasts all weekend. When this becomes a re-

ality depends largely on our advertisers – and we look forward to creating an even stronger magazine together.
Looking towards the fourth year
As we now begin our fourth year of operation, we look forward to welcoming more readers. We are grateful for the feedback we have received and hope for even more dialogue with you, our readers, to continue to develop the magazine.
Thank you for your trust – and let's make the coming year even better! Happy New Year from us in Wasa Daily!

George Orwell
1984
13

Winston hardly knew Tillotson, and had no idea what work he was employed on. People in the Records Department did not readily talk about their jobs. In the long, windowless hall, with its double row of cubicles and its endless rustle of papers and hum of voices murmuring into speakwriters, there were quite a dozen people whom Winston did not even know by name, though he daily saw them hurrying to and fro in the corridors or gesticulating in the Two Minutes Hate. He knew that in the cubicle next to him the little woman with sandy hair toiled day in day out, simply at tracking down and deleting from the Press the names of people who had been vaporized and were therefore considered never to have existed. There was a certain fitness in this, since her own husband had been vaporized a couple of years earlier. And a few cubicles away a mild, ineffectual, dreamy creature named Ampleforth, with very hairy ears and a surprising talent for juggling with rhymes and metres, was engaged in producing garbled versions–definitive texts, they were called–of poems which had become ideologically offensive, but which for one reason or another were to be retained in the anthologies. And this hall, with its fifty workers or thereabouts, was only one sub-section, a single cell, as it were, in the huge complexity of the Records Department. Beyond, above, below, were other swarms of workers engaged in an unimaginable multitude of jobs. There were the huge printing-shops with their sub-editors, their typography experts, and their elaborately equipped studios for the faking of photographs. There was the tele-programmes section with its engineers, its producers, and its teams of actors specially chosen for their skill in imitating voices. There were the armies of reference clerks whose job was simply to draw up lists of books and periodicals which were due for recall. There were the vast repositories where the corrected documents were stored, and the hidden furnaces where the original copies were destroyed. And somewhere or other,

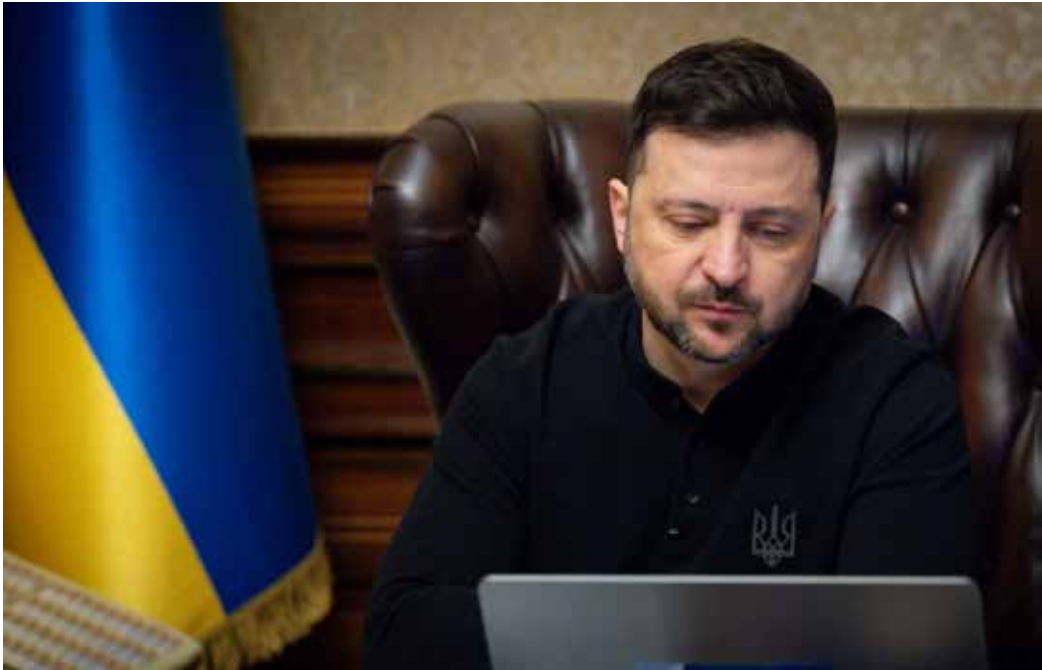


quite anonymous, there were the directing brains who co-ordinated the whole effort and laid down the lines of policy which made it necessary that this fragment of the past should be preserved, that one falsified, and the other rubbed out of existence.

And the Records Department, after all, was itself only a single branch of the Ministry of Truth, whose primary job was not to reconstruct the past but to supply the citizens of Oceania with newspapers, films, textbooks, telescreen programmes, plays, novels—with every conceivable kind of information, instruction, or entertainment, from a statue to a slogan, from a lyric poem to a biological treatise, and from a child's spelling-book to a Newspeak dictionary. And the Ministry had not only to

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Alongside Preparations for a Meeting With President Trump in the United States, Volodymyr Zelenskyy Held Six Phone Calls With European Leaders and the NATO Secretary General: The Agreement Is Getting Closer



gining of Russia's full-scale aggression, and starting January 1, it will be coordinating the work of the Nordic-Baltic Eight countries.

The conversation also covered the implementation of joint projects under the SAFE instrument, as well as the significance of the PURL initiative, which enables Ukraine, among other things, to strengthen its air defense and protect its energy sector.

During his call with Mark Carney, the President thanked Canada for its clear recognition of the necessity for joint efforts to guarantee security and real recovery.

The Head of State emphasized that, in the coming days, much can be accomplished both bilaterally between Ukraine and the United States, as well as with the Coalition of the Willing partners. It is critical that everyone jointly and constructively bolsters Ukraine's ability to protect life, reinforces its front-line positions, and enhances the effectiveness of the negotiation process.

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26.12.2025
Alongside preparations for a highest-level meeting with U.S. President Donald Trump, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy held six separate phone calls: with President of Finland Alexander Stubb, Prime Minister of Estonia Kristen Michal, Prime Minister of Canada Mark Carney, Prime Minister of Denmark Mette Frederiksen, Federal Chancellor of Germany Friedrich Merz, and NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte.

The Head of State briefed them on diplomatic efforts, shared the latest details of talks with the American side, and thanked them for their support for Ukraine.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Alexander Stubb updated each other on their contacts with partners. Ukraine is preparing for meetings and negotiations in the United States, and as of today, the Ukrainian and American negotiating teams have made significant progress. According to the President of Ukraine, much has been accomplished in drafting the ne-

cessary security guarantees, the recovery and economic development plan, as well as the 20-point framework document.

The Presidents of Ukraine and Finland share the view that the intensity of this work is truly helping, and that not a single day or hour can be lost.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy and Kristen Michal discussed further cooperation and the importance of continued support for Ukraine. The Head of State stressed that Estonia has been supporting Ukraine greatly since the very be-

ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Fanny Churberg
12.12.1845 i Vasa - 10.5.1892 i Helsingfors
Vinterlandskap, Talvimaaisema, Winter Landscae 1860-1869

supply the multifarious needs of the party, but also to repeat the whole operation at a lower level for the benefit of the proletariat. There was a whole chain of separate departments dealing with proletarian literature, music, drama, and entertainment generally. Here were produced rubbishy newspapers containing almost nothing except sport, crime and astrology, sensational five-cent novelettes, films oozing with sex, and sentimental songs which were composed entirely by mechanical means on a special kind of kaleidoscope known as a versificator. There was even a whole sub-section–Pornosec, it was called in Newspeak–engaged in producing the lowest kind of pornography, which was sent out in sealed packets and which no Party member, other than those who worked on it, was permitted to look at.

Three messages had slid out of the pneumatic tube while Winston was working, but they were simple matters, and he had disposed of them before the Two Minutes Hate interrupted him. When the Hate was over he returned to his cubicle, took the Newspeak dictionary from the shelf, pushed the speakwrite to one side, cleaned his spectacles, and settled down to his main job of the morning.

Winston's greatest pleasure in life was in his work. Most of it was a tedious routine, but included in it there were also jobs so difficult and intricate that you could lose yourself in them as in the depths of a mathematical problem–delicate pieces of forgery in which you had nothing to guide you except your knowledge of the principles of Ingsoec and your estimate of what the Party wanted you to say. Winston was good at this kind of thing. On occasion he had even been entrusted with the rectification of 'The Times' leading articles, which were written entirely in Newspeak. He unrolled the message that he had set aside earlier. It ran:

times 3.12.83 reporting bb dayorder doubleplusungood refs unpersons rewrite fullwise upsub antefiling

In Oldspeak (or standard English) this might be rendered:

The reporting of Big Brother's Order for the Day in 'The Times' of December 3rd 1983 is extremely unsatisfactory and makes references to non-existent persons. Rewrite it in full and submit your draft to higher authority before filing.

Winston read through the offending article. Big Brother's Order for the Day, it seemed, had been chiefly devoted to praising the work of an organization known as FFCC, which supplied cigarettes and other comforts to the sailors in the Floating Fortresses. A certain Comrade Withers, a prominent member of the Inner Party, had been singled out for special mention and awarded a decoration, the Order of Conspicuous Merit, Second Class.

Three months later FFCC had suddenly been dissolved with no reasons given. One could assume that Withers and his associates were now in disgrace, but there had been no report of the matter in the Press or on the telescreen. That was to be expected, since it was unusual for political offenders to be put on trial or even publicly denounced. The great purges involving thousands of people, with public trials of traitors and thought-criminals who made abject confession of their crimes and were afterwards executed, were special show-pieces not occurring oftener than once in a couple of years. More commonly, people who had incurred the displeasure of the Party simply disappeared and were never heard of again. One never had the smallest clue as to what had happened to them. In some cases they might not even be dead. Perhaps thirty people personally known to Winston, not counting his parents, had disappeared at one time or another.

Winston stroked his nose gently with a paper-clip. In the cubicle across the way Comrade Tillotson was still crouching secretively over his speakwrite. He raised his head for a moment: again the hostile spectacle-flash. Winston wondered whether Comrade Tillotson was engaged on the same job as himself. It was perfectly possible. So tricky a piece of work would never be entrusted to a single person: on the other hand, to turn it over to a committee would be to admit openly that an act of fabrication was taking place.

PRESS RELEASE 1.1.2026

Wasa Daily, Waasan Päivälehti and Wasa Dagblad Begin Their Fourth Year



The media landscape in Vaasa is undergoing a noteworthy development. Wasa Daily, Waasan Päivälehti and Wasa Dagblad have now completed three years of operation and are entering their fourth year with strengthened content, a clear vision, and growing impact.

In a short time, the publications have evolved from experimental projects into fully fledged news outlets and have become an important part of the local media ecosystem. At the same time, they are among the very few newspapers in the region that are both locally owned and locally produced.

Three Languages – One Local Commitment

The Finnish-language Waasan Päivälehti is complemented by the Swedish-language Wasa Dagblad and the English-language Wasa Daily, which occasionally also publishes content in Ukrainian. Together, the three titles reach a broad and diverse readership, including local residents, businesses, students, and international professionals.

All three publications share a strong editorial focus on quality, objectivity, and culture, alongside coverage of local news, history, social issues, and climate-related topics relevant to the region.

Broadsheet Format – More Space for Journalism

In autumn 2025, the newspapers transitioned to the broadsheet format, a classic newspaper size used by many of the world's leading publications but now rare in Finland. The format allows for greater editorial depth, more news per page, and a clearer overview compared to the tabloid format that dominates today's market.

Digital First – With Ambitious Plans Ahead

Currently, the newspapers are published digitally once a week. The long-term goal is ambitious:

daily online publishing and, in the future, a comprehensive printed Friday edition offering in-depth reading for the entire weekend. This development will take place gradually and in close cooperation with advertisers and partners.

Modern Technology in Service of Journalism

Waasan Päivälehti is also at the forefront of using modern technology in journalism. The editorial teams utilize advanced AI tools for tasks such as fact-checking, translation, and research. However, all content is always reviewed and approved by responsible journalists. Technology serves as a support tool – never as a replacement for editorial responsibility.

History as a Guiding Principle

The newspapers place strong emphasis on historical context. Through regular articles highlighting the region's past, readers are offered perspectives that help them better understand the present and future – echoing philosopher George Santayana's well-known observation that those who do not remember history are bound to repeat it.

Moving Forward Together

As the publications begin their fourth year, they do so with enthusiasm and gratitude. The editorial teams welcome new readers and value ongoing dialogue and feedback.

We extend our sincere thanks to all readers and partners who have supported the newspapers so far, and we look forward to continuing to develop strong, independent local journalism in the Vaasa region.

For further information: Hans Björknäs, Editor-in-Chief

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Address:

Waasan Päivälehti

Koulukatu 37 B 7

65100 Vaasa, Finland

Newspapers: <https://vpress.ovh>

Image archive: <https://vpress.ovh/KA.pdf>

(Images and front pages may freely be used in connection with coverage of the newspapers)

HUMOUR ONE

HUNDRED YEARS AGO

ART FURNITURE.

The understanding customer: "Yes, I'm happy to admit that these modern chairs are incredibly nice and elegant, and beautiful and artistic, and excellent in every way, and yes, I like them so much, but I don't understand how to sit in them!"

MR WEST

A well-known joker once came in company into a restaurant, where he saw a familiar gentleman named Wester sitting drinking toddy. "Listen, Wester," he exclaimed, "can you tell me what is the resemblance between the sun and a toddy?" "No", he replied. "Well, both go down in the west," was the answer.

WHERE THE CHILDREN COME FROM

There was a group of three flamboyantly dressed very little girls, with barks and ribbons and precious toys and neighbor dolls, and near them was playing on the sand a poor little girl of about the same age, scantily clad and with a home-made primitive doll in her arms. The three fine children discussed the interesting question of where they came from, which

proved a highly interesting topic for toddler speculation.

— I come from a rose, mother said, uttered one of the little living dolls.

— And me again, interjected No. 2, I must have come from a head of cabbage.

"I, yes I was picked up by a stork," said number three. Whereupon she, who had come out of a rose, scornfully and proudly turned to the poor little scantily clad girl child, and said nobly:

— And you, there, where did you come from?

— Alas, answered little Cinderella, we are so poor, so terribly poor back home, that mother and father have to make their children themselves.

DAMN LUCK

— Hello, my lord, cried the energetic flower seller, buy some flowers for your darling.
- I have no sweetheart, said the young man.
- Then buy some flowers for your wife.
— I have no wife.
— Well, lucky cheese, then buy some flowers to celebrate your damn luck.

THE CUCKOO

The teacher (who told

Astronomic picture of the week:

The star cluster NGC 3293

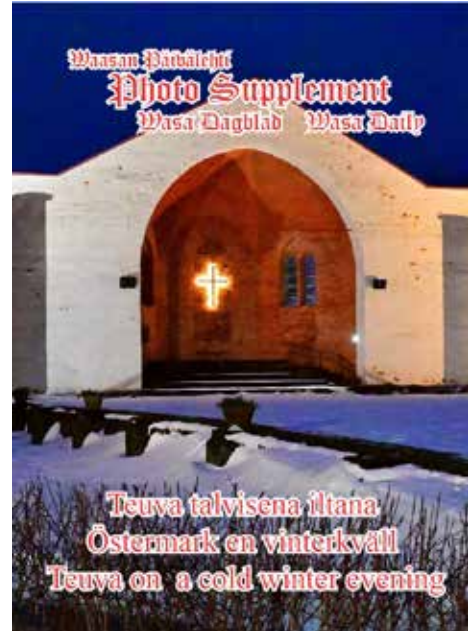


In this image from the Wide Field Imager on the MPG/ESO 2.2-metre telescope at ESO's La Silla Observatory in Chile young stars huddle together against a backdrop of clouds of glowing gas and lanes of dust. The star cluster, known as NGC 3293, would have been just a cloud of gas and dust itself about ten million years ago, but as stars began to form it became the bright group we see here. Clusters like this are celestial laboratories that allow astronomers to learn more about how stars evolve.

Credit: ESO/G. Beccari

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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, Toimien 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

Advertise in Wasa Daily

Being among the first to advertise in this historic and hyper-modern daily may have some PR value. Send ads to wasadagblad@gmail.com

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