



Deadly, dying – and up 40%?!

Boom in Svalbard's cruise traffic expected this year, despite doom cries from government, industry

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

OK, now this Svalbard cruising thing is just getting confusing – perhaps intentionally so.

First we hear it's too dangerous for ordinary folks. Then the industry says it's on its deathbed due to new government regulations. This week's news is a record number of passengers is about to arrive, with a 30 to 40 percent increase at Svalbard and other northern Norwegian ports.

"There is excitement this year in the extent to which cruise lines are able to sell capacity on board," said Erik Joachimsen, head of Cruise Northern Norway and Svalbard, in a prepared statement today. "We know that some companies have special challenges related to the accident in Italy in January, while we see that the number of calls are rising substantially."

About 374,000 passenger may arrive in ports
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VGTV



NORWEGIAN NEWS AGENCY

Viljar Hanssen, 18, above at right, does one of his multiple TV interviews following his testimony against Anders Behring Breivik in an Oslo courtroom today. Hanssen, a Longyearbyen resident, was shot five times during the July 22, 2011, attacks by Breivik that killed 77 people. At left, Breivik, second from left, smiles while exchanging a word with one of his attorneys before today's proceedings.

Viljar's blind justice

Teen shot five times at Utøya testifies, glad he can't see Breivik

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

He's blind in one eye, can't ski or do other activities, has trouble concentrating in school, and is uneasy being in Oslo so he can testify against the man who shot him five times.

But there are small blessings for Viljar

Hanssen, 18, aside from surviving the massacre by Anders Behring Breivik that killed 77 people last July 22.

"I have damaged the eye, but is convenient, because I have a little problem seeing over there," Hanssen said, nodding in

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Climate 'scare' not so hot

Dire predictions about warming's effects chilling public's interest, some say at Ny-Ålesund summit

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

The bad news is there's still not much hope of major changes to be found at climate summits like these. The good news is maybe small changes will do – if anyone can figure out how to get politicians and the public to accept them.

A three percent cut in people's material
See **SYMPOSIUM**, page 3



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Norwegian Trade and Industry Minister Trond Giske, right, and Åsmund Skjeveland, operator of the Earth observatory at Ny-Ålesund, address delegates during a climate symposium at the international research station.

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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When we screw up you'll know about it – on the front page. One of the big complaints about newspapers is they tend to bury corrections and clarifications deep inside where few people who read the original article see them. If we need to fix something, an alert box on the front page will state what story is in error and where the full correction is printed.

Submitting material

Letters, columns, photos and other material are welcome, but we can't offer pay for published items since nobody here is getting paid at the moment. Submissions in electronic form (text, Word documents, JPEGs, etc.) are highly preferred, although typing and/or scanning of items will be considered on a per-case basis. We reserve the right to edit submissions for length, clarity, accuracy, libel and other reasons, but we will also make every reasonable effort to contact the author about any changes prior to publication.

Jawing about climate and reindeer



RONNY AANES / NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

Reindeer graze on a snowy plain on Spitsbergen, where climate change appears to be affecting their body growth, according to researchers with the Norwegian Polar Institute. A newly published study analyzing 3,428 reindeer jaws turned in by hunters from 1983 to 2009 provides details about the age, gender, jaw length, tooth wear and body mass of the animals killed. "The length of the jaw of the reindeer is a good measure of the growth conditions, and can be used to identify and monitor potential impacts of climate change," said Åshild Ønvik Pedersen, editor of the report, in a prepared statement. The study declares "based on preliminary analyses, there is clear variation between subpopulations and also clear climate signals in body growth." The report, in English, is available at www.ssf.npolar.no/pages/news510.htm.

40% cruise growth, despite pitfalls

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this year, a 39 percent increase compared to 268,000 in 2011. Ships are expected to make about 430 port calls, compared to 315 in 2011.

"Political stability and natural beauty overcomes high prices and long sailing distances," Joachimsen said. "We believe this trend will continue."

That's not the tune industry officials have been singing lately when it comes to stricter regulations being proposed for Svalbard, including requiring a government-approved pilot

with year-round Arctic experience aboard. Cruise officials said the cost will mean "death" as passengers balk at higher ticket prices.

Similar predictions have been made about various policies in cruising spots worldwide which often prove false or overstated.

Passengers, meanwhile, apparently aren't being scared off by Britain's recent warning that Arctic cruises are too dangerous due to inadequate search-and-rescue capabilities.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

There's been a lot of strange words and actions at Anders Behring Breivik's trial, and it hasn't all been the defendant's constant smirks and rants about the joys of inflicting suffering upon his victims. Just a few of the recent happenings receiving headlines outside Norway are a man who set himself on fire outside the courthouse, a shoe thrown at Breivik by a victim's brother and a surviving victim who compared the defendant to Lord Voldemort. Local survivor Viljar Hanssen didn't get any such press (probably his preference, having said he doesn't want people associating him with the tragedy, and does want Breivik locked away and forgotten ASAP). National coverage generally led with either 1) his quip about it being "convenient" his blind eye kept him from seeing Breivik while testifying or 2) the teenager's

initial reaction that popping sound of the shots was a joke with "fucking bad timing." The latter raised our eyebrows a bit at first when we saw it at the top of stories in family-friendly newspapers, a reflex reaction after a long time in the U.S. where such things result in protests, fines and lawsuits. But, aside from profanity being maybe the least "inappropriate" part of Hanssen's gristly narrative of the massacre, it's a reminder of the open-mindedness we love here in the Kingdom. We've seen the "F" word (actually the "J" word in Norwegian) in the title of kids' movies, heard it in the music at children's events and, of course, there isn't the Americanized habit of throwing an unhinged fit if precious tykes (or teens) glimpse any sort of nudity. The numerous articles about Norway having some of the world's nicest prisons, including Breivik's, on the other hand...



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

Norwegian Trade and Industry Minister Trond Giske and Ny-Ålesund Symposium Chairman Knut Ore, both above at far right, lead delegates on a tour of the international research station during a three-day climate summit beginning today. At right, Rajendra Pachaudri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, address the symposium by teleconference from New Delhi.



RECHARGE AS

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM
SVALBARDPOSTEN
VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Fifteen companies caught using Svalbard as tax haven

Fifteen companies are claiming addresses in Svalbard, thus taking advantage of the archipelago's lower tax rate, when they're actually located on the mainland, according to Norwegian Tax Administration officials. The businesses all list Longyearbyen's main municipal building as their address, but city officials said there are no offices for the businesses there or elsewhere in town. Terje Kaastad, a tax official in Svalbard, said the companies will be assessed for the payments they've been avoiding. There are regular attempts to create tax havens in Svalbard, where the rate is 16 percent compared to 28 percent on the mainland, but "this is a large mass in relation to what we're used to," Kaastad said.

Blues Club gets 350,000 NOK for gear; will let others share

The Longyearbyen Blues Club received a 350,000-kroner grant this week for musical instruments and equipment from the Sparebank Foundation, with the club saying they will let other local artists use the gear as well. Randi Eek Thorsen, chairman of the foundation, said the club was one of 300 monetary recipients from the 3,000 applicants, and cited the high cost of shipping gear to Svalbard and its potential use for a wide range of events in approving the grant. Espen Helgesen, director of the blues club, said the club is planning to buy an organ, amplifiers, and bass and percussion instruments with the funds.

Boat tours starting early as lack of snow bores visitors

Tour boats are arriving early in Longyearbyen this year after a warm winter, including the *Langøysund* that docked at Bykaia on May 16 and took visitors to Pyramiden the following day. "It appeared to be an early end to the snowmobile season," said Stig Henningsen owner of Henningsen Transport & Guiding, adding this is the earliest he had started such tours. He said poor snow conditions meant few options for visitors, and "they are tired of going to galleries and museums." Among the other notable boats beginning tours is the *Polar Girl*, which starts its 10th season May 25.

Are 'scare stories' counterproductive?

SYMPOSIUM, from page 1

habits, for instance, might be enough to save the global climate, said Rajendra Pachaudri, chairman of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, addressing this year's Ny-Ålesund Symposium. But he offered no political solution for cutting those habits – also known as world gross domestic product – arguing instead "that is no high price to pay" considering the alternative.

"Twenty to 30 percent of the world's population must move" by the end of the century if a currently projected 2.5-degree Celsius temperature increase occurs, he said.

Pachaudri, in New Delhi, gave his address by teleconference to the symposium that began today. The three-day event is hosting about 40 international politicians, scientists and business leaders, some of whom are wondering if scare stories such as are Pachaudri's are proving

counterproductive with the public.

"The debate (about warming) in society has reduced significantly," said Anders Wijkman, a senior adviser at the Stockholm Environmental Institute.

The long-running contrasts in current and future climate change realities remain evident at the symposium.

Norwegian Trade and Industry Minister Trond Giske, in an introductory speech, said climate issues "are not just a threat, but also an economic opportunity."

But he spent Monday visiting and praising the new coal mine site at Lunckefjell, and didn't rule out more mining in Svalbard. That earned derision from environmental groups who noted climate change is occurring most rapidly in Arctic areas.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Snow late. SW winds to 35 km/h. High 1C (-6C wind chill), low -4C (-10C wind chill).	Snow ending. W winds to 29 km/h. High 1C (-3C wind chill), low -1C (-7C wind chill).	Cloudy. Variable winds to 7 km/h. High -2C (-5C wind chill), low -4C (-4C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 11 km/h. High -2C (-6C wind chill), low -4C (-7C wind chill).
24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight	24-hour daylight
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -1C (-6C), -3C (-7C), light 24:00h; Monday, cloudy, -1C (-6C), -3C (-7C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, cloudy, -1C (-5C), -2C (-6C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -1C (-5C), -2C (-5C), light 24:00h			
Data provided by yr.no			



NORWEGIAN NEWS AGENCY

A witness testifies in an Oslo courtroom this week during the trial of Anders Behring Breivik.

Hanssen: Thought attack a bad joke

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Breivik's direction while testifying as the first witness today, the 22nd of the trial.

It was one of a few quips by Hanssen – who has often emphasized the need for a positive attitude after the tragedy – offering a brief relief in the recollection of horrors at the Utøya youth camp where 69 of his peers were killed and at least 110 wounded. Among those killed was Johannes Buø, 14, who spent his last three years living in Longyearbyen with his family.

Hanssen spoke about the worries some had after eight people were killed by Breivik's bombing of a building in Oslo earlier on the tragic day. About hearing shots while at a tent site with his younger brother. About lying in great confusion and pain for a long time after being shot. About not feeling safe in the city afterward unless he was in a moving car. About having to repeat his final year of high school.

Breivik, 33, has admitted to the attacks, but denies criminal guilt, stating they were "cruel but necessary" to stop the ruling Labor Party's "multicultural experiment," and the "Muslim invasion" of Norway and Europe.

He was low-keyed during Hanssen's testimony, whispering to his attorneys, "staring blankly" at the teen and looking at photos of where the youth was shot.

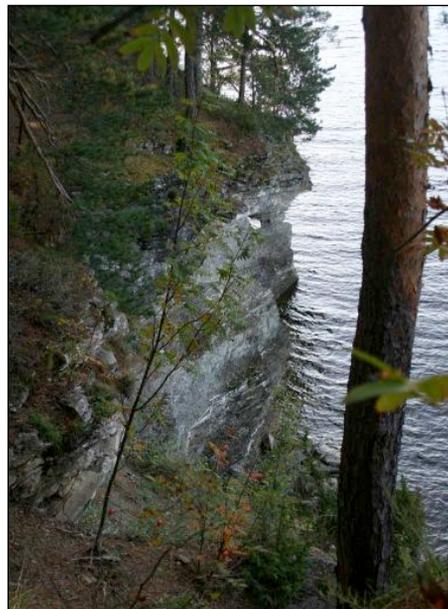
Hanssen said he was at the Utøya tent camp when a meeting was called at the main building to discuss the bombing in Oslo. His brother, Torje, 14, was asleep and, after calling their parents, "we agreed that we should not wake him until after the meeting, so I could give him a message with my own words."

The bombing upset some teens, including Simon Sæbø, a friend of Hanssen's who would be among those killed in the shooting.

"I remember he said that 'This is political, so we're not safe here either,'" Hanssen said.

They returned to the rainy tent site, where Hanssen and others from the far north chapter of the camp's political youth group were sitting "we suddenly hear a bang down the hill."

"I thought at first that they should stop making jokes because this is fucking bad timing, but then it comes more and more," Hanssen said.



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A cliff on the west side of Utøya, where Viljar Hanssen was shot while hiding in the water.

Hanssen and others fled down a trail toward the water surrounding the island, during which his brother called their parents – but was too hysterical to speak.

"I took the phone and said very calmly 'Yes, somebody's shooting, but it will go well. I'll save everyone.' A little ambitious, perhaps."

They were hiding in the water beneath the cliffs on the west side of the island when Hanssen was shot. He said he kicked his brother away, hoping his sibling could escape without noticing what happened, then "put myself around a rock in the water," where he lay in "a completely new kind of pain."

Sæbø was nearby, but Hanssen said he didn't realize his friend was dying. He spoke to Sæbø while trying to focus on positive thoughts such as returning home to his snowmobile and the girls in Longyearbyen. He eventually lost consciousness until rescuers arrived.

There's more! Visit www.icepeople.net for the complete story.

What's up

May 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Cabin in the Woods," U.S. horror/fantasy, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset.

May 24

11:15 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Business meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

May 25

9 a.m.: Board of Growing Enterprises Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

May 27-28

Svalbardhallen closed.

May 28

6 p.m.: Movie: "Iron Sky," Australian/Finnish/German sci-fi/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

June 2

10 a.m.: Spitsbergen Marathon. Registration and other details at svalbardturn.no.

6 p.m.: Cultural exchange from Barentsburg. Kulturhuset.

June 3

6 p.m.: Movie: "Laban - Lille Annas Favoritter," Swedish children's film dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Men in Black 3" (3D), U.S. comedy/action, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

June 4

11 a.m.: Environmental and Industrial Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

June 9

7:30-9 p.m.: Longyearbyen Choir end-of-season gathering. Huset.

June 10

4:30-7 p.m.: Longyear Day. Culture walk and other events at various locations.

What's online

Icepeople.net provides daily updates of news about Svalbard and the world's polar regions, plus extras for articles from the print edition. Among the latest news:

- *U.N. climate conference: Another dud?*
- *Scandinavia top in the world at research*
- *Laws of the Sea at 30: Still turbulent*
- *Good warming news? More butterflies*