

WASA DAILY



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LOCAL NEWS

PHOTO CONTEST

Lights, Camera, Ostrobothnia! International Photo Contest Puts Western Finland in the Spotlight



The breathtaking landscapes of Ostrobothnia are about to become the focus of an international photography event as the Ostrobothnia Photo Trophy takes place on 13–14 August 2026 across the region, with Vaasa serving as the starting point.

The competition forms part of the prestigious Paris–Nordkap photography challenge, now being held for the 21st time. More than 50 photographers from France, Belgium, Switzerland and other European countries are expected to travel through Ostrobothnia, capturing images based on themes revealed during the event.

Local photographers are invited to join as well, whether they are complete beginners or experienced enthusiasts. Participants will have the opportunity to showcase the region's spectacular archipelago, coastline, forests, villages and cultural heritage alongside international competitors.

Beyond the competition itself, the event is expected to generate valuable international exposure for Ostrobothnia. Powerful images shared across exhibitions and media can inspire future visitors and strengthen the region's reputation as one of Finland's most photogenic destinations.

For anyone who enjoys photography, this is a rare opportunity to combine creativity with regional

TODAY

EDITORIAL

The Heat Will Kill You First: A Grim Warning for a Scorching Summer

THIS SUMMER, as temperatures soar, forests are burning and heat waves grip regions around the world, Jeff Goodell's book, "The Heat Will Kill You First: Life and Death on a Scorched Planet," takes on a terrifying immediacy. Goodell, a veteran environmental journalist, meticulously details the dangers of rising global temperatures, particularly the devastating effects on human health.

His message is stark: heat is the often-overlooked "first order threat" of climate change, a silent killer that disrupts ecosystems, strains infrastructure, and puts millions at risk. While wildfires and floods grab headlines, Goodell argues that heat exacts a deadlier toll, disrupting vital bodily functions and leading to heatstroke, organ failure, and even death.

The book isn't just a scientific treatise; it's a wake-up call. Goodell weaves together personal stories of those already impacted by extreme heat – from farmworkers in California to residents in India – with clear explanations of the science behind climate change. This blend makes the urgency of the situation all too real.

This summer, with record-breaking temperatures predicted, Goodell's warnings are tragically prescient. Thousands are likely to succumb to heat-related illnesses, a grim testament to the human cost of

inaction on climate change.

"The Heat Will Kill You First" is not just a book; it's a call to action. Goodell doesn't shy away from outlining solutions, emphasizing the need for rapid transition to renewable energy sources and improved urban planning to mitigate the effects of heat waves.

Here is a short quote from the prologue of Jeff Goodell's book:

"When it comes, it's invisible. It doesn't bend tree branches or blow hair across your face to let you know it's arrived. The ground does not shake. It just surrounds you and works on you in ways that you can't anticipate or control. You sweat.

Your heart races. You're thirsty. Your vision blurs. The sun feels like a barrel of a gun pointed at you. Plants look like they're crying. Birds vanish from the sky and take refuge in deep shade. Cars are untouchable. Colors fade. The air smells burned. You can imagine fire even before you see it."

As we face another scorching summer, let Goodell's book serve as a motivator. By understanding the threat of heat and taking decisive action, we can still build a more resilient future. But the time to act is now, before the heat truly becomes the silent killer of our generation.

Photo Supplement



pride. The next iconic image representing Ostrobothnia to the world could come from a local photographer standing just around the corner.

Time and place: 13–14 August 2026, 9:30 a.m.–7:00 p.m., throughout Ostrobothnia, starting from Vaasa, Finland.

Sign up here: <https://www.lyyti.in/phototrophy>

Source: Regional Council of Ostrobothnia

VAASA

Royal Visit to Vaasa – Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel Heading to Finland



Photo: Bengt Nyman, Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic license.

It's official – Crown Princess Victoria and Prince Daniel are coming to Vaasa! On 21 August, the royal couple will visit the city to honour the 250th anniversary of Vaasa Court of Appeal. This marks the first royal visit to Vaasa since 2006, when King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia attended the city's 400th anniversary celebrations.

– The Court of Appeal's historic anniversary year is such a significant event that we decided to approach the Swedish Royal Court and invite a representative to grace the celebration with their presence. We are truly honoured that the Crown Princess and Prince Daniel accepted our invitation, says President of the Court of Appeal Sakari Laukkanen.

The royal couple will begin the day with an hour-long visit to the Court of Appeal, which was founded by King Gustav III in 1775 and commenced operations exactly 250 years ago, on 21 August 1776. Following this, the Crown Princess will plant a commemorative tree in Hovioikeudenpuisto (Court of Appeal Park).

At 10:30 a.m., the royal guests will walk to Hovioikeudenpuistikko (Court of Appeal Esplanade), where they will have the opportunity to greet local residents. The tour then continues to Vaskiluoto, where the Crown Princess and Prince Daniel will explore Wärtsilä's technology centre and learn about cutting-edge developments in carbon-neutral maritime transport and energy production.

– Vaasa proudly showcases to its royal visitors how the city has evolved over the past four centuries and how it is rapidly growing into the energy capital of the Nordics, says Mayor Tomas Häyry.

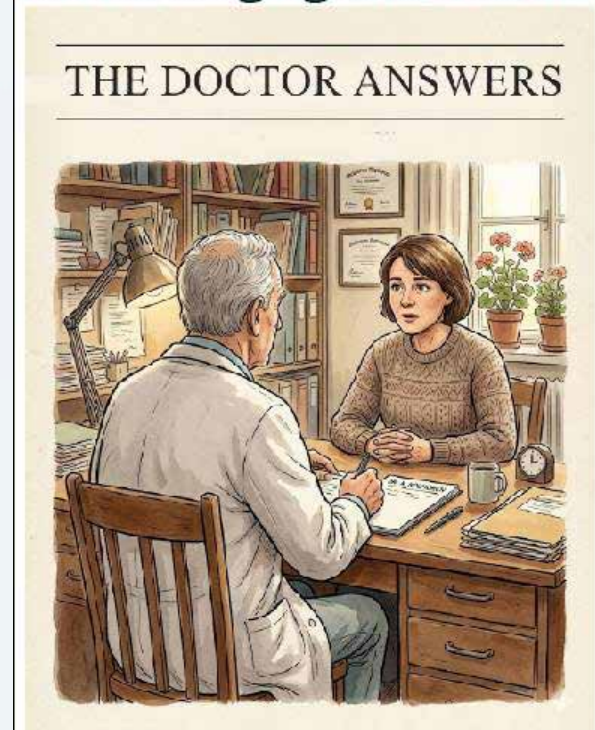
The visit concludes with a lunch hosted by the

city at Maaherrantalo. Vaasa is getting ready for a royal day to remember!

Source: STT Info / City of Vaasa

THE DOCTOR ANSWERS

Choral Singing and Health



"Neurologist Markku T. Hyypä claimed already 20 years ago that choral singing improves cognitive function, language and hearing are trained. At the same time, memory, concentration, language and hearing are trained."

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PÖRTOM

Music, Tradition and Summer Evenings – Pörtom Welcomes Visitors Throughout August

Peaceful summer evenings, beautiful music and local traditions come together this August in Pörtom, a village in the municipality of Närpes on Finland's west coast. Throughout the month, the local church and historic church cottage will host a series of cultural and spiritual events open to residents and visitors alike.



The concert series "Music in the August Evening" begins on Thursday, 13 August at 8:00 p.m. in Pörtom Church. Soprano Sofia Rosendahl will perform together with accompanist Jan-Ola Granholm and organist Gerd Lindén-Liljehage. A second concert follows on Thursday, 20 August at 8:00 p.m., featuring vocalist Emilia Tikkala and organist Hannes Uunila.

WELLBEING AREAS

PERSONAL DOCTORS

No More “Doctor Roulette”? Personal Doctors Arrive in Southeast Finland

Patients in Southeast Finland may soon stop seeing a different doctor every time they visit a health centre. In September, the first personal doctors and personal nurses will begin working at the Hamina and Kotkansaari health centres in the Kymenlaakso Wellbeing Services County.

The new model assigns residents to a dedicated doctor–nurse team responsible for coordinating their care. Health officials believe the change will improve continuity, speed up treatment and provide better support, especially for people living with chronic illnesses.

The programme will expand gradually across the region, with the goal of providing every resident in Kymenlaakso with a personal doctor and nurse by the end of 2027. Residents will be informed of their assigned care team when they next contact their local health centre after the model has been introduced there.

The reform is part of Finland’s broader effort to strengthen primary healthcare by improving long-term patient–doctor relationships and reducing fragmented care.

Time and place: September 2026, Hamina Health Centre and Kotkansaari Health Centre, Kymenlaakso, Finland.

Source: Kymenlaakso Wellbeing Services County

CHICKENPOX VACCINE

Free Chickenpox Vaccine Now Available for More Adults

A major change in Finland’s vaccination programme is giving more adults a chance to protect themselves against chickenpox. Since 1 August 2026, the Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County has offered free chickenpox vaccinations to adults who have never had the disease or who have not completed the recommended two-dose vaccination series.

Although chickenpox is usually mild in children, it can cause serious complications in adults, including pneumonia, encephalitis and severe skin infections. The vaccine is especially recommended for people planning a pregnancy, healthcare workers, those about to start immunosuppressive treatment and adults born between 2000 and 2005.

Most people over the age of 50 are already naturally immune because they had chickenpox during childhood. The vaccination programme consists of two doses given at least three months apart, with appointments available through local health centres, telephone services and online nursing chat.

Time and place: From 1 August 2026 at health centres across the Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County, Finland.

Source: Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County and Finland’s National Vaccination Programme.

WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTY OF OSTROBOTHNIA

Giving Birth Becomes Free in Vaasa – New Pilot Began on 1 August

VAASA, FINLAND – Expectant families in Western Finland have received welcome news. From 1 August 2026, Vaasa Central Hospital will offer free maternity care for childbirth, making it one of the first hospitals in Finland to launch such a pilot programme. The trial will continue until the end of 2027.

The fee exemption covers the hospital stay during which the baby is born. Standard patient charges will still apply to outpatient visits or admissions that do not result in childbirth, and neonatal intensive care remains subject to normal healthcare fees.

According to the Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County, the initiative has already attracted interest from expectant parents beyond the region. At the same time, Vaasa Central Hospital is renovating its maternity facilities, with new delivery suites scheduled for completion later in 2026. The hospital also holds the internationally recognised Baby Friendly Hospital certification, reflecting its commitment to breastfeeding support and early parent–infant bonding.

The pilot aims to ease the financial burden on growing families while strengthening Vaasa’s position as an attractive maternity hospital for parents across Finland.
Source: Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County

WELLBEING SERVICES COUNTY OF OSTROBOTHNIA

Possible Data Security Incident Under Investigation in Jakobstad

The Ostrobothnia Wellbeing Services County is investigating a possible data security incident after customer information at a competence centre in Jakobstad may have been exposed to unauthorised access.

WASA DAILY
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NEWS



Between the concerts, the traditional Cottage Worship Service in Swedish will be held on Sunday, 16 August at 3:00 p.m. at the historic Church Cottage in Pörtom, offering a peaceful gathering in a picturesque outdoor setting.

The August programme concludes on Thursday, 27 August at 8:00 p.m., when cellist Emma Strömbäck-Mård performs together with the Pörtom Choir, conducted by Jan-Ola Granholm.

Known for its vibrant cultural life and strong community spirit, Pörtom continues to demonstrate how small rural villages can offer memorable experiences through music, heritage and togetherness.

Time and place:

Thursday 13 August, 8:00 p.m. – Music in the August Evening, Pörtom Church
Sunday 16 August, 3:00 p.m. – Cottage Worship Service, Church Cottage, Pörtom
Thursday 20 August, 8:00 p.m. – Music in the August Evening, Pörtom Church
Thursday 27 August, 8:00 p.m. – Music in the August Evening, Pörtom Church

Source: Närpes Parish.

STATISTICS

Student Apartment Prices Split Finland – Vaasa Sees the Fastest Rent Increase

Students preparing to start university this autumn may face an unexpected challenge before classes even begin: finding an affordable apartment. A new comparison shows that rental trends vary sharply across Finland’s university cities, with Vaasa and Lappeenranta emerging as complete opposites.

According to the latest figures, rents for privately owned studio apartments increased the most in Vaasa during the past year, while Lappeenranta was among the few university cities where studio rents actually declined slightly. Helsinki remains Finland’s most expensive student city despite a modest drop in rental prices.



Vaasa’s growing popularity as a university

NEWS

NIGHT OF THE ARTS

Night of the Arts one year ago on 14.8.2025



This year we celebrate Night of the Arts on 13.8.2026

city helps explain the trend. The city attracts students through its internationally recognised energy technology cluster and several higher education institutions. Increased demand for small apartments has pushed rents upward, even though organisations such as VOAS continue to provide affordable student housing.

Housing experts recommend applying for accommodation as early as possible. As the autumn semester approaches, the best studio apartments are often rented out within days.

Time: Statistics cover January–June 2026 and were published during summer 2026.

Place: University cities across Finland.

Source: Statistics Finland



MALAX

Creativity explosion at the Kvarken Boat Museum – “Provapåkalaset” attracts the whole district

Malax, 19 August 2026, 17:30–19:30. There will be colour, celebration and full speed ahead when the Kvarken Boat Museum is transformed into a creative amusement park for all ages. Malax municipality invites you to the year’s most playful Tryout Party – an event where you can stumble into a circus workshop, end up in the middle of a theatre exercise or suddenly stand and speed cub as if you were training for the World Championships. On site is everything from the children’s choir Kõrvana to Art in Malakta, 4H and the municipal library. It’s as if all of Malax’s creative soul has come together in one place – and admission is also free. Music, art, theatre and surprises are promised, and the organisers promise that no one goes home without having discovered a new hobby or at least laughed at someone else’s attempt. A perfect late summer event for those who want to try something new – or just enjoy the atmosphere by the sea.

Reference: Malax municipality

ARTE MARE

Wasa Theatre takes over Arte Mare – the gallery becomes a magical showroom in August



Replot, 4–30 August 2026, 10 am–6 pm. In August, something unusual happens at Replot bridge: Galleri Arte Mare is transformed into a living theatre universe when Wasa Teater moves in and turns the gallery into its own creative showroom.

NEWS

NEW EURONOTES

Vote for Europe's Future Money – The Next Euro Banknotes Are Taking Shape

FRANKFURT, GERMANY, July 23, 2026 – Should Europe's future banknotes celebrate Beethoven, Marie Curie and Leonardo da Vinci, or showcase the continent's rivers and birds? The European Central Bank (ECB) is inviting people across the euro area to help choose the design of the next generation of euro banknotes through an on-line public survey running until 21 September 2026.

The ECB has unveiled ten shortlisted designs, divided between two themes: "European Culture" and "Rivers and Birds." The re-design aims to ensure that future euro banknotes remain highly secure while better reflecting Europe's shared identity, cultural heritage and natural diversity. It is the first complete re-design since euro banknotes entered circulation in 2002.

Once the survey closes, the ECB's Governing Council will consider public feedback before selecting the winning design around the end of 2026. Even after the final choice is made, it will take several years before the new notes appear in wallets, as extensive testing and production are required. The current euro banknotes will remain valid and continue circulating alongside the new series.

A proposal for the new banknotes has been made by Finnish graphic artist Ville Tietäväinen. His proposal can be seen on the European Central Bank's page on the new banknotes, URL below, The images on this page show one of our editorial team's favourite series.

Vote here before 21 September 2026. : <https://www.ecb.europa.eu/press/pr/date/2026/html/ecb.pr260723~c2d43f9170.en.html>

Images:
Copyright 2026, European Central Bank

Source: European Central Bank (ECB), press release, 23 July 2026.



Visitors get to step straight into the scenes of the performing arts – literally. The exhibition showcases visual elements from the production OAS, and provides a unique chance to see how costumes, set design and storytelling are woven together into magic. It's like getting a sneak peek behind the curtain, but without having to duck props or stressed actors. In addition, the autumn's repertoire will be presented, so theatre lovers can already start planning their cultural evenings. An unusual and inspiring visit for anyone who wants to see how theatre is created – from idea to finished performance. Address: World Heritage Gate, Replotvägen 2, Replot Reference: Mustasaari Municipality

END OF VILLA SEASON PARTY

The last Saturday in August there will be fireworks – but only on certain conditions



The Venetsian weekend is approaching, and fireworks are allowed – but only if you follow the rules. It is a kind of "shoot if you are able to do the right thing" policy that is supposed to keep both the party atmosphere and safety at its peak. In the area of the Ostrobothnia Rescue Department, rockets may be fired without special notification on 29.8.2026 at 18.00 – 24.00, but not in urban areas, residential areas or near buildings. And if the Finnish Meteorological Institute issues a warning for a ground fire, it is a complete stop – then the rockets are allowed to stay in the box. Everyone is also reminded of common sense: don't aim fireworks at your neighbour's barbecue, and make sure you have a bucket of water close at hand. And protect your eyes! After all, the Venetsian night is a celebration of joy, not of the fire brigade or the ophthalmologist

PHOTO CONTEST

Capture the World Heritage Site – win €500!



Do you have a mobile full of pictures from the

ALIBABA AI

Alibaba's Qwen 3.6 and Qwen 3.8: China's AI Giant Challenges ChatGPT



Artificial intelligence is advancing at an astonishing pace. While most people have heard of ChatGPT, Google Gemini, or Claude, a powerful challenger from China is rapidly attracting worldwide attention. Alibaba's newest AI models – Qwen 3.6 and the newly released Qwen 3.8 – are among the most capable systems ever developed. But what makes them different, and should ordinary users care?

For the past few years, American companies such as OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, and Meta have largely dominated the AI race. Today, however, Chinese technology companies are catching up quickly. Alibaba, one of the world's largest technology firms, has invested billions of dollars in AI research, and its Qwen family of language models has become one of the fastest-growing AI platforms in the world.

From Qwen 3.6 to Qwen 3.8
Qwen 3.6, introduced earlier this year, represented a major leap forward over previous Qwen versions. It became better at logical reasoning, programming, mathematics, and analyzing both images and text. It also introduced enormous context windows—allowing users to upload books, lengthy reports, or thousands of pages of documentation in a single conversation.

Only a few months later Alibaba surprised the AI world again by unveiling Qwen 3.8 Max, its most ambitious model so far.

The flagship model reportedly contains 2.4 trillion parameters, making it one of the

largest AI models ever built. Thanks to an advanced "Mixture of Experts" architecture, however, it activates only a fraction of those parameters during each response, making it considerably faster and more economical than its enormous size would suggest. It also supports multimodal input, meaning users can work with text, photographs, diagrams and even video within the same conversation.

What makes Qwen different?

Unlike many earlier AI systems, Qwen combines several important innovations.

First, it can automatically decide how deeply it should think. Simple questions receive immediate answers, while difficult mathematical problems or programming tasks trigger much longer reasoning processes. This produces better answers without unnecessarily slowing down everyday conversations.

Second, Qwen has become remarkably multilingual. While earlier generations handled only a limited number of languages well, the Qwen 3 family supports well over one hundred languages and dialects, making it attractive for international businesses and researchers.

Third, Alibaba has embraced an open-weight strategy. Unlike completely closed systems, developers can download and customize many Qwen models for their own servers and applications. This has made Qwen especially popular among universities, startups, and software developers.

What is Qwen best at?
Although almost any AI

assistant can answer questions or write emails, different models have different strengths.

Qwen is particularly strong for: software development and programming mathematical calculations scientific research analyzing very large documents translating between many languages building AI assistants for companies processing both text and images simultaneously

Because it can read extremely large amounts of information at once, businesses can use it to analyze contracts, technical manuals, legal documents, financial reports or research papers that would overwhelm many older AI systems.

Is it better than ChatGPT?
The answer depends on what one means by "better."

In coding, mathematics and structured reasoning, many independent benchmark tests place recent Qwen models among the world's leading AI systems. Alibaba also claims that Qwen 3.8 competes directly with the strongest American models. However, some of these performance claims have not yet been independently verified because comprehensive benchmark results for the newest model are still limited.

For everyday users, ChatGPT still offers several advantages.

OpenAI has spent years refining conversation quality, reliability, safety systems, voice interaction, memory, productivity tools and

integration with external services. Many users also find ChatGPT's responses slightly more natural and polished during long conversations.

On the other hand, Qwen often shines in technical tasks, large-scale document analysis, multilingual work and open-source development.

Which AI should you choose?

For ordinary users wanting help with writing, studying, travel planning, creativity or general questions, ChatGPT remains one of the easiest and most polished choices.

For programmers, engineers, researchers and organizations wanting to customize their own AI or process enormous amounts of information, Qwen is becoming an increasingly attractive alternative.

The competition is also benefiting consumers. Only two years ago today's AI capabilities would have seemed almost science fiction. Now companies from the United States and China are pushing each other forward at breathtaking speed, releasing increasingly capable models every few months rather than every few years.

The AI race is only beginning

The launch of Qwen 3.8 demonstrates that artificial intelligence is no longer dominated by Silicon Valley alone. China has become a genuine competitor at the highest level of AI research.

Whether Qwen ultimately surpasses ChatGPT remains to be seen. Independent evaluations over the coming months will provide a clearer picture. One thing is already certain: competition between OpenAI, Google, Anthropic, Meta, Alibaba and other AI developers is accelerating innovation at an unprecedented pace.

For users around the world, that means smarter assistants, lower costs, and increasingly powerful AI tools arriving faster than ever before.

archipelago? Now they can be worth money. The Kvarken World Heritage Site celebrates 20 years with a photo competition where everyone can participate. Take your best shot – whether it's sunset over the archipelago, a seal looking up or just that perfect archipelago atmosphere – and send it in. The winner takes home 500 euros. The exact rules and deadline for submission can be found on the website of the City of Vaasa. But one thing is certain: here you have to recharge – both the camera and the imagination. Send the photos by 31.8.2026. More information here: <https://www.vaasa.fi/sv/se-och-upplev/kvarkens-skargard/kvarken-20/fototavling-20/> And for those who don't win? At least you get an excuse to spend a day out in the World Heritage Site. That's a win too.

Source: City of Vaasa / Kvarken 20, July 2026

WORLD HERITAGE

ALVAR AALTO

A Landmark for Finland – Alvar Aalto's Buildings Win UNESCO World Heritage Status

Finland has gained a prestigious new UNESCO World Heritage Site after the organisation officially inscribed The Architecture of Alvar Aalto – A Human Dimension to the Modern Movement on the World Heritage List.



The Church in Seinäjoki

The decision was made during the UNESCO World Heritage Committee meeting in Paris in July 2026. The inscription includes 15 architectural sites—13 in Finland, one in Germany and one in France—showcasing how Alvar Aalto transformed modern architecture by combining functionality, natural light, local materials and a deep concern for human well-being.



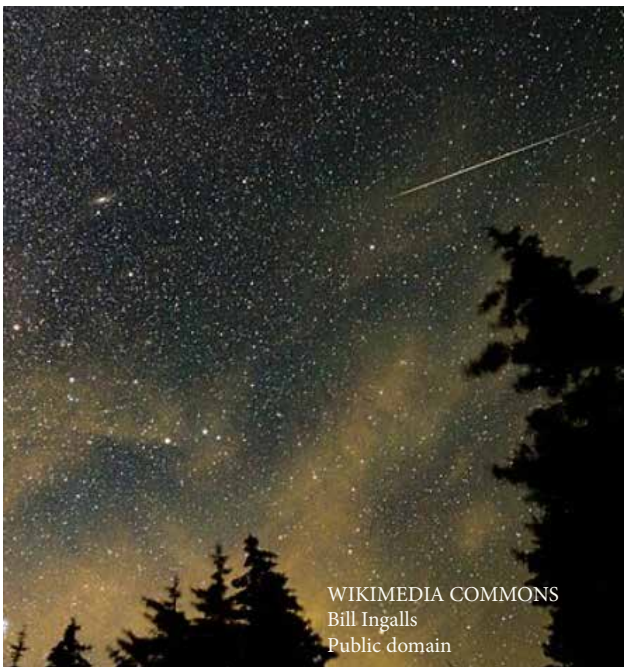
Säynätsalo Town Hall have 3000 visitors every year from many countries

Among the Finnish landmarks included are Finlandia Hall in Helsinki, the Paimio Sanatorium, Villa Mairea in Noormarkku, The Church area in Seinäjoki, Säynätsalo Town Hall

NEWS

August 12, 2026

What a wonderful evening, solar eclipse and meteor shower



PERSEIDS

Look up! The Perseids' meteor shower lights up the August nights

Every year in August, the sky offers one of its grandest shows – the Perseid meteor shower. This year, it reaches its peak on the night of Monday 12 and Tuesday 13 August, and astronomers predict a particularly intense spectacle. Under ideal conditions, you can expect up to 90 "shooting stars" per hour.

A cosmic encounter The Perseids occur when the Earth crosses the tail-like trail of dust and small particles left behind by Comet Swift-Tuttle during its orbits around the Sun. These dust grains, which are usually no larger than grains of sand, rush into the Earth's atmosphere at speeds of about 60 kilometers per second. The friction causes them to heat up and annihilate in the blink of an eye – and it is this fiery journey that we see as bright streaks in the sky.

The name "The Perseids" comes from the constellation Perseus, where

the so-called radiant of the meteor swarm – the point in the sky where the streaks appear to emanate from – is located.

When and where to look?

In Finland, the Perseids are best seen in the southern and central parts of the country, as the bright summer nights in the north can still interfere with visibility. The best time to look is between midnight and dawn, when the radiant is at its highest in the sky and the number of visible meteors increases.

Want to maximize the experience? Find a place with a clear horizon and minimal light pollution. Building lighting, street lamps, and illuminated facades can drastically reduce the number of meteors you see. The Ursa Astronomical Society recommends using Skywarden's Observation Service to find dark spots.

In Vaasa, Meteoriihi in Söderfjärden is an excellent observation site. Here you have an unobstructed view in all directions and plenty of space for both stargazing and picnic blankets. The address is Marenintie 292.

NEWS

and the Aalto University campus in Espoo. These buildings have long attracted architecture enthusiasts from around the world, and UNESCO recognition is expected to further boost cultural tourism. Alvar Aalto (1898–1976) is widely regarded as one of the most influential architects and designers of the twentieth century. His human-centred approach to modernism continues to inspire architects across the globe. The new World Heritage designation is both an honour and a responsibility. It recognises the universal value of Aalto's work while ensuring that these remarkable buildings will be carefully preserved for future generations. Source: UNESCO World Heritage Centre, The Architecture of Alvar Aalto – A Human Dimension to the Modern Movement, July 2026.

HEALTH

HEPATITIS C

Finland Closer Than Ever to Defeating Hepatitis C

Finland is making remarkable progress in the fight against hepatitis C, bringing the country closer to eliminating the disease as a major public health threat. According to the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), access to testing and treatment has improved significantly, allowing more people to be diagnosed and cured before serious liver damage develops.

Hepatitis C is a blood-borne viral infection that often causes no symptoms for many years. If left untreated, it can lead to liver cirrhosis, liver failure or liver cancer. Fortunately, modern antiviral medicines can cure more than 95 percent of patients, usually within 8 to 12 weeks.

Finland has committed to the World Health Organization's goal of eliminating hepatitis C by 2030. To achieve this, the government is expanding low-threshold testing services, introducing faster diagnostic methods and simplifying access to treatment, particularly for people at highest risk. More than €13 million has been allocated to the national elimination programme for 2025–2027.

WHO says Europe has already made major progress, but stresses that wider testing and timely treatment remain essential if hepatitis C is to become a disease of the past.

Time and place: THL announcement published in August 2026. The programme covers all of Finland. Source: Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL), Ministry of Social Affairs and Health, World Health Organization (WHO)

AI

AI

EU Unveils New AI Warning Icon – A Digital "Truth Shield" for All Europeans

The ten principles of the Helsinki spirit – and how Russia has violated everyone



Image: President Leonid Brezhnev after signing the Helsinki agreement in 1975. Wikimedia Commons, Unknown author. Public Domain

THE HELSINKI ACCORDS, signed in 1975, were a landmark achievement of Cold War diplomacy, establishing a set of ten principles to guide relations among participating states. These principles, while not legally binding, were intended to create a framework for peaceful coexistence and cooperation.

They were a cornerstone of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), the predecessor to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The very spirit of the Accords, often referred to as "The Helsinki Spirit," was a commitment to dialogue, respect for sovereignty, and the peaceful resolution of disputes.

The ten principles are:
Sovereign equality: All states are equal and possess the same rights.
Refraining from the threat or use of force: States should not use or threaten to use force against each other.
Inviolability of frontiers: Existing borders between states should be respected.
Territorial integrity of states: Each state's territory should be respected

and protected.
Peaceful settlement of disputes: Conflicts should be resolved through peaceful means.
Non-intervention in internal affairs: No state should interfere in the internal affairs of another.
Respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms: This includes freedom of thought, conscience, religion, and belief.
Equal rights and self-determination of peoples: All peoples have the right to determine their own political status.
Cooperation among States: States should cooperate in various fields.
Fulfillment in good faith of obligations under international law: States should uphold their commitments under international law.
The significance of these principles was twofold: they provided a basis for dialogue between two opposing blocs and, crucially, they opened a space for human rights activists and dissidents in the Soviet bloc to demand accountability from their governments.

Russia's Actions: A Systematic Violation
The actions of the Russian Federation since its invasion of Ukraine in 2014

and especially its full-scale invasion in 2022 represent a systematic and comprehensive rejection of every single one of these ten principles.
Sovereign equality and non-intervention: By invading Ukraine, Russia has not only denied Ukraine's sovereign equality but has actively intervened in its internal affairs, seeking to dictate its political future and territorial boundaries. The very act of invasion is a negation of these principles.
Refraining from the threat or use of force: The use of military force on a massive scale is the most flagrant violation of this principle. Russia's aggression is a direct and unprovoked war of choice.
Inviolability of frontiers and territorial integrity: The illegal annexation of Crimea in 2014, and later the proclaimed annexation of the Donbas, Kherson, and Zaporizhzhia regions, are direct assaults on Ukraine's territorial integrity and the inviolability of its internationally recognized borders. These actions are a direct challenge to the post-war European order that the Helsinki Accords sought to solidify.
Peaceful settlement of disputes: Russia's choice to resolve its grievances with Ukraine through mi-

litary force, rather than diplomatic channels, is a rejection of the peaceful settlement of disputes.
Respect for human rights and freedoms: The war has been accompanied by a litany of human rights abuses, including war crimes, targeted attacks on civilians, and the forced deportation of Ukrainian citizens. This stands in stark contrast to the human rights commitments of the Accords.
Equal rights and self-determination: Russia's stated goal of preventing Ukraine from aligning with Western institutions and its denial of Ukraine's distinct national identity directly undermine the principle of self-determination.
Cooperation among states: Russia's actions have destroyed the possibility of meaningful cooperation with many European nations, leading to a new era of confrontation and mistrust.
Fulfillment of international obligations: Russia has not only violated the Helsinki Accords but also numerous other international laws and agreements, including the UN Charter and the Budapest Memorandum of 1994, which guaranteed Ukraine's territorial integrity.

Basic icon 	When AI was involved in the creation of deep fake content (image, audio, video) or published text or when a custom text label or interactive second layer is implemented	Deep fake video with the text label "voices generated with" followed by the basic icon
Fully AI-Generated 	When the entire deep fake content (image, audio, video) or text is fully generated by AI with no human-created elements or human editorial control (apart from prompting)	Fully AI-generated deep fake videos with politicians or fictional events Fully AI-composed music or art* AI-generated news summaries
Partially AI-Modified 	When pre-existing, human-made content was partially modified with AI turning it into a deep fake or text on matters of public interest	A face in an authentic photograph is swapped with a face of a politician using AI Authentic photographs of an empty apartment is furnished using AI

A brand-new symbol is about to appear across Europe's digital landscape – a small icon with a massive mission: revealing when content has been generated or altered by artificial intelligence. The European Commission has officially released its set of AI-labelling icons, marking a turning point in the fight against deepfakes and online manipulation.

The icons, available in four versions, were refined through extensive user testing. Their purpose is simple but powerful: help every citizen instantly recognise whether a video, image, audio clip or text is human-made or machine-generated. "Transparency is our strongest defence against misinformation," an EU official said.

Under the AI Act, any AI-generated or AI-manipulated content that could influence the public must be clearly labelled. Deepfakes – realistic but fabricated videos or photos – are a particular concern, especially during elections and major public events. The icon must be placed directly on the content, remain visible when shared, and be accessible to assistive technologies.

Creative works such as art, satire and fiction receive lighter requirements, but audiences must still be informed when AI has played a role.

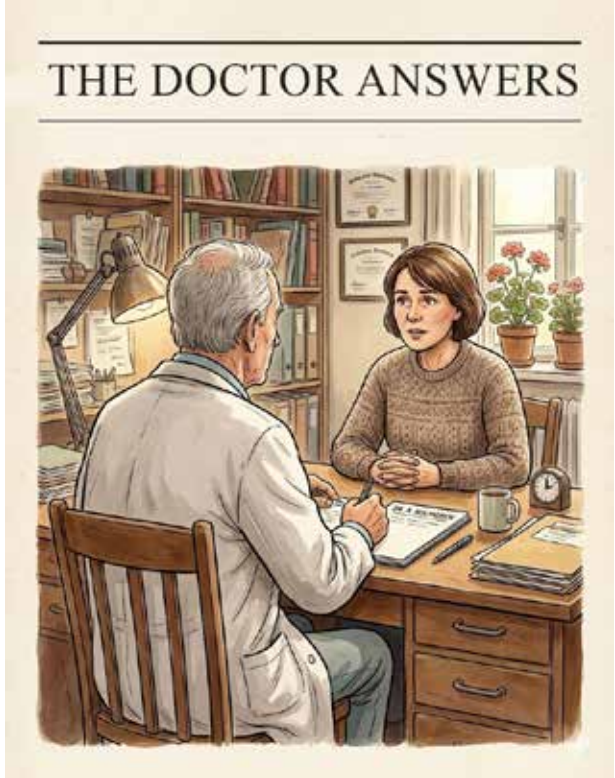
This new system is the first unified AI-labelling standard in the world. It may fundamentally reshape how Europeans judge authenticity in the digital age – giving everyone a simple visual cue to separate truth from technological illusion. Source: European Commission

DRIVING EU Road Safety: AI Eyes on the Driver

Starting this week, the European Union has mandated that all newly registered vehicles must be equipped with AI-powered driver distraction detection systems. The technology continuously analyzes head movements and gaze patterns to identify signs of fatigue or inattention. Officials emphasize that the system is designed strictly for safety: it provides alerts but does not record or transmit footage to authorities, addressing long-standing privacy concerns. As vehicle automation increases, regulators are moving faster to ensure that "human-in-the-loop" systems remain reliable. For commuters, the change means your car is now officially watching out for your focus, marking a new chapter in smart automotive security.

HEALTH

THE DOCTOR ANSWERS Choral Singing and Health



”Neurologist Markku T Hyyppä claimed already 20 years ago that choral singing is healthy, and the many choirs in Coastal Ostrobothnia are one of the reasons for the good health in our region. Is this perhaps a little too good to be true? Is there any scientific evidence that there is a connection between choral singing and health?”

Neurologist Markku T Hyyppä attracted a lot of attention when he claimed that the good health among the Swedish-speaking population in Coastal Ostrobothnia could partly be explained by a strong association life – and not least the many choirs. Many smiled at the statement. Can any songs really affect our health?

Today, there is significantly more research than when Hyyppä presented his ideas, and it does give him some support – even if the picture is more nuanced.

Studies from Finland and several other countries show that people who sing in a choir often experience a better quality of life, less loneliness, a stronger sense of community and better mental well-being than comparable groups. In the elderly, choral singing has also been linked to higher perceived health and, in some studies, also better memory functions and cognitive ability.

The explanation is probably not only about the singing itself. When people sing together, several parts of the brain are activated at the same time. Breathing becomes deeper and more regular, the stress hormone cortisol can drop and the body releases endorphins and oxytocin – substances associated with well-being,

joy and social cohesion. At the same time, memory, concentration, language and hearing are trained.

Perhaps the most important health effect is still the social one. Loneliness is today one of the biggest risk factors for ill health in the elderly. A choir offers not only music, but also friendship, routine, and a sense of being needed. This social capital was a central part of Hyyppä’s theory of why Finland-Swedes have long had better health and a longer life expectancy than average.

But does this mean that choral singing automatically gives a longer life? Researchers are much more cautious in this regard. Most studies show associations, not definite causalities. People who sing in a choir may also have other healthy lifestyles, be more socially active, and have better finances or education. Several systematic reviews therefore conclude that the research is promising but that larger controlled studies are still needed.

Still, the conclusion is encouraging. Choral singing is cheap, safe, accessible and brings joy to thousands of people. If it also strengthens mental health, improves quality of life, and helps people find a community, it is likely to have a value that extends far beyond the world of music.

So Markku T Hyyppä was absolutely right – and he was also ahead of his time.

References

Johnson, J.K. et al. (2017). Comparison of Well-being of Older Adult Choir Singers and the General Population in Finland: A Case-Control Study. *Musicae Scientiae*.

Pentikäinen, E. et al. (2021). Beneficial Effects of Choir Singing on Cognition and Well-being of Older Adults. *PLOS ONE*.

EXHIBITIONS

VAASA ART HALL

The Peace Progress 24.7. – 16.8.2026



Can art create peace? An appealing exhibition opens at Vaasa Kunstställe. Peace, nature and the connection of people come together in the new exhibition The Peace Process, which will be on display at Vaasa Art Hall (Senaatinkatu 1 D) 24.7.–16.8.2026. The exhibition invites visitors to stop and reflect on current themes at a time when the importance of peace seems more important than it has been for a long time. The exhibition is produced by the Flora and Fauna Project, whose contemporary artworks deal with coexistence, dialogue and the importance of the environment, among other things. The works challenge the viewer to think about how art can build understanding and hope. Since 2024, the Art Hall, which is maintained by the Vaasa Artists' Association, has become one of the city's most important contemporary art exhibition spaces. Admission to the exhibition is free. Opening hours: Tue–Fri 11 am–5 pm, Sat–Sun 12:00 pm–4:00 pm. Closed on Mondays.

Source: Vaasa Artists' Association.

ÖVERMARK

Echoes in an Abandoned Home: "The Hidden Spots"



In the quiet village of Övermark, art has taken over a century-old, derelict house. The site-specific exhibition, The Hidden Spots, invites visitors to wander through rooms where time seems to have frozen. Created by the artist duo Black Box Genesis, the installation blends soundscapes, poetry, and physical relics to explore memory and transience. As part of a multidisciplinary regional project, this evocative showcase encourages guests to interact directly with the layers of history hidden within the walls of a forgotten home. Regional Art Exhibition 4.7.-2.8.2026. Address: Dermossvägen 20, 64610 Ylimarkku. Opening hours: Wednesday–Thursday 12–17 Friday–Sunday 12–18 Image: Bekim Hasaj and Valentina Gelain

VAASA

Street Art Takes Over: Wasa Graffitilandia

Vaasa’s most vibrant summer tradition is back in full force. Wasa Graffitilandia has transformed over 3,000 square meters into a sprawling, colorful maze of street art and urban culture. Now in its sixth year, this summer edition showcases a massive collection of works from local and international artists. The exhibition serves as a dynamic contrast to the region’s traditional museum offerings, providing a gritty, energetic space for creative expression that continues to push the boundaries of what is considered "gallery art" in Ostrobothnia.

STUNDARS

Historic Charm: Stundars Open Air Museum



The Stundars Open Air Museum in Mustasaari has launched a pair of compelling exhibitions that dive deep into the region's heritage. With Paint and Bricks

explores the traditional decorative painting and fireplace artistry found throughout Ostrobothnia. Running alongside this are curated displays in the historic Hemmer’s House and the local Stone Mason’s Cottage, offering a glimpse into the craftsmanship that defined the area centuries ago. These exhibitions provide a peaceful, educational retreat for those looking to connect with the authentic roots of the coastal landscape.

VAASA

400 Years of Vaasa

The Ostrobothnian Museum's permanent exhibition, Vaasa 400 – Tales of a City, offers a captivating journey through the city's four-century history. From its founding in 1606 and 17th-century witch hunts to the devastating fire of 1852 and the rise of shipping and industry, the exhibition weaves together events that shaped society, education, and everyday life. Highlights include Ostrobothnian folk art, painted furniture, and reconstructed interiors of a burgher's home and a factory worker's dwelling. Old publicity films and scale models of the city's changing town plan complete this rich historical tapestry. Ostrobothnian Museum, Museokatu 3, Vaasa. Open Wed–Sun 10–17. Admission 15/9/0€. – Reference: museot.fi

VAASA

The Scavengers' Garden

Insects and invertebrates take centre stage at the Ostrobothnian Museum this summer. The nabbteeri artists' collective presents The Scavengers' Garden Ostrobothnian Museum, Museokatu 3, Vaasa. Open 9 May – 20 September 2026. Wed–Sun 10–17. – Reference: vaasa.fi

VANHA VAASA

250 Years of Justice



The Old Vaasa Museum marks a significant anniversary with its exhibition on the Vaasa Court of Appeal, established in 1775 by King Gustav III. Running until 29 August, the exhibition sheds light on the court's early years, its activities, and its profound impact on the lives of people across historical Ostrobothnia. Through miniature models, visual material, and stories of officials and their families, visitors gain insight into the ceremonies, power, and everyday life of one of Finland's oldest judicial institutions. History buffs will find this a fascinating journey into the region's legal heritage. Museum of Old Vaasa, Wasastjernen kauppiastalo, Kauppiaankatu 10, Vaasa. Open 1 June – 29 August 2026. Wed–Sat 10–17. Free admission. – Reference: museot.fi

KRISTINESTAD.

The Splendid Villa's Dramatic Fall

Carlsro Museum in Kristinestad presents the gripping tale of Alfred Carlström, once the richest man in Ostrobothnia. The Splendid Villa exhibition recounts the opulent villa era and its dramatic collapse when an embezzler drove the ship-owning family into bankruptcy in 1910. Visitors can glimpse elegant celebrations, peacocks wandering freely, and the idyll that shattered, bringing an entire town to its knees. This summer's exhibition honours the villa's anniversary year and tells the full story of what became of Carlsro and its family. A captivating tale of wealth, betrayal, and ruin. Carlsro, Carlsrovägen 181, 64100 Kristiinankaupunki. Open 1 June – 31 August 2026, daily 11–17. Closed Midsummer 23–25 June. Admission 8/2/0€. – Reference: museot.fi

AI-MUSIC

The Best AI Music Generators in 2026 – From Rap Beats to Opera Masterpieces



Imagine a 16-year-old aspiring rapper who wants to craft the next viral hit but doesn't know how to produce beats. Or a retired music teacher dreaming of composing an opera but lacking the technical skills. Maybe even a podcaster looking for the perfect background track without paying expensive licensing fees.

In 2026, AI music generators have become so advanced that they can turn anyone—regardless of musical training—into a composer.

But with so many options available, which AI tools truly stand out? We tested the top platforms to find the best AI music generators of 2025, catering to different needs, genres, and skill levels.

Suno AI 3.0 – The King of AI-Generated Songs

Suno AI made waves in 2024 with its ability to generate full songs—lyrics, vocals, and instrumentals—from simple text prompts. In 2025, Suno AI 3.0 has refined its algorithms to produce even more natural-sounding vocals and genre-specific compositions.

Best for: Aspiring singers, songwriters, and content creators.

Why it's great: Type in a prompt like "upbeat pop-punk song about summer love", and Suno generates a complete track in seconds.

Perfect for: Our teen rapper who just typed "hard-hitting trap beat with aggressive flow" and got a studio-quality demo in minutes.

Udio Pro – The Ultimate AI Music Collaboration Tool

Udio took a different approach by focusing on human-AI collaboration. Its 2025 "Pro" version lets users start with a melody, hum a tune, or even

upload a rough recording, which the AI then refines into a polished track.

Best for: Musicians who want AI assistance rather than full automation.

Why it's great: Udio Pro's "Smart Remix" feature can transform a simple piano riff into a full orchestral arrangement or a synth-heavy EDM drop.

Perfect for: Our opera-loving senior, who hummed an aria idea and watched Udio turn it into a sweeping, orchestrated piece complete with synthetic operatic vocals.

AIVA 4.0 – The Classical and Film Score Specialist

While many AI tools focus on pop and electronic music, AIVA 4.0 remains the go-to for classical, jazz, and cinematic compositions. It's used by indie filmmakers, game developers, and even professional composers for inspiration.

Best for: Composers, filmmakers, and game devs.

Why it's great: AIVA's "Emotion Engine" lets users adjust the mood of a piece (e.g., "more melancholic" or "heroic climax"), making it ideal for scoring scenes.

The Future of AI Music?

While AI music tools still can't fully replace human creativity, they've become indispensable assistants—helping beginners create professional-sounding tracks and giving experts new ways to experiment.

The best part? Most of these tools offer free tiers, so anyone can start composing today. Whether you're a teen rapper, a retired opera enthusiast, or just someone who loves making music, 2026's AI music generators have something for you.

AI

ChatGPT has a voice – and it sounds almost human



The new generation of voice calls could change the way we use artificial intelligence

Just a few years ago, the conversation with an AI consisted of typing questions and waiting for a text-based answer. Today, the situation is completely different. With ChatGPT's new voice feature, GPT-Live, the user can have a natural conversation with the AI – almost like a human. It is one of the biggest steps so far in artificial intelligence and is changing the way people work, study and communicate.

AI that listens while you talk

The biggest news is that ChatGPT no longer has to wait until you've finished speaking before responding. The new technology is based on so-called full-duplex, which means that the AI can listen and speak at the same time – just like humans do in normal conversations. This means you can pause mid-sentence, change your mind, or interrupt the AI with a follow-up question. ChatGPT perceives the context and continues the conversation without losing the thread. It can even give small confirmations such as "mm", "I understand" or "continue", which makes the dialogue significantly more natural than previous generations of voice assistants.

More than a talking machine

The new voice function is significantly more intelligent than a traditional voice assistant. If you ask about the weather, a stock price, or the news of the day, ChatGPT can search for up-to-date information on the internet while the conversation continues. If the question needs more advanced analysis, more powerful language models are connected behind the scenes without the user noticing the transition.

The result is that the AI feels both faster and smarter.

Perfect language coach
One of the most appreciated uses is language learning.
For example, you can say:
"Let's speak Spanish for ten minutes. Correct my faults but don't interrupt me."
ChatGPT then acts as a tireless tutor who adapts the difficulty level according to your knowledge. It can simulate restaurant visits, job interviews, or vacation trips, and provide direct feedback on pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. User experience and research

studies show that this can provide great support in language learning.

A personal assistant around the clock

The voice function is also suitable for much more than small talk.
Many people use it to:
Plan trips
Writing speeches and articles
Summarize meetings
solve math problems
Get Prescription
Repeat lectures
brainstorm ideas
Get help with programming
Read texts aloud
Create shopping lists and daily plans.
Because you can talk while walking, driving or cooking, the AI becomes significantly more useful than when you have to write.
Can be cancelled at any time
Previous AI voices could sometimes feel slow and difficult to stop.
Now the user can cancel in the middle of a reply.
ChatGPT immediately perceives that you want to say something and hands over the word. This makes the conversations significantly more lively and less mechanical.

Not infallible

Despite the great advances, the technology is not perfect.
OpenAI emphasizes that AI can still make mistakes or misunderstand questions. Especially when it comes to medicine, law, economics or other important decisions, the information should always be checked against reliable sources. Also, voice transcriptions don't always accurately reflect what was said in the conversation.

The future has already begun

OpenAI states that over 150 million people use voice features like Voice and Dictation every week. The new GPT-Live technology was introduced in July 2026 and is gradually rolling out to ChatGPT on the web as well as in the iOS and Android apps. For paid subscriptions, the full GPT-Live model is used, while free users get access to a lighter version with some usage limitations.
It is therefore no longer an exaggeration to say that the computer has been given a voice.
And for the first time, it actually feels like it has also learned to listen.

CLIMATE CHANGE

CLIMATE CHANGE

This summer is probably the hottest in world history – but it will get worse



From Europe and North America to Asia and the Arctic, the summer of 2026 is likely to be remembered as one of the hottest ever experienced by humanity. Scientists caution that while records are made to be broken, the bigger story is not this year's heat alone—it is the long-term trend. The planet is continuing to warm, and future summers are expected to become even hotter.

Heatwaves have become longer, more frequent and more intense than they were just a few decades ago. Cities have baked under temperatures exceeding 40°C, wildfires have spread across forests and grasslands, and drought has threatened crops in several parts of the world. At the same time, warmer oceans have fueled heavier rainfall and stronger storms in other regions, illustrating that climate change affects far more than just air temperature.

According to climate researchers, the primary driver is the increasing concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere, especially carbon dioxide released by burning coal, oil and natural gas. Natural weather patterns such as El Niño and La Niña can influence individual years, but they cannot explain the persistent rise in global temperatures observed over many decades.

The consequences are already visible. Farmers face uncertain harvests, healthcare systems must cope with more heat-related illnesses, and ecosystems are under growing pressure. Elderly people, young children and those with chronic illnesses are particularly vulnerable during prolonged periods of extreme heat. In many countries, authorities have expanded heat warning systems and opened cooling centres to help protect the public.

Despite the alarming outlook, scientists emphasize that the future is not predetermined. Every tonne of carbon dioxide that is avoided slows the rate of warming. Rapid

expansion of renewable energy, improved energy efficiency, cleaner transportation and better protection of forests can all reduce future climate risks. Communities are also adapting by planting more urban trees, redesigning buildings to stay cooler and improving water management.

Climate experts warn that unless global greenhouse gas emissions decline substantially over the coming decades, the hottest summer of today could become an average summer later this century. In other words, what now seems exceptional may eventually become normal - or below normal.

This summer may indeed be among the hottest in recorded—and perhaps human—history. But the more important message is that it should not be viewed as an isolated event. It is another warning that the Earth's climate is changing rapidly. The choices governments, businesses and individuals make during the next decade will help determine whether future generations inherit a world of manageable challenges or increasingly dangerous extremes.

EVENTS

TODAY

BRINKENS MUSEUM

Flower Day in Malax – A Blooming Celebration of Heritage

Sunday 9 August 2026, 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
At Brinkens Museum, summer bursts into color as the annual Flower Day celebrates the century-old museum garden. The tradition began with the Orre sisters, pioneers who cultivated flowers and herbs in the early 1900s and sold them at Vaasa's market square.

This year, hortonomist Jari von Wendt explores small-scale agroforestry – how old cultivation wisdom can enrich modern home gardens. Anita Storm introduces Aktion Österbotten's Eco Club, which maintains its own garden plots at the museum.

Visitors can join a free cyanotype workshop led by Daniel Beijar from Replot Archipelago Heritage Association, creating artistic blueprints of flowers and plants.

Coffee, waffles, books and bouquets are sold on site, and the flea market is open.
A radiant day where history, sustainability and beauty bloom together.

Location: Brinkens Museum, Museivägen 5, Malax
Time: Sunday 9 August 2026 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
Organizer: Malax Museum Association r.f

KORSHOLM CHURCH

August evening with tunes that make the church sing



A flute, an organ and a summer evening – sometimes all you need is to create an atmosphere. On Sunday evening, Korsholm's church will be filled with classical tunes when flutist Erica Nygård and organist Niels Burgmann offer the program Augustitones.
The concert is an opportunity to unwind as the summer gradually begins to come to an end. The church room and the organ give the music a special acoustics, while the flute adds the light and airy tones.
Time and place: Sunday 9 August 2026 at 19.00, Korsholm Church

Reference: Korsholm's Swedish parish.

METEORIIHI

When space struck Earth – Meteorian open today



Dive into the story of a crater formed over 520 million years ago – from the meteorite impact to today's farmland and Natura 2000 area. Explore rare meteorites, old farming machinery, an astronomical observatory, and a bird tower in one of Finland's most important crane resting sites. A solar system model and crater scale model bring the cosmos down to earth. Don't miss this journey through deep time!
Source: <http://www.meteorია.fi>

AUGUST

ARTE MARE

Wasa Theatre takes over Arte Mare – the gallery becomes a magical showroom in August



Replot, 4–30 August 2026, 10 am–6 pm.
In August, something unusual happens at Replot bridge: Galleri Arte Mare is transformed into a living theatre universe when Wasa Teater moves in and turns the gallery into its own creative showroom. Visitors get to step straight into the scenes of the performing arts – literally.

EVENING MUSIC

50 years of free evening music in Vaasa – stars take over Vaasa Church



June – 14 August 2026
– Every Wednesday at 7.30 pm, completely free. The evening music at the Trinity Church has been a summer classic for 50 years. And This year it is

being celebrated in earnest. The organ has its place, of course – it is, after all, one of the finest churches in Finland. But the singing, violin, piano, clarinet and cello also shine. The artists? Well-known Finnish musicians and international guest performers. High-quality, free and open to all. So simple, so good.
Bring a friend and enjoy the bright June evenings until mid-August.
Source: Bothnia Classic

SOLAR ECLIPSE

A Partial Solar Eclipse on August 12



On Wednesday, August 12, 2026, a spectacular partial solar eclipse will be experienced, which will be visible in Vaasa and elsewhere in Finland around eight o'clock in the evening. In Vaasa, the eclipse begins at 7:56 PM, its maximum phase (84% of the Sun's disk is hidden) is at 8:49 PM, and the eclipse ends at 9:40 PM.
Eclipse schedule in Vaasa
Start: 7.56 p.m.
Max: 20:49 (84% coverage)
End: 21.40
General information about the phenomenon:
Totality: A total eclipse will be visible on the same day in Greenland, Iceland and northern Spain, among other places.
Safety: Do not look directly into the sun with the naked eye or with regular sunglasses. Always use suitable filters, such as special glass to see the blackout or welding glass (darkness 14).
More detailed local observation information and instructions can be found on the Ursa Astronomical Society website.
At Meteoriihi in Söderfjärden, people gather to see the eclipse:
https://meteorია.fi/fi/tapahtumat/2026-08-12-20-00_osittainen-auringon-pimennys-12-8

VAASAN MARSSI 7-9.8.2026

42 kilometres, sea views and no stopwatch – Vaasa prepares for massive walking event

The city of Vaasa will once again become a hub for endurance walkers when the international Vaasan Marssi takes place from 7 to 9 August 2026. The three-day event begins daily from Market Square at Hovioikeudenpuistikko 15a and attracts participants from across Finland and abroad.
Walkers can choose routes ranging from 10 kilometres to a demanding 42-kilometre challenge. The event features scenic routes through Strömsö, Old Vaasa and the UNESCO World Heritage archipelago area. Organisers stress that the event is not a race – there is no timekeeping – but the physical challenge is still significant, especially for those attempting several days in a row. Vaasan Marssi is also Finland's only IML-recognised walking event.

VASA FUTURE FESTIVAL

The future is here – and it is the New Nordic



Vaasa will once again become a center for future optimists when the Wasa Future Festival kicks off. For ten days, companies, decision-makers, researchers and artists will gather to build a better tomorrow under the theme "New Nordic". You will come here to network, be inspired and make a real difference. Expect both serious and crazy ideas – all on the same stage.
• When: 10–15 August 2026
• Where: Wasa Innovation Center & Bock's Village, Vaasa

NIGHT OF ART AUG 13

Night of Art: The whole of Vaasa becomes a big stage



Want to be part of creating the biggest cultural night in the region? Now is your chance! The program of the Night of Art is created together with the people of Vaasa – both small and large projects are welcome to participate. Imagine the streets filled with music, dance and unexpected art experiences.
But be quick! The registration period ends on 31 May 2026. Don't miss the opportunity to brighten up the autumn darkness.
• When: August 13, 2026
• Where: The entire city center of Vaasa
• Reference: vaasa.fi

KORSHOLM CHURCH

50 years of choral singing – anniversary choir celebrates with music festival

There will be both history and song when the Psallite Chamber Choir celebrates half a century with a special anniversary concert. On Sunday 16 August, the Psallite Chamber Choir and the Jubilee Choir will meet in Mustasaari Church under the direction of conductor Erica Nygård. 50 years of choral singing is hardly something you whistle away – and the concert will be a chance to hear several generations of choral singers together.

UKRAINE PRESIDENT

Continued Humanitarian Support, Expanded Bilateral Cooperation and Trade, and the Implementation of Joint Projects With Serbia – the Presidents of Ukraine and Serbia Met in Belgrade



In Belgrade, President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić during his first official visit to the country.

The Head of State thanked Serbia for its hospitality and respect for Ukrainians who came to the country after the start of the war, as well as for its support

for Ukraine’s independence and territorial integrity.

The President of Serbia emphasized that he and his country consistently adhere to the UN Charter and UN resolutions and respect the territorial integrity of all United Nations member states.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy stressed that the situation in Ukraine remains difficult.

Overnight, Russia carried out another strike on energy and railway facilities and civilian enterprises using ballistic missiles and jet-powered drones. All of Ukraine’s frontline communities also came under attack.

“Efforts to deal with the aftermath are still ongoing, and fires are being extinguished. Unfortunately, thirteen people were killed in these strikes across Ukraine in just 24 hours – from 9 a.m. yesterday to 9 a.m. today. My condolences to all the families and loved ones. Seventy-seven people were wounded across our regions – twelve regions came under attack,” the Head of State said.

The President of Ukraine thanked Serbia for a new package of humanitarian support in the medical and energy sectors and for its readiness to help rebuild one of the Ukrainian cities that has been severely affected by the war.

Special attention was paid to the challenges Ukraine will face this winter. The Head of State noted that all energy cooperation projects with partners are of great significance, and that it is important there are ways to strengthen energy cooperation between Ukraine and Serbia.

The meeting also focused on bilateral cooperation. The parties discussed measures that could strengthen infrastructure, ports, and railways, as well as the economies and security of both countries overall. In particular, Serbia is interested in Ukraine’s experience in developing railway infrastructure to improve its transport network. The leaders discussed specific projects that could be implemented jointly, as well as cooperation in the area of food security.

Volodymyr Zelenskyy emphasized the importance of accelerating the implementation of the agreement on a free trade area between Ukraine and Serbia. Work

is underway to prepare everything necessary for concluding the relevant agreement by the end of this year. Aleksandar Vučić noted a significant increase in trade between the two countries compared with last year. Last year, trade between Ukraine and Serbia totaled \$442.2 million, while in the first half of 2026 it has already reached \$345.9 million.

In addition, the leaders discussed European integration. Volodymyr Zelenskyy noted that Ukraine would be glad to see Serbia’s path toward the European Union accelerate. Aleksandar Vučić emphasized that Serbia supports Ukraine’s European path.

Read more:
<https://www.president.gov.ua/en>

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ART EXPERIENCE OF THE WEEK



Ferdinand von Wright
19.3.1822, Haminalahti
31.7.1906, Haminalahti
Jays, 1877
Finnish National Gallery Collection / Ateneum Art Museum
Photo: Finnish National Gallery / Hannu Pakarinen

George Orwell

1984

Part 39

‘It’s this bloody thing that does it,’ she said, ripping off the scarlet sash of the Junior Anti-Sex League and flinging it on to a bough. Then, as though touching her waist had reminded her of something, she felt in the pocket of her overalls and produced a small slab of chocolate. She broke it in half and gave one of the pieces to Winston. Even before he had taken it he knew by the smell that it was very unusual chocolate. It was dark and shiny, and was wrapped in silver paper. Chocolate normally was dull-brown crumbly stuff that tasted, as nearly as one could describe it, like the smoke of a rubbish fire. But at some time or another he had tasted chocolate like the piece she had given him. The first whiff of its scent had stirred up some memory which he could not pin down, but which was powerful and troubling.

‘Where did you get this stuff?’ he said.

‘Black market,’ she said indifferently. ‘Actually I am that sort of girl, to look at. I’m good at games. I was a troop-leader in the Spies. I do voluntary work three evenings a week for the Junior Anti-Sex League. Hours and hours I’ve spent pasting their bloody rot all over London. I always carry one end of a banner in the processions. I always look cheerful and

I never shirk anything. Always yell with the crowd, that’s what I say. It’s the only way to be safe.’

The first fragment of chocolate had melted on Winston’s tongue. The taste was delightful. But there was still that memory moving round the edges of his consciousness, something strongly felt but not reducible to definite shape, like an object seen out of the corner of one’s eye. He pushed it away from him, aware only that it was the memory of some action which he would have liked to undo but could not.

‘You are very young,’ he said. ‘You are ten or fifteen years younger than I am. What could you see to attract you in a man like me?’

‘It was something in your face. I thought I’d take a chance. I’m good at spotting people who don’t belong. As soon as I saw you I knew you were against THEM.’

THEM, it appeared, meant the Party, and above all the Inner Party, about whom she talked with an open jeering hatred which made Winston feel uneasy, although he knew that they were safe here if they could be safe anywhere. A thing that astonished him about her was the coarseness of her language. Party members were supposed not to swear, and Winston himself very seldom did swear, aloud, at any rate. Julia, however, seemed unable to mention the Party, and especially the Inner Party, without using the kind of words that you saw chalked up in dripping alley-ways. He did not dislike it. It was merely one symptom of her revolt against the Party and all its ways, and somehow it seemed natural and healthy, like the sneeze of a horse that smells bad hay. They had left the clearing and were wandering again through the chequered shade, with their arms round each other’s waists whenever it was wide enough to walk two abreast. He noticed how much softer her waist seemed to feel now that the sash was gone. They did not



speak above a whisper. Outside the clearing, Julia said, it was better to go quietly. Presently they had reached the edge of the little wood. She stopped him.

‘Don’t go out into the open. There might be someone watching. We’re all right if we keep behind the boughs.’

They were standing in the shade of hazel bushes. The sunlight, filtering through innumerable leaves, was still hot on their faces. Winston looked out into the field beyond, and underwent a curious, slow shock of recognition. He knew it by sight. An old, close-bitten pasture, with a footpath wandering across it and a molehill here and there. In the ragged hedge on the opposite side the boughs of the elm trees swayed just perceptibly in the breeze, and their leaves stirred faintly in dense masses like women’s hair. Surely somewhere nearby, but out of sight, there must be a stream with green pools where dace were swimming?

‘Isn’t there a stream somewhere near here?’ he whispered.

‘That’s right, there is a stream. It’s at the edge of the next field, actually. There are fish in it, great big ones. You can watch them lying in the pools under the willow trees, waving their tails.’

‘It’s the Golden Country--almost,’ he murmured.

‘The Golden Country?’

‘It’s nothing, really. A landscape I’ve seen sometimes in a dream.’

‘Look!’ whispered Julia.

A thrush had alighted on a bough not five metres away, almost at the level of their faces. Perhaps it had not seen them. It was in the sun, they in the shade. It spread out its wings, fitted them carefully into place again, ducked its head for a moment, as though making a sort of obeisance to the sun, and then began to pour forth a torrent of song. In the afternoon hush the volume of sound was startling. Winston and Julia clung together, fascinated. The music went on and on, minute after minute, with astonishing variations, never once repeating itself, almost as though the bird were deliberately showing off its virtuosity. Sometimes it stopped for a few seconds, spread out and resettled its wings, then swelled its speckled breast and again burst into song.

HUMOUR ONE HUND- RED YEARS AGO

On new technology – the telephone

”Operator, I’ve been cut off!”
”Sir, please hold the line while I reconnect you.”
”Hold the line? Madam, I can’t even find the line!”

On doctors and patients

Patient: ”Doctor, you must help me! I think I’m a dog.”
Doctor: ”How long have you felt this way?”
Patient: ”Ever since I was a puppy.”

On modern appliances – vacuum cleaners

Door-to-door sales-
man: ”Madam, this new electric vacuum cleaner will cut your housework in half!”
Housewife: ”Splendid! Then I’ll take two of them.”

On golf – a booming sport in the 1920s

Golfer to his caddie: ”Do you think my game is improving at all?”
Caddie: ”Oh, yes, sir. You’re missing the ball much closer now than you did last week.”

On politicians

A politician is a fellow who can stand on a platform for an hour without saying a single reasonable word—and then take questions from the crowd on everything he didn’t say.

On flapper fashion

Young lady: ”I wear my skirts so short because I have pretty knees.”
Her friend: ”Then why don’t you wear short sleeves?”
Young lady: ”Because I haven’t got pretty elbows!”

On the ”good news / bad news” routine – a vaudeville staple

Doctor: ”I have bad news and terrible news.”
Patient: ”Give me the bad news first.”
Doctor: ”You have only twenty-four hours to live.”
Patient: ”Good heavens! What’s the terrible news?”
Doctor: ”I was supposed

to tell you this yesterday.”

IN TEN YEARS

Affectionate husband (sitting on bench, counting): My lady weighs 80 kilos; every summer She travels to MariEHAMN to bathe and loses 8 kilos; in ten years I will be free of HER!

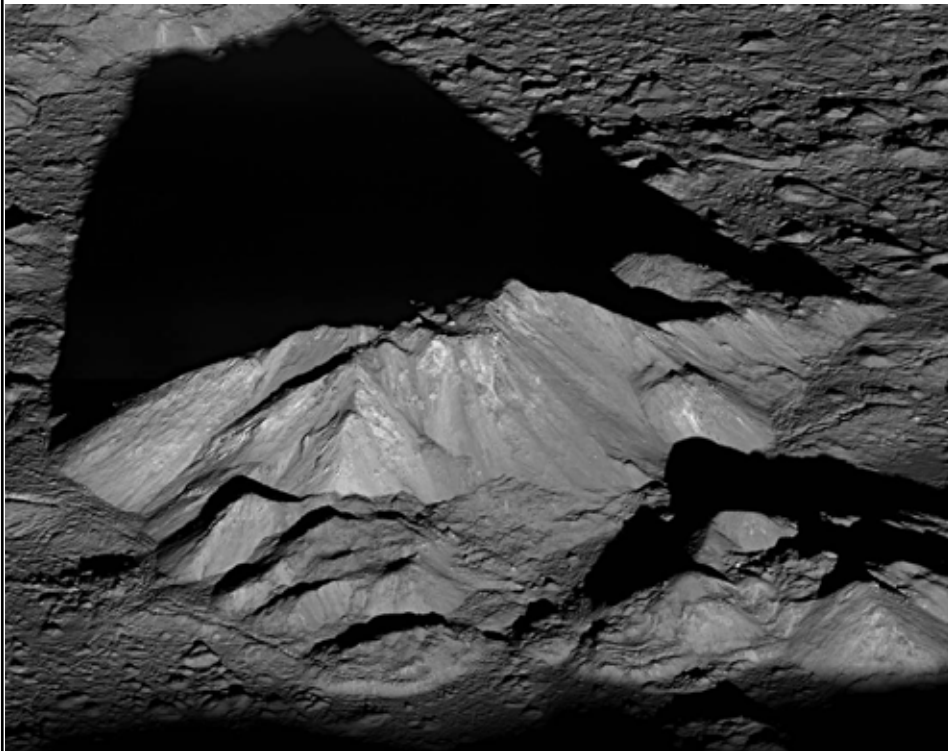
DOCTOR

Doctor: »Listen, I have to tell you. Something has happened to me today that has never happened to me in my entire time as a doctor.
- Well, tell me, you must have cured someone.

RELIGION

Where did religion originate?
From laziness! They didn’t bother to clarify things, but believed that it was as they said.

Astronomic picture of the week:



LRO Tycho Central Peak

Tycho crater’s central peak complex casts a long, dark shadow near local sunrise in this spectacular lunar-scape. The dramatic oblique view was recorded by the Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter. The rugged complex is about 15 kilometres wide, formed in uplift by the giant impact that created the well-known ray crater 100 million years ago. The summit of its central peak reaches 2 kilometres above the Tycho crater floor.
NASA / GSFC / Arizona State Univ. / Lunar Reconnaissance Orbiter
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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 Osthrobotnia 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!
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Email: wasadagblad@gmail.com

FROM OUR READERS

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

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HOROSCOPE FOR AUGUST 2026

August Horoscope – The Stars Are Mumbling (And Maybe Making Some Sense)

Aries (Mar 21 – Apr 19)
You’ll have a brilliant idea this August! Unfortunately, someone already had it in 2003. Console yourself with ice cream. And more ice cream. With sprinkles – obviously.

Taurus (Apr 20 – May 20)
Money is coming your way! Well, a discount coupon at best. Love may blossom – but only if you remember to water it. (Yes, this includes your plants.)

Gemini (May 21 – Jun 20)
You’re everywhere and nowhere – just like your vacation plans. Try deep breathing. It won’t help, but at least you’ll look peaceful while searching for your keys.

Cancer (Jun 21 – Jul 22)
You’re feeling emotional. That’s okay. Everyone cries over overcooked pasta now and then. A surprise awaits at the end of the month – possibly pizza.

Leo (Jul 23 – Aug 22)
It’s YOUR month! The world revolves around you – just the way you like it. Enjoy the spotlight, but remember: other people exist too. Sadly.

Virgo (Aug 23 – Sep 22)
You try to control everything. August has other plans. Let go – at least of your color-coded to-do list. But keep the Excel sheet. We’re not crazy.

Libra (Sep 23 – Oct 22)
You can’t decide: sunhat or raincoat? Take both. August weather can’t decide either. Love? Yes. Confusion? Also yes.

Scorpio (Oct 23 – Nov 21)
Mysteries attract you this month: ”Who took my charger?” ”Why aren’t they texting back?” Keep your cool – and your sting sharp, just in case.

Sagittarius (Nov 22 – Dec 21)
Adventure calls! Unfortunately, only to the corner store. Still, every baguette run is a journey. Remember: all epic tales start small – often with snacks.

Capricorn (Dec 22 – Jan 19)
You’re trying to be responsible – but August wants you to chill. Ditch the blazer, wear flip-flops. The world will survive without your spreadsheets for two days. Maybe.

Aquarius (Jan 20 – Feb 18)
Your head is full of wild ideas. Some are even good! Don’t start a podcast. Or do – but only if it’s about guinea pigs and existential dread. That could work.

Pisces (Feb 19 – Mar 20)
You’re daydreaming more than doing. And that’s fine. August feels like a watercolor painting – beautiful but slightly soggy. Write your thoughts down. They may become a book. Or a very weird shopping list.