



United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon examines seeds from his home country of South Korea deposited in the Svalbard Global Seed Vault on Wednesday. Ban toured the facility, often called the "new Noah's Ark" for being able to store 2.25 billion seeds as a safeguard against catastrophe, during a three-day trip to Svalbard to see the effects of global warming.

A hot story, but lacking warmth

Lots of coverage of Ban's trip, much of it questioning his ability to push climate change agenda

Ban Ki-moon got his wish for lots of media coverage during his trip to Svalbard, but whether it helps advance his climate change agenda is a different story.

The sheer quantity of headlines as the United Nations secretary-general arrived Monday in Oslo probably exceeded his wildest dreams, except nearly all initially focused on widespread criticism about his leadership. The tone improved after his three-day tour of the Arctic gave the media striking imagery illustrating climate issues, but by then coverage was notably less prominent.

Numerous articles the week before Ban's trip questioned if he would even come, thanks to the leaking of a memo calling him "spineless and charmless" by Norwegian Deputy U.N. Ambassador Mona Juul. By the time Ban arrived in Oslo to meet with Norway's leaders, a different kind of frigid climate was in the minds of the press.

"Ban Accused of Weakening Body's Moral Authority," reads part of a headline on the front page of *The Washington Post* the next morning, with the first sentence saying he "has a message for despots and dictators: We can talk."

His Norwegian trip isn't mentioned until the 12th paragraph, following various details
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Ban: Visit inspiring, alarming

Despite mishaps, U.N. leader calls trip to see effects of global warming in Svalbard a success

His arrival was marred by a huge diplomatic snafu and he got stranded overnight on a boat when plans to see the effects of global warming in the Arctic went awry due to excessive ice.

But all in all, U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon called his three-day tour of Svalbard a good trip.

Ban arrived Monday, touring research stations in Ny-Ålesund, the polar ice rim at 81 degrees north and the Svalbard Global Seed Vault before departing early Wednesday afternoon. The trip was part of Ban's effort to focus attention on getting nations to agree to an aggressive climate pact this year.

"My visit to Norway has been extremely successful and my visit to the global seed vault this morning has given me another vision that is very inspiring," he said Wednesday morning after touring the vault. "This gift should be an inspirational symbol of peace and food security."

But the other word Ban used as much as "inspiring" was "alarming." He said his views of the Arctic by helicopter and ship revealed "very shocking, very alarming" change, with 10,000-year-old glaciers melting, the second-least amount of ice cover in modern times and the "devastating" possibility of sea level rising two meters if the Arctic becomes ice-free by 2030.

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Friday is the deadline to vote – sort of

Svalbard residents can cast ballots next week, but there's no promise they'll be counted

Anne Raket Kristiansen isn't forgetting her "home" town on Election Day. She's hoping Norway's politicians remember the one where she actually lives.

Kristiansen, who has lived in Longyearbyen for a year and half, is a resident of Fredrikstad as far as vote-counters for the Norwegian parliamentary election on Sept. 14 are concerned. Like all Svalbard residents eligible

to vote, she has a dual residency and has to cast her ballot by Sept. 4 so it can be tallied in the mainland municipality where she is registered.

Also, like many interviewed, the issues in her "real" hometown still carry a lot of weight. But there are things worthy of attention in the Arctic archipelago, which doesn't have a representative seated in parliament.

"I think they should pay more attention to Svalbard," she said.

Improved medical services would be nice,
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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.



U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon addresses several hundred scientists and students during a Wednesday morning forum at The University Centre In Svalbard.

Ban experiences detours on trip

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"I'm much more alarmed and even frightened," he said.

Ban was scheduled to fly by helicopter to the polar ice rim Tuesday, but the aircraft had to turn back when poor weather caused excessive ice to build up on the blades. Instead he made the trip on the Norwegian Coast Guard's *KV Svalbard*, spending the night aboard instead of flying back to a hotel in Longyearbyen.

Svalbard Gov. Per Sefland, accompanying Ban as a host, said the detour may have actually been beneficial, allowing Ban to experience the full impact of climate change close up by seeing the breakup leading to the ice rim from the sea instead of by air.

There were questions about whether Ban would make the trip to Norway after a memo calling him "spineless and charmless" from Norwegian Deputy U.N. Ambassador Mona Juul leaked to the press. Much of the subsequent media attention before and during the trip focused on Ban's leadership, rather than climate issues.

But Ban, after meeting Monday in Oslo with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg and other high-ranking officials in Svalbard, offered "my thanks to my gracious Norwegian hosts."

Norwegian officials offered similar praise for Ban's effort to place urgency to the issue of climate change and "bringing information to the U.N. in a way nobody else can."

Ban, a South Korea native who calls fighting climate change a top priority, will continue efforts toward an international agreement at the annual U.N. General Assembly debate Sept. 23-26 in New York City and the U.N. Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen in December.

Addressing the problem is the responsibility of all nations, regardless of where the effects are most being felt now, he said.

"(The effects) do not respect national

borders," he said. "This is a global issue."

"I'm speaking to all the world," he said. "Unless we take action now we will regret deeply for the future of our humanity."

Ban concluded his visit with a public forum Wednesday morning at The University Centre in Svalbard, telling several hundred scientists and students the technology to address problems exists, and they "are the pioneers" as science assumes a major role in the global political agenda.

"You are the responsible owners, responsible for the future," he said. But, he added, "I do not want to transfer, to deliver, this planet Earth to you without proper action."

Among the needs cited by officials here and previously are doubling global food production within 40 years despite an expected decrease in harvests under current conditions, limiting warming to two degrees Celsius above levels 150 years ago and reducing carbon emissions by half.

But concerns were raised by some at UNIS who said those goals are insufficient. There were also questions about requiring wealthier nations to help poor countries most affected by climate change, and the impact of oil drilling and other commercial traffic such as shipping in the Arctic as melting seas opens previously inaccessible areas.

Sheila Watt-Cloutier, an Inuit climate activist and 2007 Nobel Peace Prize nominee who was a panelist at the UNIS discussion, said the two degrees Celsius target - and even current levels - are unacceptable for a sustainable environment. She said a reversal of temperatures is needed within 50 years.

"These are big plans, but they can be done if we have a concerted effort," she said. What is needed, she added, is "a set of principles clearly focused on humanity, not just industry."

Indigenous people are suffering some of the worst effects as the Arctic is warming faster than anywhere else on the planet, and too often are overlooked by industrialized nations, Watt-Cloutier said.

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

Snow all the year 'round



A lone pedestrian braves the snow and wind near Svalbardbutikken during an Aug. 31 storm. Snow has fallen in Longyearbyen every month so far in 2009.

Svalbard voters still follow 'home' issues

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for instance, since patients have to go to the mainland for specialized treatment, Kristiansen said. On the other hand, "if we demand more services, of course the taxes will rise."

The election selects 169 parliament members for four-year terms. Twenty-four political parties are fielding a total of about 3,700 candidates, although only seven of those parties won seats during the 2005 election.

Norwegians living abroad are required to submit ballots by Sept. 4. The governor of Svalbard sets the deadline for residents living here

"We have decided the 4th, but of course if people want to come in and vote that's OK, but we cannot guarantee it will be sent to the correct place on time," said Solbjørg Lima Skadberg, a consultant for the governor.

The ballots must reach the designated election board by the end of election day to be valid. Besides sorting and shipping, there's always unknown factors like poor weather that risk further delays.

Veronica Andersen, a Lenvik resident who has lived in Longyearbyen since 2005, said she hasn't thought about whether the split in resi-

dencies might sway how she votes.

"I vote for what's important in my home town," she said. This time around, that happens to be improving roads.

On the other hand, Mariell Brenden, a six-and-a-half-year Longyearbyen resident from Bodø, doesn't play hometown favorites - here or there.

"I'm thinking all over, not for any one town," she said.

Environmental issues tend to dominate parliamentary discussions about the far north since, according to a column this week by *Af-terposten* Political Editor Harald Kenai, "Svalbard has long been designated as our political-moral showcase." The disputes come from what he calls a double-standard, since Norway relies heavily on oil wealth and Svalbard on continued coal mining as a foundation of the economy.

Grete Haldorsen, who moved from Alta in 2003, said she'd like politicians to pay attention to Longyearbyen's schools as well.

"I have a child and they don't have the same opportunities," she said.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM

SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS



Busen cafe to close for good

Kafé Busen, long known as the where miners came for simple and study fare, is not extending its contract with Lompensenteret. The restaurant, already closed to the public for some time this summer due to declining business, will close permanently by the end of the year. "It is possible we will do a little cafe re-opening in September," said Karl Våtvik, who purchased the eatery with his wife, Berit, in 2007. The kitchen has continued catering for events, commercial flights and other activities. Våtvik said their kitchen work will continue in a new facility that's part of their Svalbard Villmarkssenter ecotourism operation. Lompensenteret is seeking tenants as it develops an additional 700 square meters of space.

Deputy governor fined 5,000 kroner for indoor gunshot

Svalbard's Deputy Gov. Lars Faus has been fined 5,000 kroner for firing a shot in his home in June. He said at the time he accidentally fired a live bullet instead of a blank while preparing a hunting rifle. The shot hit a chair and then the floor, but no injuries resulted.

Engine trouble halts *Polar Star's* voyage to Greenland

The *Polar Star* cruise ship, after completing its last Spitsbergen trip of the summer, was prevented from departing Friday for a voyage to Greenland due to engine trouble. The more than 90 passengers scheduled to make the trip were booked on to flights home and the ship will remain in Longyearbyen until repairs are made.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday

Rain. ENE winds at 16 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 3C (-1C wind chill).

Thursday

Cloudy, overnight flurries. NE winds at 17 km/h. High 4C (0C wind chill), low 2C (-3C wind chill).

Friday

Morning flurry, then cloudy. NNE winds at 12 km/h. High 3C (1C wind chill), low -1C (-2C wind chill).

Saturday

Cloudy, overnight flurries. E winds at 6 km/h. High 2C (2C wind chill), low -2C (-3C wind chill).

Extended forecast: Sunday, cloudy, -1C (-1C), -2C (-3C); Monday, cloudy with some clearing overnight, -1C (-1C), -2C (-4C); Tuesday, sunny, 1C (-1C), -2C (-3C); Wednesday, partly sunny, 0C (-3C), -1C (-3C).

Data provided by AccuWeather.com



Members of the international media capture remarks by United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and Norwegian leaders Wednesday inside the Svalbard Global Seed Vault.

No such thing as bad press? Well...

MEDIA, from page 1

about Ban "facing a leadership crisis as U.N. civil servants and diplomats here increasingly portray him as an ineffective administrator whose reluctance to hold outlaw leaders to account for bad behavior."

The Norway section doesn't start any better, focusing on the details of Juul's memo. Five paragraphs later climate change is finally mentioned, specifically how leaders say Ban's problems are "overshadowing what they believe is his most important accomplishment: rallying international support for a treaty that would reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases that cause global warming."

The words "Svalbard," "Arctic," "seed vault" and "polar" (as in the ice rim Ban visited) never appear in the article.

Also, while Ban apparently engages in meaningful talks with despots, doubt was raised about his willingness to do so in Norway.

"Ban Ki-Moon smiled wryly," reads a commentary headline in *Afterposten* the day after his meeting with Norwegian Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg. The article by foreign correspondent Kristoffer Rønneberg calls the meetings short and insubstantial, and a press conference afterward was limited to two questions because "both Ban and Stoltenberg know that climate is not the main topic."

Once Ban and a delegation of Norwegian officials reached Svalbard, the diplomatic chill started taking a back seat to the real ones of the Arctic. Descriptions of the terrain, scientists'



Images of Mother Nature "crying" at the Austfonna ice cap on Nordaustlandet were published and broadcast worldwide during Ban's trip.

presentations about it and facilities such as the Svalbard Global Seed Vault proved more interesting than being shut out of meetings.

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

What is this - journalism by time travel?

No, Einstein, just a bit of practical thinking.

Obviously it's tough publishing an article about a U.N. visit that ended Sept. 2 in Sept. 1 issue, so we just delayed the print version for a few days. We kept the "edition date" the same for consistency's sake.

Besides, as both of our loyal readers know, this thing isn't exactly fanatical about getting out on Tuesdays. Someday if we make any money that will probably change.

What's up

Sept. 3

6 p.m.: Activity Fair. Information about activities offered for kids, students and adults by various organizations in Longyearbyen. Svalbardhallen.

Sept. 6

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ice Age 3: Dawn of the Dinosaurs," U.S. family, ages 7 and up. Huset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "The Hauntings In Connecticut," U.S. thriller/horror, ages 15 and up. Huset.

Sept. 7

10:15 a.m.: Meeting of the environment and industry committee, Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Sept. 8

10 a.m.: Meeting of the management committee, Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Sept. 13

8 p.m.: Movie: "Hangover," U.S. comedy, ages 15 and up. Huset.

Sept. 22

7 p.m.: Local government board meeting. Mediateket.

Sept. 27

8 p.m.: Movie: "Public Enemies," U.S. drama, ages 15 and up. Huset.

Oct. 1

2 p.m.: Meeting of the culture and leisure board. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Oct. 2

9 a.m.: Meeting of the board of growth and enterprise. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

Oct. 12

10:15 a.m.: Meeting of the environment and industrial committee. Næringsbygget 1, "Tundra" room.

7:30 p.m.: Book launch and slideshow, "Hiking In Spain," by Anita and Birger Løvland. Longyearbyen library.

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:

- *Norway: Big oil has moral climate duty*
- *Barentsburg OKs fish processing plant*
- *Halfway through Amundsen plane hunt*
- *Global warming the next 9/11?*