



HUGO ISAKSEN / KSAT

An antenna at the Svalbard Satellite Station transmits climate and terrain data in June.

SvalSat goes to war

Claims of multinational military use, hacks denied; details murky

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

It's been used by Italy to wage war on Libya, hacked into by China's military and spied on North Korea's nuclear program. Or maybe it just appears that way.

The Svalbard Satellite Station (SvalSat) is facing literally a world of accusations due to findings in a report by the U.S. government and a book by a Norwegian journalist. The report details at least four hacking incidents consistent with China's military techniques during 2007 and 2008, while the book alleges the facility is being used for military espionage and war operations.

SvalSat and Norwegian officials are denying the hacking occurred and any military activity is basically a case of obtaining widely available terrain and weather reports.

Legally defined answers to the controversies may be a long time coming.

The SvalSat ground station, used by

Breaking: Norway's oil, energy, defense industries victim of biggest data theft ever
Page 4

NASA for observation of Earth's climate and terrain, is owned and run by Kongsberg Satellite Services, which is owned 50/50 by a Norwegian state company and a private Norwegian defense company.

A draft of an annual U.S. report on China states at least two U.S. environment-monitoring satellites were interfered with four or more times in 2007 and 2008 using SvalSat to access them. The final report released this week deletes the references to SvalSat, with a lead official stating they now "cannot attribute those two occurrences."

The report does not directly accuse China, but the techniques "appear consistent
See SATELLITE, page 4

Budget worries: Not just money

Political turmoil from resignation of justice minister, debate about new mine add to uncertainty

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

Overflowing schools and deteriorating buildings have the city begging for extra government money. Residents are facing dramatically higher utility and vehicle fees. Plus the national minister for the area just quit.

Those are just the worries for the short term, as in a few weeks in some cases. The long-term situation is more bleak and includes a feud with supposed political allies about a project deemed critical for the economy.

Longyearbyen's new municipal council is getting no honeymoon as they have less than a month to approve their first annual budget for the city under one of the most difficult situations in recent times, according to members.

Many of the parameters for the 2012 budget are already set, with the city likely to be forced to rely on reserves to deal with the shortfall, said Christin Kristoffersen, head of

See SHORTFALL, page 3

Inside

Gay polar bears sabotage Svalbard?

Page 2

Headlines from Svalbardposten

- Quick response limits fire damage at school
- Hermansen sculpture gets left out in the cold
- Baby girl born a month early in Longyearbyen

Page 3

Weather forecast

Page 3

Events calendar

Page 4

Winter ice forecast not so hot

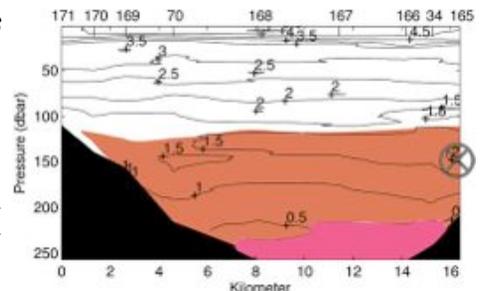
Warm water in fjords cools odds of freeze, but may also result in better snowmobiling conditions

By **MARK SABBATINI**
Editor

A frozen surface is somewhat necessary for snowmobiling. Yet less of one may actually result in better conditions this winter than last.

A large inflow of warm water into Svalbard's fjords, caused ironically by heavy sea ice last year, means the outlook for ice cover this winter is bleak, according to researchers at

See WARMTH, page 2



UNIS

Warm waters levels between Bjørndalen and Bohemanneset were far higher this September (orange) than the same month in 2010 (pink).

Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

Editor

Mark Sabbatini

Staff writer/photographer

Karla Paz

Copy editor

Kristan Hutchison

Psychiatrist

Irene Gallion

Mailing address

Icepeople
Vei 210 -2- 13
Longyearbyen, Svalbard
9170
Norway

Telephone

Norway: +47 41 51 46 38
U.S. +1 (970) 673-4472

E-mail

marksabbatini@yahoo.com

Web site

www.icepeople.net

Icepeople is published weekly (or thereabouts) on Tuesdays (or thereabouts), with printed copies available free on a limited basis in Longyearbyen. Additional printed copies are available locally and by mail upon request. Charges are on an "at cost" basis.

Copyright stuff

Original contents of this publication can be reproduced for non-commercial purposes free of charge if *Icepeople* is credited as the source. The original writers, photographers and other contributors retain their rights to all published works.

Corrections policy

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.

Nordic science now in English (but still baffling)

The screenshot shows the ScienceNordic website interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with categories like Health, Society & Culture, Environment, Technology, Agriculture & Fishery, and Natural Science. The main article is titled "Deciphering Svalbard's climate history" by Silje Amundsen, dated November 4, 2011. The article text begins: "At most times of year, you have to be prepared for very low temperatures when staying in Norway's Arctic archipelago, Svalbard. But the weather is in fact much milder there today than it was in the 1800s. Ice cores drilled from Svalbard's glaciers are providing important information on the history of its climate." Below the text is a photograph of ice cores in a laboratory setting. To the right of the article, there are sections for "Partner profile: The Research Council of Norway", "Latest news" (listing items like "All eyes on sea urchins" and "The farmhouse protects against autism and allergies"), "Most read articles", and "Environment - partner news".

SCIENCENORDIC

An article about ice cores providing insight into Svalbard's climate history is one of the first articles posted at the new website ScienceNordic (<http://sciencenordic.com>). The site, a joint effort by science news services Forskning.no and Videnskab.dk, features articles and other content about research in Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland and Denmark. Content from non-commercial entities such as universities is also posted in a separate section.

Wind a key factor in ice conditions

WARMTH, from page 1

The University Centre in Svalbard. But since the heavy cover last year was largely "frazzle ice," warmer conditions may be good if a solid enough surface for snowmobiling forms.

"In years with good snowmobile conditions ... there is a solid fast ice lid above the fjord," wrote Frank Nilsen and Tor Gammelstrød, both professors, and research associate Ragnheid Skogseth in a summary of the findings at UNIS' website.

"In years with high ice production (i.e. bad snowmobile conditions) the local water in the

fjords becomes denser than the water in the shelf area. The warm Atlantic water will thus flow into a higher level in the water column, while the denser local water will be at the bottom. The protective water layer for the sea ice is thus gone and the door is literally open for an increased inflow of warm water."

Wind will be critical in determine how much ice cover exists this winter, the trio notes. Wind from the fjords bring colder air, while wind into them carry warmer air.

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

Icesheet

Random bits of the week's weirdness:

"GAY POLAR BEARS WRECK SVALBARD WEATHER STATIONS, CAUSE NORTH POLE TO MELT!" Sorry for shouting, but we're really sorry we can't splash that headline in 15-cm. letters across the top of the front page. Researcher Jan Skistad is claiming the Pole is melting due to the apparently never-ending lust homosexual mammals have, plus they get turned on by destroying Svalbard's meteorological stations. Yes, we'd report his claims in our scandal sheet even if it was posted at www.godhatesfags.com, but the source in this instance is no less than Norway's TV 2 news. "It sounds crazy, of course, but from the picture evidence Skistad presents it's almost hard to argue with him," an article at the station's website declares. Um, OK, actually pub-

lishing those images crosses our line of questionable taste ... Something to actually feel icky about, at least at first glance, is a report from Russia that a Murmansk fishing company is delivering large amounts of fish to feed Svalbard. For those keeping up with the news about nasty conflicts between Russian trawlers and Norwegian Coast Guard inspectors – to the point of threatened armed hostilities – the thought of dining on Murmansk's offerings might easily make one queasy. But rest assured, the company is just taking care of its own by nourishing the residents of Barentsburg and Pyramiden. "Not only would it mean a considerable improvement of the miners' diet, it would also confirm the interdisciplinary aspect of working in the Arctic," said Yuri Zadornov, the company's director.



LONGYEARBYEN LOKALSTYRE

Former Norwegian Justice Minister Knut Storberget, second from left, meets with journalist Tore Ulabrand, Longyearbyen Mayor Kjell Mork and city cultural advisor Roger Ødegård during the formal opening of Longyearbyen Kulturhuset in December of 2010. Storberget, who was also the minister of Svalbard, resigned Friday in the wake of the July 22 attacks by Anders Behring Breivik.

Cuts, higher fees likely coming

SHORTFALL, from page 1

the council. But the inability to rely on them for a longer period has resulted in an application requesting an extra 43.7 million kroner in 2013, 48.7 million in 2014 and 64.7 million in 2015 being submitted to the Norwegian Ministry of Justice.

Among the needs council members have cited is more space for kindergartens that now have long waiting lists, maintenance of buildings and upgrades to technical infrastructure.

Complicating the situation is Bydrift, the city's utility agency, is facing much higher expenses due to factors such as a required project to improve the city's water quality. They are asking for a 60 percent increase in water fees for 2012, a hike in power rates from 1.42 kroner per kilowatt hour from the current 1.17 kroner assumes, and vehicle registration fee increases of 16 percent for regular vehicles and 617 percent for large commercial trucks.

Those increases, in turn, are alarming city entities that will face higher bills. Kristoffersen said rate hikes are likely, although not necessarily at Bydrift's requested level, with the focus on alternatives as the council looks ahead.

"What we're doing anyway is next year is we will look into all the welfare offers we have and see if there is anything we can do about the

situation," she said. In addition, "what we're working with now is finding a balance of cut-backs to make."

Dealing with the national government also just got more uncertain as Justice Minister Knut Storberget resigned Friday after a relatively long term of six years. His resignation was expected by many observers, although not necessarily this soon, in the wake of controversies about the handling of the July 22 terror attacks and other increased criminal activity.

Kristoffersen said the impact of working with his successor, former Defense Minister Grete Faremo, remains to be seen.

"I think Knut has done a tremendous job for Longyearbyen," Kristoffersen said. "When taxes were raised he was the one who helped us get taxes down again."

A potential strain on relations – even though the Labor Party rules at the local and national levels – is Store Norske's hope of opening a coal mine at Lunckefjellet by 2014, which city officials say will provide a significant economic boost. Concerns raised by the Environmental Ministry are causing delays and Kristoffersen has written a letter to Prime Minister Jens Stoltenberg expressing objections.

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

HEADLINES STOLEN FROM SVALBARDPOSTEN

VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

Quick response to school fire keeps damage minimal

An automatic fire detection system and a rapid response by firefighters kept a fire from causing major damage Monday night at Longyearbyen School. The alarm was triggered at about 10:20 p.m., with firefighters arriving at the school within 10 minutes. Several plastic bags were discovered smoldering and burning on top of a ceramics oven that was left on. Fire Chief Jan Olav Sæter said there was some difficulty locating the fire because multiple smoke detectors were triggered, but it was quickly extinguished upon discovery.

Hermansen left out in the cold – his sculpture, that is

A bust of Robert Hermansen, the former Store Norske leader now in prison for gross corruption, has been moved from Longyearbyen's municipal building to a space across the street outside the post office/bank building. "This is a jewel of a work of art created by a major artist who deserves to be shown," said Kjell Mork, chairman of the city's memorial committee. As for the corruption conviction, "we have emphasized that the bust came as a gift long before there was any Hermansen case." The bust by sculptor Per Ung was unveiled two years ago outside the post office, but a permanent location for it was not determined at the time. The municipal council turned down Store Norske's request to place it at the entrance of Kulturhuset, resulting in its temporary placement near the entrance inside the municipal building.

Rare birth in Longyearbyen as girl arrives a month early

A baby girl born at 1:35 p.m. Monday at Longyearbyen Hospital, the fifth since 1991, is in good health after arriving four weeks early, said Reidun Holte, a midwife who brought the mother to the hospital. The mother, who with the family declined to be interviewed, arrived at the hospital at about midnight. Officials contacted the hospital in Tromsø for an air ambulance, but it was delayed due to weather. Births are rare in Longyearbyen because women are required to go to the mainland two weeks before their delivery due date.

Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. SE winds to 18 km/h. High -10C (-17C wind chill), low -15C (-22C wind chill). Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Snow. SE winds to 22 km/h. High -10C (-18C wind chill), low -18C (-23C wind chill). Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Snow ending. E winds to 11 km/h. High -17C (-23C wind chill), low -18C (-25C wind chill). Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00	Partly cloudy. E winds to 11 km/h. High 19C (-27C wind chill), low -21C (-27C wind chill). Sunrise 0:00; sunset 0:00
Extended forecast: Sunday, snow, -8C (-16C), -14C (-21C), light 0:00h; Monday, snow, -5C (-11C), -8C (-14C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, snow, -5C (-10C), -6C (-11C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, snow, -4C (-9C), -8C (-13C), light 0:00h			
Data provided by yr.no			



NASA

This Landsat-7 satellite, controlled by the SvalSat station, experienced at least 12 minutes of interference due to hacking, according to a draft of a U.S. government report about China.

SvalSat battles military accusations

SATELLITE, from page 1

with authoritative Chinese military writings" that have advocated disabling an enemy's satellite control facilities on the ground in a conflict.

The hacks were from two to more than 12 minutes long, with the culprits achieving the steps necessary to control the satellite, but not issuing any commands.

China denies hacking the satellites, stating they are often the victims of such incidents themselves, and SvalSat officials deny the hacks even occurred.

"KSAT has not experienced any attempt to enter into the company's systems from outside sources," Kongsberg Satellite Services President Rolf Skatteboe declared in a statement to the website Talking Points Memo.

"Communication to and from NASA satel-

lites is carried out on dedicated lines. They are entirely separated from the KSAT network. We have not received any message from NASA that their satellites were tried hacked."

More wide-ranging and sinister allegations are made in the newly released book "Satellitkrigen" by Bård Wormdal, an NRK journalist.

"There are a lot of things on Svalbard the public is not fully acquainted with," he said in an interview with the network. "Perhaps not many of the politicians, either. I believe that many of the satellites that download data from SvalSat is used in espionage."

Images of airports and other key infrastructure, for instance, were used by Italy for a military attack on Libya, Wormdal claims.

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



Claims of SvalSat access for military use are detailed in the new book "Satellitkrigen."

Record data theft hits key industries

Numerous attacks raid secret information from Norway's oil, defense and energy companies

By MARK SABBATINI
Editor

Data from Norway's oil and defense industries has been stolen in possibly the biggest data espionage case in the country's history, security officials said this week.

Stolen industrial secrets were "sent out digitally from the country," according to a statement by the Norwegian National Security Authority. It does not name any companies or institutions targeted, and states it is not clear who is behind the attacks.

The potential impact for Svalbard and the rest of the Arctic region is enormous due to the fierce global battle for resource and access rights due to vast potential oil drilling and cargo transportation activities.

At least 10 different attacks, mostly targeting oil, gas, energy and defense industries, were discovered in the past year. But the security agency states it is assuming the total is much higher because many victims don't yet realize their computers were hacked.

The attacks often occurred when the companies were negotiating large contracts, sometimes using e-mails tainted with viruses that swept hard drives for data and passwords.

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

What's up

Nov. 16

6 p.m.: Movie: "Footloose," U.S. drama/comedy, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 17

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 1, Tundra room.

6 p.m.: Bydrift board meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Nov. 18

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

Nov. 19

2:30 and 4 p.m.: Sirkus Svalnardo performance. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 20

7:30 p.m.: Holiday concert by Cecilia Vennersten og Gaute Ormåsén. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 21

8:30 a.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority meeting. Næringsbygget 2, Smuthullet room.

Nov. 22

10 a.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

Nov. 23

6 p.m.: Movie: "In Time," U.S. sci-fi/thriller, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 27

3 p.m.: Advent celebration. Torchlight procession begins at Huset and proceeds past "Santa's Mine" to downtown, where the Christmas tree will be lit at about 4:10 p.m., followed by children's stories at the library.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Immortals" (3D), U.S. action/fantasy, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

Nov. 30

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ola Froskesnapper"(3D), Danish animated/family, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

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:

- *Can Svalbard's plants survive warming?*
- *Seeking foster parents for 500 polar bears*
- *New ice-free North Pole date: 2015*
- *Gay penguins split up by Canadian zoo*