



KORYO GROUP AND ANOTHER DIMENSION

**Don't try this at Svea:** Han Jong Sim, above, plays a North Korean coal miner ridiculed for wanting to be a circus acrobat in the movie "Comrade Kim Goes Flying," which will be shown Jan. 19 as part of the Tromsø International Film Festival in Svalbard. At right, Saeed Taji Farouky captures footage of a snowy Spitsbergen landscape for the documentary "There Will Be Some Who Will Not Fear Even That Void," one of two Svalbard-based movies shown when the festival begins Jan. 16.



COURTESY OF SAEED TAJI FAROUKY

# Imam lost in dark

*Controversial Islamic leader goes unseen and sees little on visit to research faith in Arctic*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

For someone who generates a lot of attention and controversy, he did a remarkable job of keeping local leaders – and likely himself – in the dark.

Haitham al-Haddad, whose controversial teachings as an Islamic leader have politicians seeking denial of his entry into Norway, is visiting Svalbard this week before attending a conference Saturday in Tromsø to discuss Muslim practices in the Arctic, according to *Nordlys*. At issue is how to properly observe prayer and fasting times in a region where sunset and sunrise don't exist much of the year.



**HAITHAM AL-HADDAD**

But the heat he's getting from Tromsø leaders isn't being felt in Svalbard, with the

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# Encore of a debut

*Film festival hopes to shine by shadowing Tromsø's epic gathering*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

In the industry it's known as a reboot, where a fresh makeover tries to bring heat to a concept gone cold. For organizers of a film festival in Longyearbyen, that means opening

the curtain at the coldest time of all.

Movies ranging from a documentary about a Svalbard "ghost" to a comedies about North Korea and a prison camp in Pakistan are scheduled for the Tromsø International Film

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# Can't snowmobile? Maybe a swim...

*Another poor year of ice cover likely as warm water continues invasion of Svalbard's fjords*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

Your body might feel otherwise if you go for a swim but, really, the water off Svalbard's beaches is quite warm.

Alas, that means snowmobiling will also be less than hot in the fjord areas due to lack of ice cover, according to researchers taking water temperature and salinity measurements for The

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ANNA VADER / UNIS

Lars Frode Stangeland and Prasad Rao collect water samples in Adventfjorden in December.

## Who's to blame and how to express your wrath

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## 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.

## Free Willem



STICHTING RIJKSMUSEUM HET ZUIDERZEEMUSEUM

Dutch whalers attempt a kill off the coast of Spitsbergen in this 1690 painting by Abraham Storck. Their adventures, along with the rest of Svalbard's history from Willem Barentz's 1596 expedition to present day, will be taught in a free class at The University Centre in Svalbard beginning Jan. 21. The class, which meets weekdays for two weeks, is taught annually by Thor Bjørn Arlov. All material – including the lecture slides, essay topics, online literature and exercises, and sample exams – is at [www.unis.no/10\\_STUDIES/1020\\_Courses/General\\_Courses/sh\\_201.htm](http://www.unis.no/10_STUDIES/1020_Courses/General_Courses/sh_201.htm).

## Icesheet

### *Random bits of the week's weirdness:*

The whole world is watching Gordon Buchanan, who got his cage (on ski-tracks) rattled at length by a Svalbard polar bear in a documentary airing this week on BBC Two. But leave it to the local journalists to be the only ones actually seeing what's happening in the now-viral preview video we mentioned here last week. That would be the muckrakers at *The Paper That Doesn't Shoot Itself In The Foot*, of course, which notes **Buchanan and his crew may be violating terms of the permit issued by the governor's office, which state "when filming polar bears it is not permitted to put bears or humans at risk.** All confrontations with bears resulting in the being chased or frightened away with weapons or otherwise must be reported to the governor." Guri Tveito, the governor's environmental chief, said they're now investigating to see if those terms were followed. That's also got to be giving indigestion to local filmmaker Jason Roberts, who provided logistical support and was already in hot water for forging a message that allowed him to make some illegal cargo flights for a different project last year ... Researchers excited about getting back to work on Mars rover development here in Svalbard thanks to the enormous global interest in Curiosity may find themselves trying to make advertising stickers for Viagra ("always ready for long explorations") stay attached in outer space if certain politicians in the U.S. get their way. Robert Walker, a Republican who chaired the House Science Committee from 1995 to 1997, told lawmakers this week **NASA should pay**



NORWEGIAN POLAR INSTITUTE

**What do you call this?** If you can actually spot Svalbard's largest lake in this overhead photo (hint: it's not white – those are glaciers) then maybe you're worthy of naming it.

**for part of the cost of missions like the Mars rovers by selling corporate sponsorships similar to NASCAR, which plasters its vehicles bumper-to-bumper with decals.** "When the Go Daddy rover is traversing Martian terrain, we will be more solidly on our way to fulfilling our destiny in the stars," he said ... Meanwhile, folks who don't inspire speculation about alien life are **looking to bestow naming rights on Svalbard's largest lake, which is newly formed due to melt from three surrounding glaciers.** The 17.3-square-kilometer lake (nearly double that of silver medalist Brånevatnet) at the head of Ekmanfjorden is an unsightly reddish-brown due to sandstone in the glacial runoff – and researchers say it may vanish if the glaciers expand again. But for now the Norwegian Polar Institute is accepting name suggestions (in Nynorsk) at [oddveig.oien.orvoll@npolar.no](mailto:oddveig.oien.orvoll@npolar.no).



ISLAM NET

A message etched in snow on the hood of a car welcomes Islamic leader Haitham al-Haddad to the Norwegian Arctic this week. Al-Haddad is scheduled to visit Svalbard and Tromsø to study the challenges of prayer and fasting in the Arctic. Details about the visit, which has prompted protests from numerous regional politicians due to his teachings, are being kept largely secret. The Norwegian organization Islam Net, which invited al-Haddad, does not specify where the photo was taken.

## No heat for Muslim leader's visit

**FAITH, from page 1**

governor's office and city of Longyearbyen unaware of his visit. It also may prove a largely futile endeavor since in early January there isn't a hint of sunrise or sunset to observe and Longyearbyen's Muslim population is nearly nonexistent.

Muslim practices in the polar regions have been debated at great length, with the general consensus suggesting observing times in either Mecca or nearest suitable geographical location.

But Sandra Maryam Moe, co-leader of Al-nor Church in Tromsø, told *Nordlys* several fatwas have been issued on the subject and "it is difficult to gather around a system with so many

differences."

"He is a little conservative, but we still want to use the opportunity to bring him here," she said. "We want Muslims with influence and he has influence – perhaps especially in conservative communities. It is important that we meet across these lines."

Al-Haddad, a board member of London's Islamic Sharia Council and other organizations in the United Kingdom, has been criticized for stated beliefs such as the death penalty for adultery and calling Jews "descendants of apes and pigs."

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

## Warm water means tepid snowmobiling

**FJORDS, from page 1**

University Centre in Svalbard.

"Warm water is not uncommon this time of year," the eight-member team wrote in a statement. "However, the important difference this year is that the warm water appears quite high in the water column, about 60-70 meters below the ocean surface."

The conditions date back to the beginning

of 2012, when winds from the south brought warm and wet air to Svalbard, they wrote. The ice cover here and elsewhere in the Arctic reached a record low in September due to melt rates scientists called shocking.

More details, including links to past years of similar research, are at [tinyurl.com/app53kr](http://tinyurl.com/app53kr).

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

### HEADLINES STOLEN FROM **SVALBARDPOSTEN** VERDENS NORDLIGSTE AVIS

#### Housing buildings evacuated due to mold now for sale

Two apartment buildings at Skjæringa evacuated in 2010 due to the discovery of mold are now being advertised for sale as "attractive homes" by Store Norske. Multiple types of fungus were discovered, causing foul odors and health problems for residents. Store Norske initially decided last year to demolish the buildings and construct new housing, but instead tore up and disinfected the basement areas where mold was detected. The company's ads don't mention the problems in its advertising. "For all the details they go through the broker," said Håvar Fjerdingsøy, administrative director of Store Norske Dwellings. "There are posted pictures and all stakeholders must come for inspection." The asking price for each building is about six million kroner and Fjerdingsøy said "there has been some interest."

#### Fire stalls upgrade at power plant; damage still unknown

A major renovation to Longyearbyen's power plant will be delayed beyond a Sept. 1 deadline due to the fire that broke out in the roof Dec. 7. A contract for the project was scheduled to be awarded before Christmas, but damage from the fire won't be known until this summer, said Marianne Aasen, chief administrator for Bydrift. "There is a part we did not get checked because of the weather and temperatures," she said, adding the roof has been temporarily patched. She said a new completion date for the upgrade, mandated to meet emissions requirements, can't be estimated before the extent of damage is known.

#### Gas, not kerosene, at station

The kerosene tank at Svalbard Auto was accidentally filled with gasoline, which could have fatal consequences for customers. "If people refuel a kerosene heater it is hugely hazardous," said Longyearbyen Fire Chief Jan Olav Sæter. "Gasoline is extremely flammable and explosive." LNS Spitsbergen said they have located and alerted all five customers purchasing kerosene since Dec. 28, with no incidents reported. The pump is expected to be refilled and reopened by the end of the week.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 45 km/h. High -2C (-9C wind chill), low -11C (-16C wind chill).	Snow. W winds to 52 km/h. High 0C (-7C wind chill), low -3C (-8C wind chill).	Rain/snow. SW winds to 55 km/h. High 1C (-7C wind chill), low -4C (-9C wind chill).	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 49 km/h. High -5C (-9C wind chill), low -10C (-18C wind chill).
24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness	24-hour darkness
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, p. cloudy, -8C (-15C), -11C (-17C), light 0:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -10C (-14C), -11C (-16C), light 0:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -10C (-16C), -11C (-17C), light 0:00h; Wednesday, clear, -9C (-16C), -10C (-18C), light 0:00h			
<b>Data provided by storm.no</b>			



BADLANDS ENTERTAINMENT

Per Martinsen scrutinizes the abandoned mining community of Pyramiden for the source of a mysterious radio broadcast in the documentary "Ghost Radio Hunter," one of the opening-night films at TIFF in Svalbard. Martinsen's wife Aggie Peterson, who collaborated with him last year on a concert in the settlement and Pyramiden-themed album, is producing the festival.

## Planners hope 'mini' TIFF a big hit

### MOVIES, from page 1

Festival in Svalbard. The four-day festival beginning next Thursday, is promoted as a satellite event to the much larger TIFF in Tromsø.

An attempt at a similar mini-festival in October of 2010, titled CinemArctic, suffered organizational and attendance problems. That resulted in a sequel last fall being called off, but organizers decided in November to schedule the "inaugural" satellite TIFF.

The hope is TIFF's widespread publicity and prestige will draw the attention of Longyearbyen residents to the local festival, while also giving it a separate identity, said Aggie Peterson, producer of the event. She said one of the key challenges is if Longyearbyen residents will be interested in the screenings during a busy time in the town's cultural calendar.

"I just think it's really important for everyone to go out and see the movies because if this works maybe we can make it an every year thing," she said.

Among the similarities in the overlapping festivals is the opening and closing films are the same in both cities, Peterson said. An effort is also being made include thematic highlights, such as screening a film each from Russia and Israel since collections from both countries are being featured in Tromsø.

Local emphasis will come on opening night with two documentaries from a "Films of the North" collection being shown in Tromsø. The first, "Ghost Radio Hunter," stars Peterson's husband, Per Martinsen, in a quest to find the source of a recent radio broadcast supposedly originating from the abandoned Russian mining community of Pyramiden. The second, "There Will Be Some Who Will Not Fear Even That Void," follows a sailing voyage around Spitsbergen by 20 artists seeking to raise awareness about climate change.

**There's more! Visit [www.icepeople.net](http://www.icepeople.net) for the complete story.**

### TIFF in Svalbard schedule

#### Thurs., Jan. 17

6 p.m.: Opening ceremony. Invitees only. Kulturhuset cafe.

7 p.m.: "Before the Snow Falls," Norwegian drama.

9 p.m.: "Films from the North," featuring Svalbard movies "There Will Be Some Who Will Not Fear Even That Void" and "Ghost Radio Hunter."

10 p.m.: Post-movie gathering. Svalbar.

#### Friday, Jan. 18

7 p.m.: "Comrade Kim Goes Flying," North Korean romantic comedy. Introduction by directors Anja Daelemans and Nick Bonner.

9 p.m.: "Bones Brigade," U.S. skateboarding documentary.

10 p.m.: Post-movie gathering. Svalbar.

11:30 p.m.: "Juan of the Dead," Cuban/Spanish satirical comedy.

#### Saturday, Jan. 19

11 a.m.: Bonfire w/ popcorn and drinks. Central square.

Noon: Children's short films. Free admission.

2 p.m.: Discussion w/ "Comrade Kim Goes Flying" directors Anja Daelemans and Nick Bonner. Longyearbyen Library.

3 p.m.: "Anton's Right Here," Russian documentary about autistic boy.

7 p.m.: "Åtat Sova Dö," Swedish drama.

9:30 p.m.: "Zaytoun," French/Irish/British action/comedy about Israeli/Pakisintian friendship.

10 p.m.: Post-movie gathering. Svalbar.

#### Sunday, Jan. 20

3 p.m.: "No," Chilean political thriller/comedy.

6 p.m.: "The Sessions," U.S. drama w/ strong adult themes.

All events at Kulturhuset unless noted otherwise.

Festival passes 480 kr., individual tickets 80 kr.

Full program details at [cinemarctic.no](http://cinemarctic.no).

## What's up

### Jan. 10-13

Training weekend for Polarpuls, taught by visiting instructors. Svalbardhallen. Registration and details available at [polarpuls@gmail.com](mailto:polarpuls@gmail.com).

### Jan. 10

7:30 p.m.: Theater performance: "Helt bort Fra Tiden" ("Completely Away From Time"), featuring two stories of tragedies in Svalbard. A discussion about the performances by drama professor Tor Helge Allern of Høgskolen in Nesna is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. Kulturhuset.

### Jan. 13

6 p.m.: Movie: "Lotte og Månesteinens Hemmelighet," Estonian animated/children's film dubbed in Norwegian, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Jack Reacher," U.S. drama/crime, no age limit specified. Kulturhuset.

### Jan. 14

7 p.m.: Trivia quiz. Kulturhuset cafe.

### Jan. 15

8 p.m.: Svalbard seminar 2013. First of a series on Tuesday and Thursday nights. UNIS.

### Jan. 16

6 p.m.: Movie: "The Good Teacher," French drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### Jan. 17-20

Tromsø International Film Festival in Svalbard, featuring selected movies from the mainland festival. Kulturhuset. Tickets and other information at [cinemarctic.no](http://cinemarctic.no).

### Jan. 19

7 p.m.: World International Female Arctic Lutfeskilag meeting. Hats are mandatory. Raffle grand prize is a blind date). Location to be announced at <http://wifal.blogspot.no>.

### Jan. 20

8 p.m.: Movie: "Les Miserables," U.S. drama, 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:

- *Norway OKs US\$10B Arctic gas projects*
- *2012 hottest ever in U.S. by a landslide*
- *Hot or cold, whole world feeling extremes*
- *Heat puts new color on Australia map*