



GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN

Pakistani soldiers, above, dig through 40 meters of snow and ice trying to reach 135 of their peers buried in an April 7 avalanche at the high-altitude Siachen Glacier. At right, Karoline Bælum of the Svalbard Science Forum and Thomas Gölles, a PhD student at The University Centre in Svalbard, prepare to leave for the avalanche site last week to assist a Norwegian Red Cross teams attempting to locate objects under the avalanche using a custom radar unit developed at the university.



UNIS

## Searching deep for help

Two Svalbard experts bring custom radar to avalanche in Pakistan

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

There's little to ease the difficulty and misery for Pakistani soldiers digging out 135 of their presumed dead peers buried under 40 meters of ice in the high mountains. But a

couple of avalanche experts associated with The University Centre in Svalbard are at least helping making sure the soldiers dig in the right place.

Thomas Gölles, a PhD student, and  
See RADAR, page 4

## Q: How many will split 7.4M

Ultimate answer: 42 projects receive grants from Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Tourism is the declared winner, but in reality the native dwellers of where all those visitors trek will reap the benefits.

As will 42 entities responsible for projects to improve environmentally friendly outdoor activities, plus other green measures such as energy efficiency and waste reduction. They were selected this week to split 7.365 million kroner from the Svalbard Environmental Protection Fund, the first round of grants in a year where an unusually large allocation of 13 million kroner is available.

The fund is giving priority this year to visitor activities, but other projects from an effort to increase the use of cloth diapers to a children's book about environmental toxins were also approved by the board of directors.

Among the recipients:

- AECO, a cruise ship organization, which received about two million kroner for three projects including the creation of guidelines for landing places in East Spitsbergen.

- Bydrift, Longyearbyen's infrastructure agency, received 550,000 kroner for three

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## There's no topping this wedding

Explorer Børge Ousland weds in first Lutheran ceremony at N. Pole; Libyans leave at the altar

By MARK SABBATINI  
Editor

Now this is a couple whose relationship is definitely heading south after the wedding.

Børge Ousland, the first person to walk to the North Pole alone and first to ski alone across Antarctica, made history again Thursday as he married his fiancée, Hege, in the first official Lutheran ceremony at the top of the world. The groom in a traditional Norwegian suit and bride in a long, white dress (plus a  
See MATRIMONY, page 3



CAMP BARNEO

Explorer Børge Ousland, right, and his bride, Hege, are married Thursday by Priest Dag Henrik Berggray in the first Lutheran ceremony at the North Pole.

## 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.

## Going rapidly to the dogs



MARK SABBATINI / ICEPEOPLE

Theresa Rexer and Martin Arntsen, on sled, mush their dog team out as the first starters in the fourth annual Trappers Trail race Saturday at The University Centre in Svalbard. Liv Bjørsvik, competing in the large team category of six to eight dogs, won the two-day, 75-kilometer race to Kapp Laila and back in three hours, 36 minutes and 52 seconds, beating the previous record by about nine minutes. Tommy Jordbrudal and Janne Soreide won the small team category with five dogs in a time of 4:19:26. Thirteen teams with 24 dog drivers and 85 dogs competed in the race.

## 42 projects get environmental funds

### GRANTS, from page 1

projects including a pilot program working with businesses on urban initiatives in the center of town. "The (fund's) board of directors ... is very excited about this project and has high expectations," a statement from the governor's office notes.

- Among the local tourism and outdoor recreation organizations receiving grants are Basecamp Spitsbergen getting 250,000 kroner for four of five submitted projects, Svalbard Husky getting approval for its two requests, Trollsteinens Friends and the Svalbard Sailing Association. "The local initiatives for non-motorized outdoor recreation is a very positive development," the governor's statement notes.

- Kings Bay is receiving 345,000 kroner for three projects addressing cultural activities

and and one focusing on energy efficiency.

A record 112 applicants requested a record 51.2 million kroner. The board of directors noted many applications showed a lack of cost-benefit analysis and in the upcoming round "the board will request an environmental audit of such projects, so that both environmental and economic benefits are clear." (Disclosure: *Icepeople* was among the applicants and was politely informed our idea sucks.)

The fund has distributed 42 million kroner to 240 projects since its inception in 2007. The deadline for the next grants is Sept. 15.

The full list of this year's requests and recipients is at [www.syssemmannen.no/hoved.aspx?m=44267&amid=3182518](http://www.syssemmannen.no/hoved.aspx?m=44267&amid=3182518).

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

## Icesheet

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

OK, the only story in Norway this week as far as the world is concerned is the trial of That Guy and his rants so far exceed anything we're going to come up with. He's also apparently upset people are ridiculing him (um, go figure), but not a lot of wisecracks are coming to mind here. So we'll just note for the historical record it's happening and, as far as our local survivor of the tragedy is concerned, the sooner it ends and the guy is put away wherever he's going and forgotten the better ... On a brighter note, our illuminated friends at Philips are back in the news, or at least the PR wire, as their mass giveaway of "Wake-Up" lights to local residents and online video promo of the area won the inaugural Golden Hedgehog Awards in Birmingham, Great Britain, earlier this month. We were amused the release states

the company "persuaded residents" to try the lights, since the pricy gizmos were given to anyone who asked. But one stat, if true, is impressive: Philips claims its market share increased 22 percent during the ad campaign. Pretty remarkable since, as we've noted before, the light got a "don't buy" recommendation from the only consumer publication we found testing such products that holiday season ... Here's a weird opening line for a news article (and we'll give a free subscription to anyone guessing the topic): "Some things in travel simply don't mix: winter sun and Svalbard, Disney cruises and Somalia, budget travel and Antarctica." The answer is Malaysia Airlines is banning all children under 12 on the top first-class deck of its A380 flights from Kuala Lumpur to London as of July 1 "following a series of noise complaints."



Priest Dag Henrik Berggray, above left, keeps candles aflame in light winds while performing a wedding ceremony at the North Pole with a cross made of skis in the background. At top right, staff at the Barneo ice camp and other revelers pour champagne after the ceremony. At bottom left, British explorer Mark Wood surprises himself and the wedding party by crashing the ceremony at the end of his solo ski trip to the top of the world. All photos courtesy of Camp Barneo.

## Even Pole weddings get crashed

**MATRIMONY, from page 1**

wooly hooded jacket) exchanged vows in the minus 23 degrees Celsius cold while standing before a cross made of skis.

"There to witness it was just the best men, staff from the Barneo base and a polar bear lurking some 40km out," a "breaking news" item at Ousland's website ([www.ousland.no](http://www.ousland.no)) notes. A total of about 30 people were in the party, brought by helicopter from the Russian Barneo ice camp.

Priest Dag Henrik Berggray performed the ceremony, which concluded with champagne and (real) fireworks.

It also turned out that the polar bear wasn't the only one to crash the wedding. Mark Wood, a British explorer on a solo ski trip to the Pole, arrived to a warmer scene than he probably imagined possible in the Arctic cold.

"They had a priest here, there were tables set up with mulled wine and champagne and suddenly I come pulling my sledge over the ice and gatecrash the wedding at the North Pole," told the UK's *Coventry Observer* newspaper.

And it was Ousland who offered the congratulations to Wood, who made the trek to raise awareness about climate change.

Meanwhile, another party looking to crash the happenings at the North Pole are putting their plans on hold.

A delegation representing Libya's new government stated earlier this year it was bringing NATO and media representatives for a goodwill trip at the top of the world. Svalbard's governor denied the group permission to land in Longyearbyen to refuel on their way to Barneo, declaring the trip was a sightseeing flight which is prohibited under Svalbard law.

The Libyans filed an appeal to the Norwegian government and stated they were coming regardless of whether they got permission. But while their appeal was successful, with Norwegian officials declaring the law lacked clarity in the case of this particular trip, the company arranging the trip said it was no longer practically possible.

"Basically we got permission, but it came too late to organize the trip," said Sam Rutherford, Belgian company Prepare2Go. The plan is to make the trip next year, but "it depends whether something changes between now and then because of the situation there (in Libya)."

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

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

#### **Conservatives: Tour boosts support for new power plant**

Conservative Party representatives say their support has "strengthened" for a new coal power plant with full CO2 capture capability in Longyearbyen following a visit to the town last week. Officials with the governor's office and city provided the party members with a tour of existing facilities, an overview of the existing situation and potential for future CO2 capture locally. The party suggested in January a new power plant haven CO2 capture from the time it opens and that construction occur within an accelerated three-year period. The proposal, now being considered by Parliament's Energy and Environment Committee, is scheduled for debate in Parliament May 15.

#### **E. Svalbard polar bears being illegally sought, some say**

A female polar bear and two cubs are thwarting some snowmobilers along a major ice road in East Svalbard, but some are reportedly invading the bears' space in violation of the Svalbard Environmental Protection Act. People asking not to be identified are telling *Svalbardposten* the incidents in the Mohnbukta area are mostly by local residents not on organized tours. Tour operators have also said they received similar reports from customers on tours or renting snowmobiles. "The guides feel that it is difficult to defend their own attitudes towards tourists, while others do not care (about observing regulations)," said Victor Eklund, who oversees guiding at Svalbard Snøscooterutleie. "What we say to our guests is that such behavior is illegal." Erik Nygaard, police chief for the Svalbard governor's office, said he has not received definitive reports of misconduct.

#### **Nearly one snowmobile per person in Svalbard in 2011**

The number of snowmobiles in Svalbard nearly matches the population, with 2,060 machines for the archipelago's estimated 2,400 residents at the end of 2011, according to the Norwegian Public Roads Administration. There are 4,574 registered motor vehicles in Svalbard, including 1,242 cars.

## Weather forecast for Longyearbyen

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Partly cloudy. N winds to 18 km/h. High -12C (-12C wind chill), low -15C (-15C wind chill). Sunset 12:26a; sunrise 1:25a	Partly cloudy. Variable winds to 11 km/h. High -10C (-16C wind chill), low -13C (-19C wind chill). 24-hour daylight	Partly cloudy. N winds at 7 km/h. High -13C (-17C wind chill), low -17C (-22C wind chill). 24-hour daylight	Partly cloudy. NE to 7 km/h. High -12C (-15C wind chill), low -16C (-20C wind chill). 24-hour daylight
<b>Extended forecast:</b> Sunday, p. cloudy, -10C (-14C), -16C (-21C), light 24:00h; Monday, p. cloudy, -8C (-12C), -14C (-19C), light 24:00h; Tuesday, p. cloudy, -8C (-12C), -12C (-16C), light 24:00h; Wednesday, cloudy, -8C (-13C), -12C (-16C), light 24:00h			
<b>Data provided by yr.no</b>			



UKM TROMSØ

Marlene Mellum, 16, performs a solo version of "Drømmen" during the UKM regional competition in Tromsø during the past weekend. She and Erle Haldorsen, 15, who screened her video "Svalbard er Livet" were selected among the Longyearbyen participants to advance to the national competition in Trondheim on June 22-25.

## Two local teens go to UKM finals

*Erle Haldorsen and Marlene Mellum among those prevailing at regional contest in Tromsø*

By **MARK SABBATINI**  
Editor

When it comes to life and dreams, two Svalbard teenagers managed to make quite a statement.

Erle Haldorsen, 15, and Marlene Mellum, 16, are among the youths advancing to the national UKM competition June 22-25 in Trondheim. They were among eight Longyearbyen students selected for the regional competition this past weekend in Tromsø after the local audition in February.

Haldorsen's project is the video presentation "Livet er Svalbard," while Mellum was selected for her vocal and piano performance of "Drømmen." About 100 stage performances and 74 artistic works were featured at the regional event.

The UKM competition attracts tens of thousands of Norwegian youths ages 10 to 20, with works ranging from paintings to gymnastics. Longyearbyen has participated in the event for the past eight years.

The full participant list, photos and other details of current and past competitions is available at [www.ukm.no](http://www.ukm.no).

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

## Local avalanche experts in Pakistan

**RADAR, from page 1**

Karoline Bælum, a graduate now with the Svalbard Science Forum, are part of a six-member team sent by the Norwegian Red Cross to the area at the request of Pakistani authorities. They are using a custom snow radar unit developed at UNIS to help locate objects up to 100 meters below the surface.

The radar, about the size of suitcase and weighing about 30 kilograms, can't discern if objects are bodies or something different. But Lars Skorpen, director of national disaster response for the Norwegian Red Cross, said the deployment appears to have been a success.

"The team has had successful coverage of

the avalanche area," he said. "They have pointed out to Pakistan authorities where to dig (and are) expected to leave in next couple of days."

Nonetheless, the effort the troops will need to reach the victims is immense.

"Our team describes the conditions down there are like granite, so it is very very demanding circumstances," Skorpen said.

The April 7 avalanche at Siachen Glacier, an area in dispute between India and Pakistan since 1980, has prompted numerous inquires about why troops are deployed there and calls for a resolution of "peaceful coexistence."

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



I am a hard-working Dutch woman looking for a job in Svalbard, Tromsø or the northern part of Norway. I speak English, Dutch, German, Spanish, Hungarian and Slovenian. I am a certified piano teacher, but I am open for other jobs to as long as I am paid. For further info e-mail [rebekakonc@hotmail.com](mailto:rebekakonc@hotmail.com).

## What's up

### April 19

2 p.m.: Board of Culture and Leisure Authority Meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

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

### April 22

6 p.m.: Movie: "Titanic" (3D), U.S. drama/romance, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### April 23

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

### April 24

1 p.m.: Administration Committee meeting. Næringsbygget 3, Newtontoppen room.

### April 25

6 p.m.: Movie: "Ildfjell," Icelandic drama, ages 11 and up. Kulturhuset.

### April 26

7:30 p.m.: Theater monologue "Jeanne d'Arc – Visjon Gjennom Eld," featuring Juni Dahr. Kulturhuset.

### April 28

10 a.m.: Svalbard Skimarathon. Details at [svalbardturn.no](http://svalbardturn.no).

### April 29

6 p.m.: Movie: "A Cat in Paris," French animated/children's film dubbed in Norwegian, ages 7 and up. Kulturhuset.

8 p.m.: Movie: "Tyrannosaur," British drama, no age limit determined. Kulturhuset.

### May 2

6 p.m.: Movie filmed in Svalbard: "En Fiende å Dø For," Swedish drama premiering this year, ages 15 and up. Kulturhuset. Film details and reviews at [www.filmweb.no/film/article418290.ece](http://www.filmweb.no/film/article418290.ece).

### May 3

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

## 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:

- *Svalbard polar bears star in IMAX film*
- *Poll: Weather sways U.S. on warming*
- *China: Sweden OKs us on Arctic Council*
- *Attacking penguin injures Newt Gingrich*