

Britain Today

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Cameron to demand 'safeguards'



David Cameron warned on Tuesday night that he will block plans for a new EU Treaty unless European leaders agree to a list of British demands.

The Prime Minister insisted that if eurozone countries want to use the "institutions of Europe" to rescue the single currency, they will have to back a number of "British safeguards" in return.

French president Nicolas Sarkozy and German chancellor Angela Merkel renewed calls for reform of the treaty after emergency talks in Paris on Monday.

The aim would be to allow far tougher rules and sanctions governing the eurozone in future to reassure markets about the euro's long-term stability.

Mr Cameron said he was heading to talks in Brussels later this week "to defend and promote British interests".

"Now, the most important British interest right now is to sort out the problem in the eurozone that is having the chilling effect on our economy that I have spoken about," he said.

"That obviously means eurozone countries doing more together and if

they choose to use the European Treaty to do that, then obviously there will be British safeguards and British interests that I will want to insist on. And I won't sign a treaty that doesn't have those safeguards in it, around things like, of course, the importance of the single market and financial services."

"Now if they choose to go ahead with a separate treaty, then clearly that is not a treaty that Britain would be signing or would be amending but, of course, if they want to use the European institutions, then we will be insisting on the safeguards and the protections that Britain needs."

"Britain is a member of the European Union, we benefit from our membership of the European Union. Key to that is the single market. We want the single currency crisis solved but we will protect and defend British interests at the same time."

Asked if he was prepared to reject a treaty that would save the single currency, Mr Cameron said: "To save the single currency you need more than a treaty, you need to address the competitiveness problem, the deficit problem, you need to take action to convince the markets that you are serious."

"You need all the institutions of the eurozone, including the European Central Bank, to get behind that."

Karzai cancels Downing St visit

Afghan President Hamid Karzai has cancelled Wednesday's visit to the UK, Downing Street confirmed on Tuesday night.

The decision to pull out of talks with Prime Minister David Cameron was taken after a series of bombings in the country in the first serious resurgence of sectarian violence in a decade.

At least 56 Shiite worshippers were killed by a suicide bomber at a mosque in the city while four more Shiites were killed in a second bombing.

President Karzai was due to meet Mr Cameron to sign a long-term

partnership agreement between the UK and Afghanistan.

At the one-day Bonn conference, held on Monday, about 100 nations and international organisations, including the United Nations, jointly pledged political and financial long-term support to prevent Afghanistan reverting to a safe haven for terrorists.

Foreign Secretary William Hague had vowed Britain would continue to support Afghanistan "long after" 2014, when UK forces will finally be withdrawn from combat roles.

No group has claimed responsibility for Tuesday's bombings, which were carried out on a holy day, but Afghan's Ministry of Interior accused the Taliban.

President Karzai said it was the first time attacks of such a "horrible nature" had taken place on a religious day.

The Afghan leader had also been due to give a lecture called Afghanistan: Achievements, Challenges, Opportunities and Prospects for the Future at the London School of Economics on Wednesday night.

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FTSE 100
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LONDON
Min 3°C Max 10°C

Today's highlights



Hacker UK trial sought

The mother of computer hacker Gary McKinnon has called for her son to stand trial in Britain as she spoke of how attempts to extradite him to the US have "destroyed" his life.



Blues win to advance

Chelsea avoided an early Champions League exit and advanced to the knockout stage as Group E winners with a 3-0 win over Valencia at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday night.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

"There's a lot to be said for taking time out for a tickle" - Actress Anna Friel enjoys family fun.

Hacker's mother calls for UK trial

The mother of computer hacker Gary McKinnon has called for her son to stand trial in Britain as she spoke of how attempts to extradite him to the US have "destroyed" his life.

Janis Sharp said her son faces his 10th Christmas since his arrest and is suffering severe depression.

"This will be his 10th Christmas since his arrest and it has destroyed his life and it has destroyed ours," she said.

"Here the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) said in 2002 that Gary was looking at six months' community service but then when the Americans took over suddenly it becomes 60 years. So there is a huge disparity."

Ms Sharp was speaking after MPs urged the Government on Monday night to improve safeguards for British citizens wanted by authorities overseas by reforming extradition laws.

The House of Commons agreed without a vote to call on ministers to bring forward new laws and attempt to change the UK-US extradition treaty and European Arrest Warrant regime.

Mr McKinnon has spent the last seven years facing the threat of



extradition to the US after he hacked into top secret military computers in 2002.

American officials have demanded that he is tried in the US despite expert opinions obtained by Mr McKinnon's legal team warning that his mental condition could lead him to commit suicide.

The 45-year-old, from Wood Green, north London, admits the crimes but claims he was looking for evidence of

UFOs.

Ms Sharp said on Tuesday: "Our argument is to try Gary here and to be given a proportional sentence. To go from six months to 60 years is ludicrous."

The Commons debate was granted by the backbench business committee to Tory Dominic Raab, who called for ministers to "inject a dose of common sense into the blunt extradition regime".

Lobbyist claims 'untrue'

Claims that lobbying firms such as Bell Pottinger have influence over Government policy were dismissed as "simply untrue" by the Prime Minister's official spokesman on Tuesday.

Calls for a statutory register of lobbyists were stepped up on Tuesday after it was revealed that executives from Bell Pottinger were secretly taped claiming to be able to directly influence David Cameron and other senior Government figures on behalf of private sector clients.

But Mr Cameron's spokesman said companies would do better to go through the official channels to speak to ministers and civil servants about their concerns.

"It simply isn't true to say that Bell Pottinger or any other lobbying company has influenced Government policy," said the spokesman.

"Clearly it is in their interests to tell their clients that they can provide them with a service and that is what they appear to be doing."

The spokesman said that Downing Street, the Treasury and the Department for Business were happy to speak to companies about their business concerns in response to direct contacts.

"In my experience in the civil service, the official process is the best one to pursue," he said. "If companies want to spend money on lobbyists, that is a matter for them."

The Independent newspaper revealed on Tuesday that undercover reporters from the Bureau of Investigative Journalism, posing as agents of the government of Uzbekistan, secretly recorded conversations with Tim Collins, managing director of Bell Pottinger Public Affairs.

Mr Collins boasted about his access to the Prime Minister, Chancellor George Osborne, Mr Cameron's policy chief Steve Hilton and Downing Street chief of staff Ed Llewellyn.

Undercover review urged

Activists called for a fresh review of undercover policing in Britain on Tuesday as they said a retired judge's probe was "programmed to fail".

The Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station controversy is just one of several cases where prosecutors failed to fulfil obligations to declare activities of officers, protesters claim.

Director of Public Prosecutions Keir Starmer was even misled during his time as a defence lawyer in an animal rights case, the No Police Spies campaign group say.

Sir Christopher Rose's findings surrounding the Ratcliffe-on-Soar power station illustrated an "almost pathological failure" to address systematic problems, Michael Schwarz, of law firm Bindmans, said.

"I think it is unacceptable that the CPS should produce the Rose report to hide behind," the lawyer told a press conference.

"Rose's report simply fails because it was programmed to fail." Similar cases show an "institutionalised corruption of the legal process", Mr Schwarz said.

WORLD NEWS

GERMANY: A shock warning of a possible debt downgrade for the eurozone including Germany shook EU leaders on Tuesday, giving them notice that a summit at the end of this week is their last chance to stop the crisis.



RUSSIA: Russia deployed troops in central Moscow and held opposition figures on Tuesday after an unprecedented protest against polls that critics said were rigged in favour of Vladimir Putin's party.

DR CONGO: Thousands of soldiers patrolled Kinshasa and other Congolese cities amid fears that Tuesday's expected announcement of full results for last week's polls could stir unrest in the conflict-prone country.

USA: The United States must "fully review" its ties with Pakistan and consider cuts or new restrictions to military and economic aid, Republican senators John McCain and Lindsey Graham urged.

SYRIA: Syria said it conditionally accepts observers as part of an Arab plan, as a rights group reported militiamen loyal to the regime killed 34 civilians and dumped their bodies in a city square.

EGYPT: Egypt on Tuesday wrapped up the opening round of the first parliamentary elections since Hosni Mubarak's fall, with Islamists winning a landslide victory at the expense of weakened and divided liberals.

SOUTH AFRICA: UN climate talks on Tuesday were mired in problems as environment ministers from around the world began a huddle focused on the future of the Kyoto Protocol.

USA: Newt Gingrich, the new frontrunner for the Republican presidential nomination, courted Donald Trump and promoted his controversial ideas on putting children to work.

NGN asked about lawyer's children

The News of the World's publishers inquired about the price of obtaining information about the young children of a lawyer for alleged phone-hacking victims, the Leveson Inquiry heard on Tuesday.

Charlotte Harris described seeing documents that revealed how she was put under surveillance by News Group Newspapers (NGN) and contained private details about her family.

She said it was natural as a mother to feel "terribly uncomfortable" about the idea of people investigating her children, who were aged two and four at the time.

Ms Harris, who represents alleged hacking victims including Ulrika Jonsson, former Lib Dem MP Mark Oaten and sports agent Sky Andrew, said she was given an insight into her clients' lives after learning a private detective had spied on her.

"One of the difficulties with surveillance, and I hear this from clients but I also speak for myself, is you don't really know what happened when," she said.

"It is what you don't know that can cause stress. That in itself might be a new form of harassment to look into."

The media lawyer, of leading London firm Mishcon de Reya, told the inquiry into press standards she first learned in May that she had been placed under surveillance.

She contacted Simon Greenberg, director of corporate affairs for NGN's parent company News International, who in September informed her that he had uncovered more papers relating to what happened.

Government warned of care 'risk'



The Government is not doing enough to avoid a repeat of the Southern Cross care homes crisis, an influential group of MPs warned on Tuesday.

Neither Whitehall nor local authorities are monitoring the financial health of providers, and some companies are racking up huge debts, according to the Public Accounts Committee.

The abrupt collapse of Southern Cross, Britain's biggest care homes operator, over the summer caused turmoil for more than 30,000 elderly and vulnerable people.

The firm was crippled by having to pay a £250 million rent bill as councils sought to cut fees in the wake of the first credit crunch.

However, the PAC's report said effective oversight of the market was still not in place.

There is no early warning system for when providers are getting into

difficulty, and no apparent plan for what happens if they fail. At the same time, care homes are facing rises in costs and reductions in what local authorities will pay for places. Currently 63% of funding for homes comes from the public purse.

"Reducing this funding could destabilise the market or create problems for the NHS with elderly people blocking beds as local authorities no longer fund the social care places," the cross-party committee cautioned.

Chairman Margaret Hodge said: "The Department of Health must get to grip with the very real risks to the social care market, if we are to avoid another Southern Cross."

"No one, government or local authorities, really knows what is going on locally or whether one provider is becoming too dominant."

Murder law reforms sought

Careful reform of the "fiendishly difficult" murder laws might help improve public confidence and reduce calls to scrap mandatory life sentences, the most senior judge in England and Wales said on Tuesday.

The Lord Chief Justice Lord Judge said previous proposals to reform the murder laws "have not been taken forward except piecemeal", leaving complications which can lead to a "sense of injustice" in individual cases.

"It doesn't make anything in the law of murder very straightforward," he said.

"And it's sometimes felt that the complications leave, in the long run, a sense of injustice about how an individual case is fitted into the framework overall."

"I would have thought myself that a careful reform, or consideration of reform of the law of murder, might reduce the call for the automatic

sentence to be removed."

His comments came as legal experts on the Homicide Review Advisory Group, which includes judges, academics and former QCs, said neither mandatory sentences nor the system for setting minimum terms allow for sentences to match individual cases.

A so-called mercy killing attracts the same mandatory life penalty as serial killings, the group said.

Private funeral for Speed

The funeral of Gary Speed will take place later this week, the League Managers Association (LMA) has confirmed.

The private funeral and service will take place in Wales and will be for family and close friends. It is by invitation only. But a public memorial service for the Wales national football team manager is being planned for the new year.

A spokesman for the LMA said: "At this time, Louise Speed and her family wish to express their deep appreciation for the very generous and clearly heartfelt tributes paid to Gary and his memory by the public and all forms of the media."

"Mrs Speed is especially grateful for the sympathetic way that the media has respected the family's privacy in these extremely distressing circumstances."

"She is also acutely aware how Gary touched the lives of so many people and that each of them would wish to thank him for the joy he brought to them."

"Accordingly, a memorial service to celebrate Gary's life will take place soon and hopefully this will allow as many people to attend as wish to be there to pay their final respects and tributes to Gary."

Lawrence accused 'may have visited attacker'

One of the men accused of murdering Stephen Lawrence may have picked up traces of forensic evidence when visiting one of the attackers, a court heard on Tuesday.

Forensic scientist Roy Green told a jury at the Old Bailey that one of the scenarios he considered during his research was that David Norris had visited one of the killers and picked up fibres on his clothes.

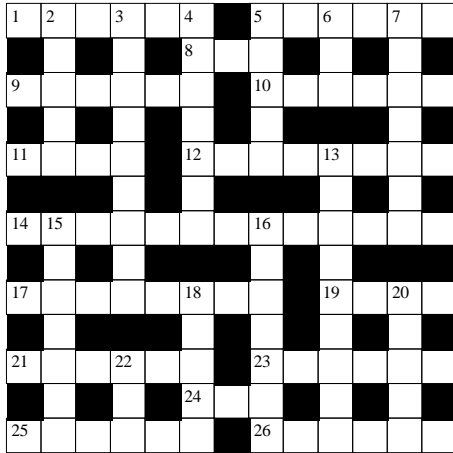
A team of experts found six green fibres matching Mr Lawrence's trousers and one matching his T-shirt linked to a sweatshirt seized from Norris' house.

On Tuesday Stephen Batten QC, for Norris, asked Mr Green: "What you postulated to yourself is that he might know one of the real assailants for example, and have gone round to their address?"

Mr Green said: "That was one of the scenarios that I considered, yes."

On Monday the fibres expert told the court that he had also looked at the possibility that the sweater was washed after the attack.

Headland SatNews CROSSWORD No. 340



ACROSS

1. Enlist (4,2)
5. Rogue (6)
8. Regret (3)
9. Hands on hips (6)
10. Movie theatre (6)
11. Ale (4)
12. Cheeky (8)
14. Consequence (5,2,6)
17. Jumper (8)
19. Ireland (4)
21. Wine fruit (6)
23. Unique item (3,3)
24. Night bird (3)
25. Competitor (6)
26. Thing (6)

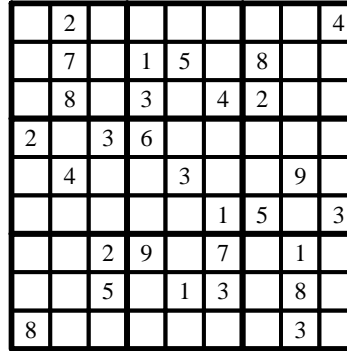
DOWN

2. Coloured Linen tape (5)
3. By numbers (9)
4. Stipulation (7)
5. Go over again (5)
6. Transgression (3)
7. Statistical calendar (7)
13. Dissimilar (9)
15. Indifferent (7)
16. Aural organ (7)
18. Cap peak (5)
20. Re- 'dip' (5)
22. (3)

SOLUTION

ACROSS, 1. Sign up, 5. Rascal, 8. Rue, 9. Akimbo, 10. Cinema, 11. Beer, 12. Impudent, 14. Knock on effect, 17. Pillow, 19. Eire, 21. Grapes, 23. One off, 24. Owl, 25. Player, 26. Entry. DOWN: 2. Inkle, 3. Numerical, 4. Provino, 5. Recap, 6. Sin, 7. Almanac, 13. Different, 15. Neutral, 16. Earhole, 18. Vision, 20. Refit, 22. Pty.

Headland SatNews SUDOKU



7	8	4	9	2	5	6	1	8
2	8	6	8	1	4	5	9	7
5	1	9	7	8	6	2	3	4
8	2	5	1	4	8	7	6	9
9	6	7	5	3	2	8	4	1
8	4	1	6	7	9	3	5	2
1	7	7	2	4	6	3	9	8
6	9	8	7	5	2	1	4	3
5	4	8	3	5	4	7	6	9

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

GEOGRAPHY: What is the name of the smallest American state?

ART: Who painted the masterpiece 'The Last Supper'?

HISTORY: Who said the following words: 'A horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse'?

(Answers on Page 8)

FANCY THAT!

Brain 'knows genuine art'

When it comes to art, only the real deal will do, according to a study into fake paintings.

Oxford University academics found that the brain responds differently to artwork depending on whether it is said to be authentic, or merely a good imitation.

The findings show that reaction to art is "not rational" as the viewer reacts to what they are told about a piece of work - regardless of whether it truly is genuine.

The research saw 14 people placed in a brain scanner and shown images of Rembrandt portraits, some of which were authentic and some of which were convincing fakes created by different artists.

While their brain signals showed they could not differentiate between the real and fake work, the response altered significantly depending on whether they were told it was a genuine Rembrandt or not.

Professor Martin Kemp, Emeritus Professor of the History of Art at Oxford University, said: "Our findings support what art historians, critics and the general public have long believed - that it is always better to think we are seeing the genuine article."

"Our study shows that the way we view art is not rational, that even when we cannot distinguish between two works, the knowledge that one was painted by a renowned artist makes us respond to it very differently."

"The fact that people travel to galleries around the world to see an original painting suggests that this conclusion is reasonable."

Being told a work was genuine activated a response in the area of the brain associated with reward. But being told a painting was not by Rembrandt triggered a variety of responses in parts of the brain linked to planning new strategies.

CELEBRITY NEWS

Winehouse hits top spot

Amy Winehouse has shot to the top of the album charts, more than four months after her death.



Her posthumous collection Lioness: Hidden Treasures, which features original tracks and covers, was released on Monday.

Winehouse's father Mitch tweeted: "Just been told. Amy at Number One... My heart is sad but bursting with pride. Mitch."

Some of the proceeds from the album, put together after the 27-year-old singer was found dead in bed in her Camden flat, will go to the Amy Winehouse Foundation, set up in the star's name.

Mitch tweeted: "140,000 sold = £140,000 to foundation in one day. Well done baby."

Potter star set for stage

Harry Potter star Katie Leung is to make her stage debut in the adaptation of another literary bestseller.

The 24-year-old Scottish actress, who plays Potter's girlfriend Cho Chang in the film franchise based on JK Rowling's tales of young witches and wizards, will take on the role of author Jung Chang in Wild Swans at London's Young Vic.

The book, the best-selling non-fiction work in British history, tells the history of China in the 20th century through the eyes of three generations of women in Chang's family.

Leung, from Motherwell, said: "It is a great honour to be involved in such an extraordinary project and especially to be playing the role based on Jung Chang. I look forward to performing this truly inspirational story on stage."

Chang said: "This production means a lot to me. To see Wild Swans on stage - transferred into another art form - will be fantastic. It feels great to know that my book is in such good hands."

It is the first stage adaptation for the 1991 work, which has sold more than 13 million copies in 36 languages, and has come about through collaboration between the Young Vic, the American Repertory Theater and the Actors Touring Company.

Saunders opens up

Comedy star Jennifer Saunders has opened up about suffering depression following her treatment for breast cancer.

Saunders, 53, was diagnosed with breast cancer last year after missing her previous mammogram because she was on tour.

The actress, who is resurrecting her alter-ego Edina for three Absolutely Fabulous specials, said she was unprepared for how she felt when the treatment - six months of chemotherapy - ended.

"I found the Tamoxifen (which she will be on for five years) the hardest thing because it changes you," she said.

"It's like suddenly becoming older... you lose your motor and it makes you feel depressed. You have that 'I want to go to bed and sleep for ever' kind of feeling."

"Normally I have the energy to get up, get ready and do something, but I wasn't starting my days until maybe 11 or 11.30, even though I was awake."

The Ab Fab star said it was one of her best friends, psychologist Tanya Byron, who made her confront the reality that she was suffering from depression.

FTSE slightly higher after S&P warning

World markets were pegged back on Tuesday after Standard & Poor's warned it could downgrade Europe's multi-billion bailout fund as well as the credit ratings of 15 eurozone countries.

S&P said it was putting the AAA long-term credit rating for the European Financial Stability Facility on watch with "negative implications".

In London, the FTSE 100 Index finished just one point higher at 5568.7 after the move, which followed S&P's notice that it may cut 15 eurozone countries' ratings, including Germany and France, as the region's crisis

rumbles on without any sign of an imminent fix.

The biggest Fointsie risers were Wolseley up 69p at 1972p, Sage ahead 6.5p at 293.9p, Weir up 43p at 2078p and Antofagasta ahead 25p at 1228p.

The biggest fallers were Meggitt down 17.1p at 366.4p, Marks & Spencer off 14.1p at 314.9p, Admiral down 37p at 890.5p and Glencore International off 14.8p at 410.15p.

While analysts said the S&P update came as little surprise, it does increase the prospect that without their AAA ratings Germany and France might not be able to raise enough

money to bail out their weaker neighbours.

The mood on the continent has been more upbeat in recent days, ahead of a crucial summit in Brussels on Friday, when it is hoped a concrete solution to the problems in Europe will be delivered.

Hopes for success were lifted on Monday after French president Nicolas Sarkozy and German chancellor Angela Merkel said eurozone nations should face greater checks on their finances as well as sanctions for running up deficits.

Price war hits Tesco market share

A fierce price war raging among the major supermarkets has eroded the dominance of market leader Tesco, industry figures showed on Tuesday.

Tesco's share has slipped from 30.7% a year ago to 30.5% while its growth rate of 3.8% has fallen behind rivals, according to figures from Kantar Worldpanel for the 12 weeks to November 27.

The supermarket, which has more than 2,700 stores in the UK, cut the cost of 3,000 items as part of its £500 million Big Price Drop campaign, which started at the end of September.

The move triggered an aggressive response as competitors hit back with their own schemes, such as Sainsbury's Brand Match campaign and Asda's move to bring petrol prices down.

Kantar said that while Tesco was the only supermarket among the big four to see its market share fall on a year earlier, its price cutting initiative is likely to have brought in more shoppers.

Edward Garner, director at Kantar Worldpanel, said: "With more products available for less, the amount of cash taken at the tills has

understandably dropped. Despite this, Tesco has successfully attracted more shoppers to its stores through the promotion."

Morrisons continued its positive run, seeing its share rise from 11.8% a year ago to 12.1%, while Asda posted its strongest sales growth - 5.3% - since December 2009 as the integration of the UK Netto stores is completed.

Mr Garner said that Waitrose appears to be "immune" from the uncertain economic outlook faced by shoppers as its market share went from 4.1% to 4.3%.

TOURIST RATES

Tourists going abroad can expect the following rates for sterling:

Australia	1.45	dollars
Canada	1.52	dollars
Denmark	8.27	kroner
Euro	1.12	euro
Hong Kong	11.51	dollars
Japan	115.46	yen
Norway	8.62	kroner
Sweden	10.12	krona
Switzerland	1.38	francs
USA	1.49	dollars

(Rates for indication purposes only)

Wolseley upbeat despite UK slide

Plumbing and heating merchant Wolseley weathered a 20% slide in UK profits on Tuesday after benefiting from strong trading in the United States.

The loss of a national boiler supply contract worth £70 million a year and continued tough trading at its Bathstore consumer arm contributed to a fall in UK profits to £24 million for the quarter to October 31.

Like-for-like sales were down by 3% but Wolseley said that excluding the recent contract loss the figure would have been 1% higher as its Plumb and Parts Center businesses battled to replace the lost work.

The profits slide at the Leamington Spa-based UK business also reflected recent disposals such as the sale of Build Center to Jewson owner Saint-Gobain.

LONDON STOCK EXCHANGE

FTSE - Closing prices Tuesday

▼ Admiral Gp	890.50	-37.00	▲ Compass Gp	587.50	1.50	▲ Land Securities	681.50	4.50	▲ Sage Gp	293.90	6.50
▲ Aggreko	1898.00	25.00	▲ Diageo	1360.00	5.50	▶ Legal & General	108.90	0.00	▼ Sainsbury(J)	294.90	-3.50
▶ AMEC	954.00	0.50	▼ Essar Energy	245.90	-2.60	▶ Lloyds Banking	27.10	0.10	▼ Schroders	1392.00	-17.00
▼ Anglo American	2494.50	-7.00	▼ Eurasian Natl Res	676.00	-11.50	▼ Lonmin	1050.00	-26.00	▼ Schroders N/V	1135.00	-11.00
▲ Antofagasta	1228.00	25.00	▼ Experian	841.50	-2.50	▼ Man Gp	143.20	-3.20	▼ Serco Gp	477.10	-7.20
▲ ARM Hldgs	591.00	1.50	▼ Fresnillo	1750.00	-7.00	▼ Marks & Spencer	314.90	-14.10	▼ Severn Trent	1469.00	-29.00
▶ Ashmore Group	348.70	-0.30	▼ G4S	254.10	-1.50	▼ Meggitt	366.40	-17.10	▲ Shire	2152.00	40.00
▼ Assoc British Foods	1116.00	-1.00	▼ GKN	191.80	-2.90	▶ Morrison (Wm)	317.50	-0.30	▲ Smith & Neph	595.50	2.00
▲ AstraZeneca	2937.00	28.50	▲ GlaxoSmithKline	1427.50	28.00	▶ National Grid	604.50	-0.50	▼ Smiths Gp	948.50	-8.50
▲ Aviva	329.10	2.50	▼ Glencore Intl	410.15	-14.80	▼ Next	2575.00	-85.00	▼ SSE	1257.00	-20.00
▶ BAE Systems	276.70	0.90	▶ Hammerson	384.60	-0.70	▼ Old Mutual	118.40	-1.40	▶ Standard Chartered	1455.00	0.50
▼ Barclays	188.00	-3.65	▲ Hargreaves Lansdown	470.00	2.10	▲ Pearson	1142.00	3.00	▼ Standard Life	207.30	-1.30
▲ BG	1383.00	17.00	▼ HSBC	508.30	-9.70	▼ Petrofac	1476.00	-3.00	▲ Tate & Lyle	670.00	8.50
▼ BHP Billiton	2004.00	-8.00	▼ ICAP	366.50	-1.90	▶ Prudential	649.00	0.00	▼ Tesco	398.75	-8.00
▶ BP	465.55	-0.75	▼ IMI	775.00	-19.50	▼ Randgold Resources	6710.00	-5.00	▲ Tullow Oil	1396.00	4.00
▲ Br Am Tob	2952.00	19.00	▲ Imperial Tobacco	2334.00	30.00	▼ Reckitt Benckiser	3218.00	-1.00	▲ Unilever	2124.00	12.00
▼ British Land	494.20	-1.60	▼ Inmarsat	427.10	-4.90	▼ Reed Elsevier	517.50	-8.00	▼ United Utilities	602.00	-13.50
▼ BSkyB	749.00	-9.50	▼ Intercontl Htls	1114.00	-2.00	▶ Resolution	257.60	0.10	▼ Vedanta Resources	1086.00	-25.00
▲ BT Gp	192.10	3.50	▲ Intertek Gp	1969.00	12.00	▲ Rexam	352.50	3.90	▲ Vodafone Gp	174.45	1.40
▶ Bunzl	829.00	0.50	▼ Intl Cons Airlines Gp	154.30	-3.60	▼ Rio Tinto	3351.00	-33.00	▲ Weir Gp	2078.00	43.00
▼ Burberry Gp	1267.00	-5.00	▼ Intl Power	327.30	-6.90	▲ Rolls-Royce	723.00	9.00	▼ Whitbread	1626.00	-16.00
▼ Cairn Energy	274.50	-3.50	▼ Investec	363.30	-6.70	▶ Royal Bank of Scot	22.59	-0.18	▼ Wolseley	1972.00	69.00
▼ Capita Gp	634.00	-2.00	▶ ITV	65.05	-0.25	▲ Royal Dutch Shell A	2269.50	13.50	▶ WPP	672.00	0.50
▲ Captl Shop Cent	321.60	1.60	▲ Johnson Matt	1923.00	5.00	▲ Royal Dutch Shell B	2333.50	6.00	▲ Xstrata	1048.00	15.50
▼ Carnival	2251.00	-7.00	▼ Kazakhmys	964.00	-4.50	▼ RSA Insurance	107.40	-1.40			
▼ Centrica	288.10	-5.00	▼ Kingfisher	258.30	-4.60	▲ SABMiller	2234.00	1.50			

Park reveals Christmas orders surge

A television advertising campaign featuring former Loose Women presenter Coleen Nolan helped the UK's leading gift voucher firm sell more Christmas savings schemes this year.

Park Group, which sells vouchers, hampers and other gift products on a 45-week prepaid instalment plan in time for Christmas, said orders were up 5% this year, while customer numbers were more than 1% higher at 415,000 and average order value was up 4% at £417.

The Birkenhead, Merseyside-based company said the Christmas savings scheme, which makes up 55% of its revenues, was popular with consumers wary of spending in the current economic climate and offered a "controlled, disciplined" approach to the season.

But the group, which sells its products through 114,000 agents, reported a pre-tax loss of £5.2 million in the six months to September 30, compared to a £4.5 million loss last

year, as 80% of orders are actually dispatched in the second half of the year.

Ben Thefaut, an analyst at Arden Partners, said sales of Park's Christmas saving product was boosted by its festive advert, in which eighties popstar Ms Nolan claims she is "on a mission to get the nation saving".

Despite the upbeat outlook for the second half of the year, investors were not impressed by the results for the first six months of the year as Park shares fell more than 7%.

Park reported a 10% fall in revenues in the period to £48.6 million but still awarded a dividend of 0.525p to shareholders, a 5% increase on the previous period.

Chairman Peter Johnson said the outlook for the business was encouraging and that a year of growth was expected as the consumer business, which provides the Christmas savings scheme, saw revenues increase 15% in the first half of the year to £6.7 million.

Lloyds bidder pledges bank shake-up

A bidder for more than 600 Lloyds' branches has said it will allow managers to choose their opening hours as part of a drive for "local decision making" in the sector.

NBNK is one of the front-runners in the auction of 632 outlets being sold by Lloyds Banking Group in order to meet European competition rules.

If the takeover vehicle is successful, Gary Hoffman, the banker who was brought in to rescue Northern Rock before moving to head up NBNK last year, pledged to bring about change for the estate's 5.5 million customers.

He said they will be able to visit their local branch as late as 9.30pm in the run up to Christmas, with banks sharing similar opening hours to neighbouring shops.

"We'll have local decision-making. Every other bank in the UK is arranged around products. We'll be arranged around customers and geography," he

said.

The banker, who made his name at Barclays, has also pledged to eradicate short-term annual bonuses for senior managers.

Instead of receiving pay-outs every year and rewards for their ability to sell products, branch staff would be rewarded according to the loyalty of their customers.

"Eighty-seven per cent of customers complain about hard-selling by banks. They talk about being hijacked," he said.

Lloyds, which trades under the names Lloyds TSB and Cheltenham & Gloucester, is being forced to offload the branches as a penalty for the state aid it received during the 2008 financial crisis.

Ministers hope that the sale will create a new bank which will be fit to challenge other banks and shake up the financial services industry.

Airport tax consultation 'a sham'

Government consultation on the air passenger duty (APD) airport departure tax was "a sham and a waste of taxpayers' money", airline chiefs said on Tuesday.

In last week's autumn statement Chancellor George Osborne confirmed an 8% rise in APD from next April.

On Tuesday, the Treasury released its response following consultation on APD, which is vehemently opposed by airlines.

Despite pleas to reduce, scrap or amend APD, the Treasury said the system would carry on as it is.

In a statement, the bosses of easyJet, Ryanair, Virgin Atlantic and British Airways parent company IAG, said: "The Government's consultation on APD has been a sham and a waste of taxpayers' money."

"We are left with a tax that has already cost 25,000 jobs, is doing increasing damage to the prospects for economic recovery, and sends a message to the world that Britain is a difficult and expensive place to do business."

They went on: "We are united in calling for the Government to commission an independent study of APD's overall economic value and impact. We have no doubt this would confirm that APD's negative effect on UK GDP (gross domestic product) significantly outweighs its revenue benefit for the Treasury. We call for this tax on passengers to be axed."

Thousands complain of silent calls

Complaints about silent phone calls are running at up to 1,300 a month in the UK, probably as a result of increasing awareness of the issue, the telecommunications watchdog has said.

There was a sharp rise in complaints about silent calls received by Ofcom between January and February from 590 to 1,924, the watchdog said, with this figure then falling to between 1,000 and 1,300 a month.

Ofcom said its research has suggested a decreasing proportion of people receiving silent phone calls over the past two years - from 30% of British adults with a landline phone in 2009 to 24% this year.

Boost for deep space comms site

The UK could have a role in future manned missions to Mars "or beyond" after millions of pounds of Government funding for a "space science park".

The former Satellite Earth Station at Goonhilly, Cornwall, built to receive the first transatlantic satellite television signals from Telstar almost 50 years ago, is to receive almost £7 million to allow "deep space communication and radio astronomy" from the site.

Earth Station Limited (GES), which announced plans to transform the former BT site in January this year, said the upgrading of Goonhilly's massive antennas would create an opportunity for the UK to "receive communications from missions to Mars and beyond", as well as boosting facilities for space science research.

Online shoppers short on patience

Online shoppers will typically give up trying to make a purchase after four minutes if they have not been able to get through the retailer's security checks, a new study has found.

Research for Experian revealed that 44% of people had abandoned an online shopping transaction because the checks were taking too long and 43% turned to a competitor after becoming frustrated with lengthy procedures.

Impatience was found to be greatest in the online gaming sector, when people will try to make a purchase for an average of three minutes before abandoning it.

Fierce competition will take place among online retailers this month as customers look to grab the best Christmas bargains in the tough economic climate.

Interactive Media in Retail Group estimates that shoppers will spend £7.75 billion online throughout December.

The Experian survey found younger adults had the least patience, with 13% of adults under 35 frequently abandoning security checks due to the length of time they take, compared with 10% of 35 to 54-year-olds and 8% of the over-55s.

Consumers were more tolerant when it came to banking procedures, being prepared to wait almost as long online as in-branch.

Ashton banned for four weeks

Northampton wing Chris Ashton received a four-week ban on Tuesday night after being found guilty of dragging Leicester's Alesana Tuilagi off the pitch by his hair in Saturday's fiery east midlands derby.

Ashton, 24, denied the charge of unsportsmanlike conduct for the incident, which occurred in the first half of Northampton's 30-25 defeat at Welford Road and sparked a touchline brawl.

Tuilagi and Saints flanker Tom Wood were both sent off for punching. A disciplinary hearing on Tuesday night deemed their red cards to be sufficient punishment.

Ashton will miss Northampton's back-to-back Heineken Cup fixtures against Castres, the Christmas Eve Aviva Premiership clash with Bath and the New Year's Day trip to Newcastle. The England wing will be available for Northampton again in time for the Friday night Premiership game against Harlequins on January 6.

RFU disciplinary officer Judge Jeff Blackett, who chaired the three-man panel, said: "We accepted that this started by accident but it became clear that at some stage Chris Ashton knew what he was doing.

"If you pull somebody by the hair there is an element of denigration and this act was a catalyst for a mass brawl that resulted in two red cards and significantly affected the image of the game.

"Without any laid-down guidance on sanction we have aligned the offence to that of spitting and reduced the entry level points to that of three, six and 10 weeks for low, mid-range and top end respectively.

"This was a mid-range offence but we have reduced the sanction by two weeks based on the player's good record and conduct at the hearing."

Radcliffe slams ceremony budget

Paula Radcliffe has labelled the decision to double the budget for the London 2012 opening and closing ceremonies as "frivolous" and suggested the money could have been better used elsewhere.

The Government announced on Monday that an extra £41million of public money is to be put into the ceremonies to go alongside cash from the London organising committee.

Radcliffe, 37, speaking after being selected as one of three marathon

Chelsea win to advance

Chelsea captain John Terry said he hoped his team's dip in form was over after the Blues avoided an early Champions League exit and advanced to the knockout stage as Group E winners with a 3-0 win over Valencia at Stamford Bridge.

Didier Drogba broke the deadlock with a third-minute drive before Ramires prodded home a second, before the Ivorian secured victory when he flicked in a Juan Mata through-ball in the second half.

"We're obviously delighted (with the result)," Terry said.

"We left it too late in the group but it was a good solid performance and we knew it was going to be very difficult, which it was."

"It was important we didn't concede and we did that. We set out with a game plan and we still had to get a second goal. The manager said at

half-time that the third one would kill them off completely, which it did. They were deflated after that."

"Genk was a tough place to go but we're delighted to be top and we're delighted to be in the next round."

"We had our dip in form in the season and hopefully that's the end of it. Newcastle (3-0 away win on Saturday) was the building block."

Chelsea manager Andre Villas-Boas was relieved to finish top of the pool and claimed his under-pressure side had given everyone a "slap in the face".

"In terms of the result I'm very happy," the Portuguese said.

"The players worked very hard for the win. Guess what? We finished top of the group against all odds. It was good to score straight away. Valencia started a bit uncomfortably and struggled a couple of times."

Arsenal lose in Greece

Arsenal boss Arsene Wenger admitted his side deserved to lose as they went down 3-1 to Olympiacos in Greece in the Champions League on Tuesday night.

Wenger fielded a much-changed side with top spot in Group F already sewn up and his fringe players failed to rise to the occasion.

"We must give credit to Olympiacos tonight because they played a very physical game and in the first half it was very difficult for us," the Frenchman said. "And I don't think we had the right tactical approach."

"In the second half at 2-1 we looked like we might come back, but they were dangerous and probably deserved it. Many of the players did not have experience in the Champions League so were a bit surprised by pace of game."

Arsenal lost goalkeeper Lukasz Fabianski to injury in the first half and replacement Vito Mannone was at fault for the goal he conceded shortly after coming on. But Wenger had words of support for his keepers.

"I think we didn't help our goalkeepers," he said. "We exposed them with our lack of quality in the passes we gave them and they were quite brave."

O'Neill: we must win

New Sunderland manager Martin O'Neill has called on his players to start winning matches soon so they can drag themselves away from the relegation zone.

O'Neill took over the manager's position at the Stadium of Light on Saturday before watching the Black Cats squander a 1-0 lead to lose 2-1 at Wolves.

The defeat stretched the Wearsiders' winless run to five matches and also saw them slip to 17th in the Barclays Premier League table, just one point from safety.

O'Neill took charge of his first training session at the club on Tuesday and chose the media conference that followed to remind his players that they must start winning games fast if they are to move away from the drop zone.

He said: "Obviously we are in a little bit of trouble at the moment. We have been losing games and we could have had a few more points on the board."

runners for Team GB for the Olympics next year, said there were better uses for the money.

She said: "I think it is a little bit frivolous to throw a lot at it given the fact we are in a recession."

"The money could be thrown at other areas such as grass-roots sports. The Games are costing quite a bit as it is and it would be better off spent in ways which would give more back long term."

Radcliffe will be competing at her fifth consecutive Olympics in London next year but admitted she had yet to attend an opening ceremony for Games.

"I've always been in team holding camps," she added.

Olympics minister Hugh Robertson described the extra funding as an investment to attract business and tourism to Britain when the eyes of the world were on London.

TUESDAY'S FOOTBALL

**UEFA CHAMPIONS LEAGUE
 GROUP E**

Chelsea	3-0	Valencia
Genk	1-1	Bayer Leverkusen

Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Chelsea	6	3	2	1	13	4	11
Bayer Leverkusen	6	3	1	2	8	8	10
Valencia	6	2	2	2	12	7	8
Genk	6	0	3	3	2	16	3

GROUP F

Olympiacos	3-1	Arsenal
Borus. Dortmund	2-1	Marseille

Table

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pt
Arsenal	6	3	2	1	7	6	11
Marseille	6	3	1	2	7	4	10
Olympiacos	6	3	0	3	8	6	9
Borus. Dortmund	6	1	1	4	6	12	4

GROUP G

Apoel Nicosia	0-2	Shakhtar Donetsk
FC Porto	0-0	Zenit St Pete.

GROUP H

Barcelona	4-0	BATE
Plzen	2-2	AC Milan

THE CHAMPIONSHIP

Barnsley	2-1	Crystal Palace
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**JOHNSTONE'S PAINT TROPHY
 SEMI-FINALS**

Northern Section

Oldham	2-0	Bradford
Preston	1-1	Chesterfield

Southern Section

Barnet	0-0	Brentford
Southend	1-2	Swindon

**Mancini: important to sell
 Tevez**

Manchester City manager Roberto Mancini has said it is "important" to sell Carlos Tevez and would be happy to see him move to Italy.

The striker does not appear to have a future at City and has been absent from the club for the past month.

AC Milan revealed on Monday they had been given permission by City to speak to representatives of the player.

Mancini, speaking at a press conference to preview Wednesday's Champions League clash against Bayern Munich, said: "I don't know what the situation with Carlos is in this moment. I think for us it is important to sell him."

"We can do this, to sell Carlos, for him and the club. If he has a chance to go to Italy I am happy for him."

FA looking at Suarez 'gesture'

The Football Association are looking at allegations Liverpool striker Luis Suarez made an offensive gesture after Monday night's 1-0 defeat at Fulham.

Photographs published on Tuesday appear to show the Uruguay international making a gesture in the direction of the crowd as he left the pitch at Craven Cottage.

The FA are aware of the alleged incident and it is understood they are now looking at the matter.

Liverpool manager Kenny Dalglish was cautious when quizzed after the game about the allegations.

"I've not seen the picture and I am not taking anybody's word for it," he said. "But until you have proved it is true to me, I won't comment."

Dalglish defended the striker after he was subjected to "cheat" taunts by fans unhappy at the way the player went to ground regularly.

"Scandalous," was the Scot's reaction.

"I would like to see you write that in the paper because you would be in a bit of trouble as well. You write what you want to write."

"At the end of the day, we will



AFP

look after Luis the best we can and I think it is about time he got a bit of protection from some people."

Suarez saw a wonderful second-half finish disallowed for offside and had a couple of penalty shouts in the Barclays Premier League clash at Craven Cottage rejected.

Fulham fans felt Suarez went down too easily at times and made their anger known, but Dalglish leapt to the Uruguay striker's defence.

"At the end of the day, we will look after Luis the best we can and I think it is about time he got a wee bit of protection from some people."

An air of grievance hung over Liverpool's return to Anfield following a controversial evening in south west London.

**Mark Allen may face
 disrepute charge**

Mark Allen could be charged with bringing the game into disrepute after he used "inappropriate language" during a post-match tirade against World Snooker chairman Barry Hearn.

Northern Irishman Allen was heavily critical of the decision to shorten the early rounds of the UK Championship, where he was a first-round victor over Adrian Gunnell on Monday.

A statement from World Snooker on Tuesday read: "Following Mark Allen's use of inappropriate language in his press conference at the williamhill.com UK Championship, he has been referred to the World Professional Snooker and Billiards Association (WPBSA)'s disciplinary committee as he is in breach of tournament rules and could be charged with bringing the game into disrepute."

After swearing, Allen also said on Monday: "Whenever Barry came in, one of the first things he said was that the World Championships, UK and Masters wouldn't be touched. Only 18 months later, the UK format has changed."

'Rocket' running out of fuel

Ronnie O'Sullivan bowed out of the williamhill.com UK Championship in York on Tuesday and claimed he needs to end his career if he is to have a life away from snooker.

On the table, O'Sullivan's two-year wait for a ranking event title was forced to continue as he was beaten 6-5 in the second round by Judd Trump, but the Essex cue-man, who turned 36 on Monday, was keen to discuss matters away from the baize.

Despite having been the sport's box-office attraction for the majority of his 20-year career, O'Sullivan has rarely been a settled presence as snooker's public face and has continually threatened to retire despite being regarded as the most talented player of all-time.

Having gone through public battles with depression, O'Sullivan's mindset has always been one of snooker's talking points, but he says the penny has finally dropped as to why he has gone through such turmoil.

"I thought I applied myself today, I feel in a good place and I don't want to take the shine off Judd but I seriously can't see me having much longer playing," O'Sullivan said.

WEATHER

INTERNATIONAL WEATHER

	Min	Max	Condition		
	C	F	C		
Amsterdam	4	39	7	44	rain
Athens	5	41	18	64	clear
Auckland	15	59	21	69	ptcloudy
Beijing	-6	22	4	39	clear
Beirut	14	57	21	69	ptcloudy
Cairo	11	51	22	71	clear
Dublin	1	33	6	42	clear
Hong Kong	19	66	23	73	cloudy
Istanbul	9	48	16	60	clear
Johannesburg	12	53	25	77	rain
Madrid	2	35	15	59	clear
Manila	26	78	33	91	ptcloudy
Mexico City	8	46	26	78	clear
New Delhi	15	59	28	82	clear
New York	9	49	16	61	rain
Oslo	-4	24	3	37	ptcloudy
Paris	5	41	8	46	rain
Rome	12	53	16	60	rain
Sao Paulo	18	64	26	78	rain
Singapore	26	78	33	91	ptcloudy
Stockholm	-2	28	2	35	cloudy
Sydney	14	57	19	66	rain
Tokyo	9	48	11	51	rain
Toronto	6	42	8	46	rain
Zurich	6	42	8	46	rain

UK WEATHER

	C	F	Forecast
Aberdeen	3	37	Some rain, snow
Belfast	3	37	Spotty showers
Birmingham	4	39	Spotty showers
Bournemouth	7	45	Showers around
Cardiff	6	43	Spotty showers
Edinburgh	3	37	Mostly cloudy
London	6	43	Spotty showers
Manchester	5	41	Spotty showers
Newcastle	4	39	Clouds and sun
Norwich	6	43	Spotty showers
Nottingham	5	41	Showers around
Plymouth	6	43	Spotty
St Helier	10	50	Windy with rain
Stornoway	5	41	Turning cloudy

NOW YOU KNOW!

GEOGRAPHY: The smallest American state is Rhode Island.

ART: 'The Last Supper' was painted by Leonardo da Vinci.

HISTORY: King Richard III said the words 'a horse, a horse, my kingdom for a horse'.

Wilkin signs new Saints deal

England forward Jon Wilkin has effectively committed the rest of his career to St Helens after signing a new four-year contract.

The 28-year-old back rower, who will celebrate a 10-year testimonial with Saints in 2012, is now tied to the club until the end 2015.

Wilkin has made 231 appearances, scoring 74 tries, since joining Saints from Hull KR as an 18-year-old in 2003.