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Newspaper of the year

Mould and squalid housing 'making NHS crisis worse'

Josh Halliday
North of England correspondent

Thousands of babies and toddlers are being admitted to hospital in England each year with lung conditions probably linked to damp and mould-ridden homes, a senior doctor has warned.

Dr Andy Knox, an associate medical director for the NHS, said squalid

housing was having a "profoundly negative impact on the nation's health" and worsening the crisis in the NHS.

"It is becoming a really major health issue for us as a nation, and we need legislation that is going to properly deal with this," he said.

The Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health said the state of Britain's housing was "now a crucial issue

for child health" and called on ministers to launch a clear way for parents to report poor air quality in rented and social housing.

The stark warnings come as the Guardian launches a series focusing on Britain's growing private rental sector. One in five UK households now live in private rented homes, with costs for tenants rising despite worsening conditions and squalor.

Inside Britain's rent crisis

The town where every privately rented home is mould-ridden

How damp exposure affects immunity, hormones and lungs

Pages 14-15 →

Damp is five times more common in private rentals than in owner-occupied homes.

Government figures suggest that more than 520,000 rented properties in England have hazards that pose "a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety" - a large proportion of these being cold, damp and mould.

However, industry experts say the true scale of the problem is likely to be far greater given systemic problems with the housing system and chronic under-reporting by tenants who fear eviction.

Nearly 31,000 children aged four and under are admitted to hospitals in England each year with conditions linked to the respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), which is known to be caused or exacerbated by damp and mould. NHS

2 →



No power, no water and little hope in Gaza hospital

Ruth Michaelson

Inside a darkened operating theatre in Gaza's largest hospital complex, staff swaddled dozens of tiny premature babies seven or eight to a bed, in a desperate effort to keep the infants warm - and alive. With no oxygen supplies or power for incubators, nurses attempted to provide what little care they could for 39 babies who

had been transferred from the neonatal unit in another part of the sprawling complex following a strike on Dar al-Shifa's intensive care unit.

Just getting them to the theatre was potentially deadly after staff reported strikes on anyone moving inside the hospital compound.

"The neonatal unit is not connected to the main surgical units within al-Shifa medical complex; it was dangerous to go from the main building to get the babies," said Dr Marwan Abu Sada,

▲ Premature babies are placed close together on a bed to keep warm after incubators in al-Shifa hospital shut down yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: REUTERS

the head of surgery at al-Shifa, once considered the heart of Gaza's healthcare system, now operating under fire. "We called the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and the Israelis to ensure the passage of the babies from the neonatal ICU to the surgical area." Thirty-six infants survived

Braverman demands more action on marches

Peter Walker
Vikram Dodd
Heather Stewart

Suella Braverman has demanded "further action" be taken against pro-Palestine marches, as police sources said attacks by the far right on officers were linked to her rhetoric in the run-up to Saturday's protests.

In her first public pronouncement since far-right groups fought officers near the Cenotaph, the home secretary made no comment yesterday on claims by Labour and the police that tensions had been inflamed by her comments. Condemning violence among pro-Palestine demonstrators and those she termed "counter protesters", she focused on "sick, inflammatory and, in some cases, clearly criminal chants, placards and paraphernalia openly on display" at the main march.

Writing on X, formerly Twitter, she said: "This can't go on. Week by week, the streets of London are being polluted by hate, violence and antisemitism. Members of the public are being mobbed and intimidated. Jewish people in particular feel threatened. Further action is necessary."

4 →

Inside 13/11/23
Four sections
every day

News and Sport

Vaginal mesh payout
Patient wins record £1m
from NHS after consent
form doctored
Page 13

Journal Outside G2
Opinions and ideas

Islamophobia seemed a
bit retro - but it is never far
from the surface in Britain
Nesrine Malik
Page 1

G2 Centre pullout
Features and arts

'TV's most divisive show'
Five stars for The Curse:
deeply uncomfortable but
mesmerising viewing
Page 10

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Weather
Page 32

Quick crossword
Back of G2

Cartoon
Journal, page 4

Cryptic crossword
Back of Journal

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News

Scars of 2008 crash deeper for millennials in UK than those in US

Heather Stewart

Millennials in the UK are bearing the “economic scars” of the 2008 financial crisis and are struggling to catch up with the living standards of older groups, while their US counterparts have closed the gap, research shows.

In its annual “intergenerational audit”, the Resolution Foundation thinktank compared the fortunes of millennials – which it defined as those born between 1981 and 2000 – with their predecessors, including generation X (born between 1966 and 1980). The report found that after the 2008 financial crisis and ensuing recession, the long-running pattern that saw young people earn more on average than their parents did at the same life stage was broken.

The authors of the report wrote: “Millennials born in the late 1980s earned, on average, 8% less at age 30 than their counterparts from the generation X cohort when they were the same age.” In the US, by contrast, recent strong income gains by younger workers have helped them catch up.

Sophie Hale, the thinktank’s principal economist, said: “Young



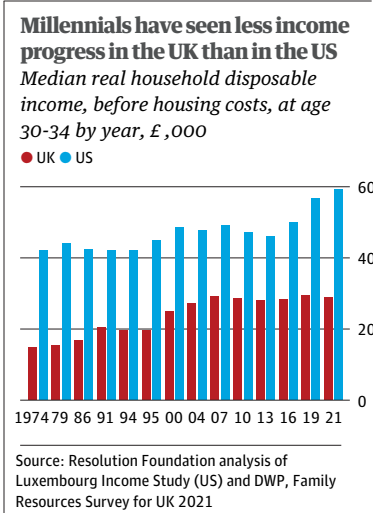
people across advanced economies were hit by the financial crisis, putting a stop to decades of progress. Fifteen years on, this ‘crisis cohort’ are no longer young. And while many US millennials have bounced back, their counterparts in Britain are still wearing economic scars as they approach middle age.”

US millennials in their early 30s in 2021 were earning 21% more in real terms than people in the same age group were in 2007. In the UK, however, incomes were 1% lower for this group than for 30- to 34-year-olds 15 years earlier. The authors attributed this to long-term wage stagnation in the UK, particularly bad for young graduates – due, they argue, to the UK’s inability to create enough skilled jobs. “The typical weekly pay of graduates aged 30-34 has fallen by 16% between 2007 and 2023, while the typical weekly pay of nongraduates is down by only 6%,” they wrote.

The UK’s sky-high housing costs have meant many millennials have also struggled to afford a home at the same age as their parents or grandparents. The Resolution Foundation found some improvement in recent years, but millennials remained far behind. “Around the turn of the millennium, 67% of households aged

30-34 were homeowners, but by 2021 this figure was still 20 percentage points lower, at 47%.”

In the US, home ownership rates are similar for this age group, but they have fallen much less – 56% of 30- to 34-year-olds owned their own home two decades ago, whereas in 2021 it was 50%. Hale said these low home ownership rates in the UK meant many millennials were “forced to live in high-cost and often low-security private rented



◀ Long-term wage stagnation in the UK has been particularly bad for graduates, the report found
PHOTOGRAPH: CAMPUS SHOTS/ALAMY

accommodation that further impedes their living standards”.

Darren Jones, the shadow chief secretary to the Treasury, said: “This report paints a stark picture of an economy that no longer works for working people. Thirteen years of the Conservatives have left an entire generation falling behind their international counterparts and no better off than their parents’ generation.

Ben Twomey, the chief executive of the pressure group Generation Rent, said the last 10 years had been a “lost decade” for UK housing. “Policies like help to buy have only helped existing homeowners by increasing house prices. Most young adults continue to shell out excessive rents that make it harder to save for the future, while those lucky enough to have bought could only do so by taking on large debts and are now facing crushing increases in mortgage payments.

“At least now there is action to make life better for renters through the renters reform bill, but it needs to go further to give those of us locked out of home ownership the chance of a long-term home.”

The tough economic conditions endured by millennials may explain why they appear not to have followed their forebears in moving to the political right as they have aged. A recent YouGov poll suggested just 12% of people between the ages of 25 and 49 intended to vote Conservative at the next general election.

The Centre for Policy Studies, a rightwing thinktank, recently called for policies to help close the “generation gap”, including cheaper childcare and changes to student loans. The director of the thinktank, Robert Colville, said: “The divide between young and old is becoming Britain’s defining characteristic, not just politically but economically too.”

Continued from page 1

Doctor warns of rise in child illness due to mould in homes

figures show nearly 80% of these – 24,485 babies and toddlers – develop acute bronchiolitis needing hospital treatment. Some studies suggest between 20-40% of children who have bronchiolitis in their early years go on to develop asthma.

Knox, who leads on population health for the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria, said the impact of damp and mould had been an issue for years but was “definitely getting worse”. “Poor quality housing is having a profound effect on children’s health.” It was costing the economy millions of pounds a year in time taken off work, and contributing to the strain on the NHS.

“Around 31,000 children are admitted to hospital each year with RSV-related conditions. Evidence from other countries with comparable housing conditions to the UK would suggest that around 20% of these are likely to be directly linked to damp or mould-ridden homes.

“This is a substantial number and is putting extra strain on the NHS every winter. It particularly affects areas like ours where the housing available in our most disadvantaged areas has been poorly kept by landlords, leaving children at risk.”

Experts have said that children living in damp homes are up to three times more likely to have breathing problems than others. A study published in the British Medical Journal in 2019 concluded that 19% of acute respiratory admissions for children under two in New Zealand would be prevented if all housing was free from damp and mould.

The link has become more evident since the Covid pandemic and the inquest last year into the death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who died as a direct result of black mould in the flat he lived in. However, the scale of the challenge is not well understood owing to a lack of nationwide data.

Tenants living in private rented properties are known to under-report problems because they fear receiving a no-fault eviction order – a practice scheduled to be made illegal – or having their rent raised, which can have the same effect as an eviction.

Local authorities, which are responsible for overseeing the private

rented sector, say their environmental health and housing teams are chronically under-resourced so the majority of complaints do not result in any formal action.

Senior doctors suggest the NHS should start routinely asking about patients’ living conditions when they present with a respiratory condition.

Dr Camilla Kingdon, the president of the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, said the body was encouraging paediatricians to ask about housing when reviewing children with lung issues, but she called on the government to do more to improve standards.

“The UK has some of the very worst housing stock in Europe, and evidence shows a rising number of

families are living in poor quality accommodation, with detrimental impacts on children’s health.

“Cold and damp housing conditions lead to increased risk of asthma, respiratory infections, slower cognitive development and mental health problems in children. We must remember that our housing crisis is also a health crisis.”

She added: “We call on the UK government to establish a process for people in rented and social housing to report indoor air quality problems and to help with necessary improvements. It is essential all children have a base standard of living that promotes health and wellbeing.”

The housing department said: “Everyone deserves to live in a safe and decent home. That’s why the government is determined to crack down on rogue landlords who cause misery to their tenants and put their health and safety at risk.

“We are delivering a fairer private rented sector for tenants and landlords through the renters reform bill, which includes creating a new ombudsman to resolve issues quicker and empower tenants to challenge poor practice.”

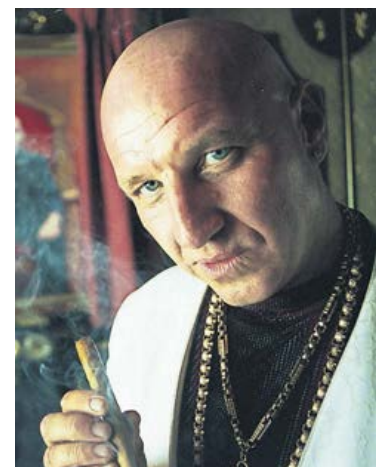
31,000
Children admitted to hospital annually with conditions linked to RSV, known to be caused by mould

40%
Possible proportion of children who have bronchiolitis in their early years who go on to develop asthma

Living hell Pages 14-15 →

▼ Jennifer Pinto and Angela Bostock at the 'Camelot' home in east London of Dave Courtney, right

MAIN PHOTOGRAPH: SARAH LEE/THE GUARDIAN



McGirr said the gangster told him: "I can't fuck and I can't fight so I'm bored and I'm in pain every day."

In a farewell video shared online by his family, Courtney explained his reasons, saying: "I am hurting and disguising a lot of pain."

Speaking about legalising assisted dying, McGirr added: "Dave would have taken that option, and would have had his family there with him, and he would have been able to do it properly and say goodbye."

"I just think that the extra suffering that he's had and mental stress that he's had to have because of that ... could have been avoided [if the law was different]. I do think if anything comes out of his passing it should be a debate on assisted euthanasia."

His last girlfriend, Angela Hoy, 62, described their first meeting at a ball five years ago.

"He came over and I was 57 and I said to him: 'Mate, unless your cock's made of chocolate and spits out money, I'm not interested.' He laughed and came back an hour later with a hollow Lindt rabbit on his willy and a £20 note hanging off it."

Courtney, who once attacked five Chinese waiters with a meat cleaver, was described by friends as "like an angel". They said he recently paid for a homeless woman's dinner in a cafe and had previously paid off bailiffs for the dad of a doorman.

In June 2004, Courtney was cleared of beating Pinto, which was reported as being over a lesbian affair with their friend Angela Bostock, before Bostock successfully sued for libel. Pinto said the episode had been misreported and that she and Courtney had remained friends, with Courtney driving her to cancer treatments last year.

In the UK and Ireland, Samaritans can be contacted on freephone 116 123, or email jo@samaritans.org or jo@samaritans.ie.

Larger than life: call for assisted dying law after gangster Courtney's suicide

Emily Dugan

When gangster-turned-author Dave Courtney was found dead last month in the east London terrace he transformed into a crenellated castle, it was not a shock to his inner circle.

Courtney, said to be the inspiration for Vinnie Jones's character Big Chris in the film *Lock, Stock and Two Smoking Barrels*, had been planning his exit for months. He was 64, had been in severe pain from rheumatoid arthritis and had other serious health issues, including prostate cancer.

Despite Courtney's claims that the arsenal of weapons at his house "Camelot Castle" were all

decommissioned, he found a pistol that worked and turned it on himself. His friends and family said they wished he could have avoided a violent end - and that others in ill health had options too.

His wife, Jennifer Pinto, 54, who remained married to him after they separated, said: "He couldn't take the pain ... And because Dave Courtney was Dave Courtney he had the ways and the means." She said of assisted suicide: "I do wish the option could have been there because it's inhumane ... I remember we went to go and see Reggie Kray. He'd had a stroke so his mouth was open ... and people were lining up to take pictures of him. He had no control of it whatsoever. And Dave said: 'Don't let that be me'."

On the day his body was secretly sent off in a van to be cremated last week, his friends and family spoke in his Plumstead front room.

His lodger and long-time friend Brendan McGirr, 56, found Courtney dead in his bed on 22 October. McGirr said that since July, Courtney had been filming farewell videos for his family - and that he had been open about his desire to go.

His arthritis medication had stopped working, and Courtney was in serious pain. Previous prostate cancer treatment had made him impotent and his heart condition meant he could not take Viagra any more, leaving him frustrated at not being able to use the "sex dungeon" he constructed in his front garden.



▲ Angela Hoy met Courtney five years ago and became his girlfriend

I'm a Celebrity rumours swirl as Farage seen at Brisbane airport

Amy Sedghi

Nigel Farage has been seen at Brisbane airport in Australia, adding to speculation that he will be joining the lineup in this year's *I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!*

The former leader of Ukip and the Brexit party did not confirm, when asked, if he was entering the jungle



▲ Lure of the jungle? Nigel Farage at Brisbane airport in Australia

as part of the ITV show but did tell a reporter that he "might be going in".

He previously ruled out an appearance, saying the reality show was "humiliating", but later said he was considering joining the programme, which had reportedly offered him "substantial sums of money" to take part. According to the Mail Online, the rumoured sum for his participation was £1.5m.

Although Farage declined to confirm his part in the *I'm a Celebrity ... Get Me Out of Here!* lineup, video footage of him at the airport shows him telling a reporter that he had recently given up drinking alcohol for a week.

Speaking to the Mail Online, Farage said: "I can't confirm I'm doing it ... I just think there's a big ... audience out there that watches the programme [who are], actually, people ... worth talking to."

Other names rumoured to be joining the reality show are the TV presenter Josie Gibson, the First Dates star Fred Sirieix and the social media influencer Nella Rose.

Last year, the former health secretary Matt Hancock was paid £320,000 for his appearance on *I'm a Celebrity*.

The politician, who was forced to resign from the government for breaking Covid rules, donated 3% of the fee to charity, according to the

register of MPs' financial interests. Other politicians, former politicians and relatives of politicians to have appeared on the show include Nadine Dorries, who was censured by the parliamentary standards committee for failing to declare her fee for appearing in 2012; Edwina Currie, who appeared in 2014; and Stanley Johnson, Boris Johnson's father, who appeared in 2017.

Contestants for the programme are customarily revealed shortly before the start of the series, which is hosted by Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly (Ant and Dec) and filmed in Australia. The 2023 series is expected to begin airing later this year.

Braverman says 'further action is necessary' on pro-Palestine marches

Continued from page 1

Last week Braverman provoked fury by ignoring Downing Street's request that she tone down an opinion piece for the Times, in which she accused the police of bias in how they deal with political protests.

One policing source with close knowledge of the weekend's events said the intensity of attacks by far-right supporters on officers in central London was "unprecedented". Police believe some were using cocaine.

A government source claimed police were trying to "dictate" what could be debated publicly by claiming tensions had increased following "intense debate about protest and policing". While police do not want a public row with the government, senior officers were clear about the factors they thought had driven far-right violence towards officers.

On Saturday night, Matt Twist, the Met's assistant commissioner, said: "This operation took place in unique circumstances, against a backdrop of conflict in the Middle East, on Armistice Day and following a week of intense debate about protest and policing. These all combined to increase community tensions."

Ben Jamal, director of the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC), which coordinated Saturday's march, accepted that some placards were antisemitic but hailed the protest as "overwhelmingly peaceful" and blamed "pro-Israel actors" for deliberately seeking out examples of antisemitism.

Jamal said he had counted 10 examples of antisemitism at the protest documented on social media, among what he said were 800,000 marchers. "The organisers including PSC would dissociate ourselves

Police follow protest leads

Police are looking for people seen in pictures and videos featuring antisemitic and Islamophobic language and symbols after Saturday's pro-Palestinian and far-right marches in London.

The British Transport Police appealed for the public to help them identify four men in relation to a "racially aggravated altercation". A video shows one man calling a supporter of the march a "terrorist" and another shouting: "We were fucking born in this country."

In another image, a woman is seen holding a placard featuring the Star of David intertwined with a swastika above the slogan "No British politician should be a 'friend of Israel'."

A further image showed a young woman shouting: "Death to all the Jews." Amy Sedghi

entirely from them. But we reject absolutely the attempt to suggest that they are indicative of our views or the vast majority of those marching."

Yesterday the Met said Saturday's protests had led to 145 arrests and that seven people had been charged with offences relating to violence, assault, possession of weapons, criminal damage, public order, inciting racial hatred and possession of drugs.

Centrist Conservative MPs have expressed despair at Rishi Sunak's delay in sacking Braverman, with one senior backbencher predicting "a lot of noise" from angry colleagues when they return to parliament today.

While her statement yesterday was not in open defiance of Sunak,

it indicated she is not minded to tone down her language.

The shadow home secretary, Yvette Cooper, accused Braverman of being "damaging and irresponsible", but the defence secretary, Grant Shapps, dismissed the idea that the home secretary's approach had emboldened far-right marchers, accusing Labour of "trying to play politics" over the issue. "The counter-protest was already going to happen," he told Sky's Sunday Morning with Trevor Phillips. "Those people who were going to come and try and disrupt this weekend had already said they were going to do it."

Allies of Braverman believe No 10 is not inclined to sack the home secretary immediately, especially given the supreme court ruling due on Wednesday on the plan to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda.

The sense of indecision has alarmed Tory MPs who want her to be removed and who fear the prime minister is too weak to stand up to her allies on the right of the party. There have been doubts over claims that her allies number 50 or more.

"I can see the logic of her staying for the Rwanda judgment on Wednesday, but if it goes much beyond that, it looks like she's won the battle," one backbencher said.

A former minister said there was "despair" among many Tory centrists. "The prime minister does seem to have a strange predilection, when any pressure appears, for deciding that these rightwing nutters should be accommodated," they said.

In contrast, Braverman-backing MPs argue that antisemitic placards at the pro-Palestine event vindicated her description of the demonstrations for a ceasefire in Gaza as a "hate march".



Tommy Robinson

Cenotaph rally marks return of far-right figure

As far-right protesters rallied in London bellowing "England till I die" on Saturday, a familiar face was walking out in front.

Tommy Robinson was beaming as a throng of angry men headed towards Whitehall to "defend the Cenotaph" from those protesting over Palestine on Armistice Day chanting: "We love you Tommy, we do." He jumped in a taxi before the violence but was accused of being instrumental in encouraging people to attend.

Since being reinstated on X, formerly known as Twitter, this month, the English Defence League (EDL) founder is experiencing a resurgence. Robinson, 40, whose real name is Stephen Yaxley-Lennon, claims in

his latest profile that this is a "new era" for him.

Among those concerned about his return to the mainstream is Nick Lowles, the chief executive of the anti-fascist group Hope Not Hate. "The fact that all this has blown up around the Cenotaph and the pro-Palestine demos in the fortnight that he's come back on to X, I think has obviously been significant," he said. "It just highlights how important banning hate figures on social media is because even though they can go on to fringe platforms, it's much more difficult to speak to people outside their bubble."

Lowles, whose biography of Robinson, Tommy, was published last year, said that while Robinson

was careful to appear moderate in his videos and had not been there when protesters clashed with police, he had "lit the fuse" for what happened next.

"He turns up, leads the crowd down Whitehall, and then leads a group up into Chinatown and then jumps in a taxi and goes away," he said. "But he has lit the fuse."

He added: "His email list is several 100,000 people. He'd send out emails to the list with a video embedded in the email, saying we must take action, we must take to the streets. He winds people up."

After Robinson left, the group faced riot police and violence broke out, with protesters chanting: "You're not English any more."

Robinson told the Guardian he had told people to remain calm and respectful. "I was polite the entire time, I was calm. I was talking to the police pleasantly. And then when I finished my two minutes'

silence I left and went home, which is what I said I was coming to do.

"So I didn't lead a crowd. I just left ... I didn't ask anyone to follow me. I left at the first available opportunity, I got in a taxi and went home to see my children. So I didn't lead a march. I didn't instigate any trouble."

The EDL disbanded in 2015 but its supporters remain active. Responding to Rishi Sunak's condemnation of the "violent,



▲ Tommy Robinson with supporters near the Cenotaph on Whitehall

wholly unacceptable scenes" from the group and others on Saturday, Robinson said: "If you want the EDL back Rishi, I could easily organise that for you."

Robinson's comeback may be short-lived, however. He lost a libel lawsuit in 2021 for slurs against a Syrian boy who was filmed being attacked at school, and the attorney general's office is considering legal action for contempt of court after a film repeating the libel was circulated. Assuming it were to go to trial and he were convicted, it could mean that by early next year Robinson is back behind bars. Given his previous convictions – which include fraud, assault, stalking and contempt of court – he could face up to two years in jail.

Robinson said: "I am facing a contempt of court charge because the bent judiciary, which is what it is, has silenced me and a film was leaked." Emily Dugan

▼ Suella Braverman lays a wreath at the Cenotaph yesterday. Below, Rishi Sunak and seven former prime ministers pay their respects. Left,

from top: armed forces members and veterans in Liverpool; the Royal Mile in Edinburgh; Prince William and King Charles III at the Cenotaph



PHOTOGRAPHS: KIN CHEUNG/AP; TOBY MELVILLE/AFP/GETTY; ADAM VAUGHAN/EPA; JANE BARLOW/PA WIRE



Slogans Momentum founder says some on left 'in denial' over impact of chants on Jews

Ben Quinn

Political correspondent

A key figure behind Jeremy Corbyn's rise to become Labour leader has said some on Britain's left are "in denial" about the impact of certain pro-Palestinian slogans on Jewish people.

Jon Lansman, the founder of the grassroots movement Momentum, said he and others had come to feel alienated by Britain's main pro-Palestinian campaign and revealed he had recently joined the Jewish Labour Movement, the party's oldest Jewish affiliate and one that was highly critical of Corbyn.

Lansman also challenged Keir Starmer to sign a new joint letter from a range of Jewish and Arab social justice groups and others calling for "a stable ceasefire" between Israel and Hamas, along with a commitment to negotiations, mutual recognition of rights to Palestinian self-determination, an end to Jewish settler violence and to the harming of innocent civilians.

He spoke of the impact on leftwing Jews such as himself when they had taken part in protests by the Palestine Solidarity Campaign (PSC) and heard the chant: "From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free." The phrase - regarded by some as a legitimate expression of support for Palestinian statehood but by others as advocating the eradication of Israel - has increasingly been questioned since the Hamas atrocities of 7 October.

"Most people who go on PSC marches are people who genuinely want to express solidarity with the Palestinian people and I have no problem with that," he said.

"But in the past - the last time I was on one was 2015 or 2016 - I found it uncomfortable to hear the 'from the river to the sea Palestine will be free' chant. Where does it leave Israeli people? Can there not be scope for a message that has the sentiment 'from

'Can there not be the message: from the river to the sea Palestinians and Israelis shall be free?'

Jon Lansman

Momentum founder



the river to the sea Palestinians and Israelis shall be free and equal'?"

He said it was also "unhelpful" that some in the leadership of the PSC, which was behind Saturday's march through central London, appeared only to favour of a one-state solution.

Lansman spoke to the Guardian at a time when many leftwingers from a Jewish background have challenged what they saw as shortcomings in the reaction of erstwhile comrades on the left to the Hamas attacks.

After the atrocities, dozens of left-of-centre Israeli academics published an open letter criticising political allies abroad for their "inadequate response" to the attacks.

Lansman, 66, was also critical of the way in which Jews have come to be characterised by the left. "One of the problems is that many on the left insufficiently differentiate between Jews. They seem to categorise them as Zionists or anti-Zionists," he said.

"In fact, British Jews have a wide range of views and very many who the left might see as Zionists are critical of illegal settlements, the occupation, of the Israeli government and even of the conduct of the present war."

David Lammy challenges Tories over war crimes investigation

Patrick Wintour

The government is being challenged over whether it will join Labour in supporting the international criminal court inquiry into potential war crimes committed by Israel, with the shadow foreign secretary, David Lammy, calling for all parties to uphold international law.

The ICC prosecutor, Karim Khan, has insisted he has jurisdiction, but under the premiership of Boris Johnson the government said the ICC had no legal right to interfere.

Both the UK and the US intervened

against the ICC becoming involved in Israel in 2021 when, after five years of preliminary inquiry, judges confirmed that Palestine's status as an occupied territory rather than a sovereign country did not preclude an ICC investigation.

In a letter to the Conservative Friends of Israel in April 2021, Johnson reassured pro-Israeli MPs that the government opposed an ICC investigation into alleged war crimes.

At the same time the Trump administration in the US also rejected ICC involvement, insisting "Palestinians do not qualify as a sovereign state and therefore, are not qualified to obtain membership as a state in, participate as a state in, or delegate jurisdiction to the ICC".

The Conservatives have not subsequently said they no longer support the legal analysis set out by Johnson.

Lammy said last night that "all parties must uphold international law".

Israel urged to exercise restraint as Gaza hospitals are forced to close doors

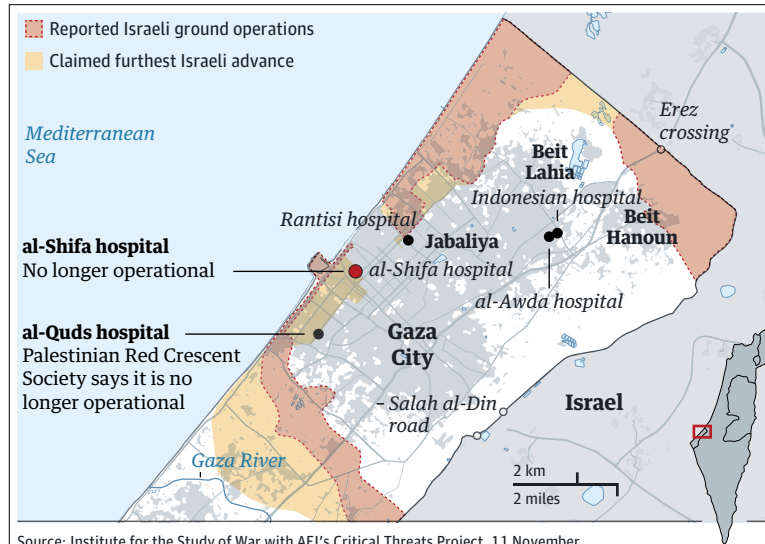
Jason Burke
Jerusalem

Two hospitals in northern Gaza closed to new patients yesterday amid Israeli airstrikes and heavy fighting around both facilities, as medical staff were left without oxygen, medical supplies or fuel to power incubators.

Intense clashes were taking place around Gaza's biggest hospital, al-Shifa, and another major facility, al-Quds, as Israel pressed ahead with its offensive against Hamas.

Last night the World Health Organization said it had contacted al-Shifa after three days without electricity, water and functioning internet, but that it was "not functioning as a hospital any more".

The WHO director general, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, tweeted: "The constant gunfire and bombings in the area have exacerbated the already critical circumstances. Tragically, the number of patient fatalities has increased significantly. The world cannot stand silent while hospitals ... are transformed into scenes of death, devastation, and despair."



Source: Institute for the Study of War with AEI's Critical Threats Project. 11 November

Israeli forces appeared close to reaching many of their objectives in Gaza, sweeping across the northern sector, seen as the stronghold of Hamas, though its leaders seemed to have escaped the massive military effort so far.

International pressure is mounting for Israel to employ "maximum

restraint". António Guterres, the secretary general of the UN, said Hamas's attacks on Israel, in which 1,200 people, mostly civilians, were killed, did not justify the collective punishment of Palestinians. "You cannot use the horrific things that Hamas did as a reason for collective punishment of the Palestinian people," he told CNN.

Josep Borrell, the EU's top diplomat, called for immediate pauses in the fighting to enable the evacuation of hospital patients who require urgent medical care. "These hostilities are severely impacting hospitals and taking a horrific toll on civilians and medical staff," Borrell said.

"Hospitals must ... be supplied immediately with the most urgent medical supplies, and patients that require urgent medical care need to be evacuated safely. In this context, we urge Israel to exercise maximum restraint to ensure the protection of civilians."

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said a ceasefire or "long pause" would not be right. "That would mean ultimately that Israel leaves Hamas the possibility of recovering and obtaining new missiles," he added, calling instead for "humanitarian pauses".

Israel has said doctors, patients and thousands of evacuees who have taken refuge at hospitals in northern Gaza must leave through "humanitarian corridors" so it can tackle Hamas gunmen who, it says, have placed command centres under and around the hospitals. Hamas denies using medical facilities in this way.

Hospital staff say patients could die if they are moved and Palestinian officials say Israeli gunfire makes it dangerous for others to leave.

Officials from the Gaza health ministry said on Friday that 11,078 people had been killed in air and artillery strikes, around 40% of them children, and that 13 Palestinians were killed yesterday in an Israeli strike on a house in Khan Younis in southern Gaza, inside the area to which Israel's military has been directing Palestinians to evacuate.

Israel has cut most supplies of electricity, fuel, water and food to Gaza, causing acute suffering to the population of 2.3 million. Many are now crammed into makeshift shelters without food, clean water or treatment for chronic medical conditions.

In some shelters, poor hygienic conditions are leading to outbreaks of infectious diseases. A spokesperson for the Israel Defence Forces said Israel was trying to get more humanitarian assistance into Gaza, but only a fraction of the aid that usually enters Gaza has reached the needy.

There remains overwhelming support for the war among Israelis, but the issue of how to free hostages held by Hamas is more divisive. Yesterday, Benjamin Netanyahu, the prime minister, hinted at a deal to free the more than 240 hostages but declined to provide details.

In a televised address on Saturday, Netanyahu pledged once again to bring the hostages home and also threatened Hezbollah, the Islamist militia based in southern Lebanon. As he spoke, thousands joined a rally outside the Tel Aviv museum square, which has been informally renamed "hostages square", to support families of the hostages.

The complex balancing of conflicting threats and objectives - to keep Hezbollah out of the war, "crush" Hamas and release the hostages - is placing immense strain on Israel's resources. More than 300,000 reservists remain mobilised, and the IDF said 46 servicemen and women had been killed since its ground operations in Gaza began.



Al-Shifa No power, no water and little hope amid fears for newborns

Analysis

Battle for beleaguered medical facility is fraught with diplomatic risk

Establishing control over al-Shifa hospital is a key Israeli objective for both military and political reasons. The sprawling complex dominates the centre of Gaza City, where Hamas has much of its administrative infrastructure, and is close to the main north-south coast road.

Destroying the ability of Hamas to govern Gaza is one of the stated aims of the Israeli offensive.

"In this war we have to dismantle the elements of Hamas that will prevent Hamas from becoming a military threat again or a government again," said Prof Kobi Michael of the Institute for National Security Studies in Tel Aviv. "We cannot deal with the ideology by bombing or shooting. This requires different means."

As crucial as Israel feels the operation is, it is also fraught with diplomatic risk. The United States had no wish to see "innocent civilians" caught up in fighting in Gaza's healthcare facilities, a senior US official said yesterday.

"The United States does not want to see firefights in hospitals where innocent people, patients receiving medical care, are caught in the crossfire and we've had active consultations with the Israel Defence Forces on this," the

White House's national security adviser, Jake Sullivan, told CBS News.

Israeli officials have repeatedly claimed the headquarters of Hamas is in bunkers under al-Shifa and that the militant Islamist organisation is using patients, medical staff and thousands displaced by war as "human shields". Hamas rejects the claims.

Writing in the mass market newspaper Yedioth Ahronoth, the columnist Avi Issacharoff said that, despite mounting Israeli casualties in Gaza, what began as the biggest military failure in Israel's history had become a relatively successful military campaign. But he added: "One cannot ignore the fact that before our very eyes this is turning into one of the biggest diplomatic disasters we have ever known."

Israel's prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said his country had offered fuel to the hospital, but Hamas had refused to receive it

Israeli military planners are well aware that international pressure halted Israeli offensives or counter-attacks in previous wars. There are few signs that today's government is about to make any concession to the entreaties of Israel's allies. Munir al-Boursh, an undersecretary at the Hamas-run health ministry, alleged yesterday that Israeli snipers had deployed around Shifa, firing at any movement inside the hospital compound while airstrikes had destroyed homes next door, killing three people, including a doctor.

The Israeli prime minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, said his country had offered fuel to the hospital, but Hamas had refused to receive it. The Israeli military has said there is a safe corridor for civilians to evacuate south, but people in the hospital said they were afraid to go outside.

The Hamas-run health ministry in Gaza says there are 1,500 patients in the hospital and a similar number of medical personnel. Physicians said it was impossible for everyone to leave.

Lt Col Richard Hecht, an IDF spokesman, last week said the Israeli military did not target hospitals, adding: "But if we see a Hamas terrorist, we will kill him." Jason Burke Jerusalem

Continued from page 1



'We lost a baby today; yesterday we lost two. I fear all the babies will lose their lives'

Marwan Abu Sada Surgeon

◀ *Rescuers and civilians stand amid the rubble of a building destroyed by Israeli bombardment of Khan Younis*

PHOTOGRAPH: MAHMUD HAMS/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

the transfer, but their conditions worsened over the weekend. "We lost the life of one baby today, yesterday we lost two and I am afraid that all of the babies will lose their lives," said Abu Sada.

Al-Shifa had the largest neonatal unit in Gaza, and nowhere else could care for the infants, he said, making evacuation impossible. "We no longer have oxygen, or even fuel to run a generator."

Hospitals across Gaza City are in a struggle for survival, with only one facility able to receive hundreds of wounded people arriving daily. Staff in Dar al-Shifa, the largest medical facility in the territory, were working yesterday under bombardment and without power, clean water, or food.

"Shifa is besieged: No one can get out or enter," said Abu Sada. "It is dangerous for us, even the medical staff, to look out the window. We are so afraid of the shooting."

Amid fears of sniper fire, staff have moved all 600 remaining patients from the windows and into corridors inside the complex. The complex in the west of Gaza City suffered six strikes over the past two days as Israeli tanks and snipers closed in, Abu Sada said, including one on an extension to the intensive care unit yesterday.

In the West Bank town of Ramallah, the Palestinian health minister, Mai al-Kaila, said 12

patients inside al-Shifa had died in the past two days. A drone was targeting people in the compound, she said, and staff had been forced to leave at least 100 decomposing bodies in the hospital grounds. They had witnessed stray dogs ripping at the bodies.

Ambulances were unable to bring the wounded to the hospital or take patients to other facilities, said Abu Sada, though one person who was shot in the surrounding neighbourhood managed to flee into the grounds. Another was shot in the chest when he looked out the window and died instantly.

"It is a horrifying scene for the staff; we are so afraid. But we must stay here; we are ethically obliged to treat patients and we cannot leave with them still inside. Even if we could, where would we go?"

Israeli officials have repeatedly demanded that Palestinians flee to the south of the Gaza Strip, including evacuating hospitals where thousands are sheltering. Staff say moving critical patients would be deadly. The UN estimates that 1.5 million people are displaced within the Gaza Strip - almost 70% of its population.

Al-Kaila said Israeli demands to evacuate hospitals meant the wounded would be left to fend for themselves on the street. "This is not an evacuation but an expulsion at gunpoint."

▶ *Wounded Palestinians at a hospital in Khan Younis, Gaza. Below: medical workers treating a Palestinian by flashlight as power is cut at the Indonesian hospital in northern Gaza*

PHOTOGRAPHS: FATIMA SHBAIR/AP, ANAS AL-SHAREEF/REUTERS



The Israel Defence Forces (IDF) have repeatedly claimed that Hamas operates from bunkers underneath al-Shifa. This is denied by Hamas and hospital staff.

Col Moshe Tetro, who heads the IDF Gaza coordination and liaison unit, said: "There is no shooting at the hospital and there is no siege," in reference to al-Shifa. "The east side of the hospital remains open. Additionally, we [the IDF] can coordinate [with] anyone who wants to leave safely."

The Red Cross said: "The ICRC urgently calls for the immediate protection of all civilians, including humanitarian workers and medical personnel. This protection is not only a legal obligation but a moral imperative to preserve human life."

At least 11,100 people are believed to have been killed in Israeli bombardments of the Gaza Strip since 7 October, when Hamas attacked Israeli towns and kibbutzim, killing an estimated 1,200 people. On Saturday night, health officials in the territory said they were unable to update the daily death toll owing to the attacks on medical infrastructure.

Early yesterday, the World Health Organization said it had lost communication with its contacts inside al-Shifa hospital. "The last reports said that the hospital was surrounded by tanks," they said. "Staff reported a lack of clean water and risk of the last remaining critical functions, including ICUs, ventilators and incubators, soon shutting down due to lack of fuel, putting the lives of patients at immediate risk."

"The WHO has grave concerns for the safety of the health workers, hundreds of sick and injured patients, including babies on life support and displaced people who remain inside the hospital. The number of inpatients is reportedly almost double its capacity."

Al-Shifa hospital ran out of clean water after storage tanks on the roof were struck in the bombardments, which also hit oxygen supplies in the complex according to staff and al-Kaila, who said blood supplies had spoiled owing to the lack of power. People in the surrounding area had died after being unable to access the hospital for treatment.

Abu Sada said staff had been surviving on dates as food supplies dwindled. An estimated 15,000 people were sheltering in al-Shifa as of Saturday morning. Patients and staff risked dehydration because of the lack of drinking water.

In the Al-Ahli Arab hospital on the eastern side of the city, the only facility able to receive patients, Dr Fadel Naim said they had run out of blood supplies. "The situation is catastrophic. We have a limited team. Our colleagues are in al-Shifa hospital and they can't come to help us. At the same time, we are receiving hundreds of injured people as well as those with chronic diseases like diabetes or hypertension, diarrhoea and dehydration. We operate like a field hospital, conducting the emergency and minimum possible intervention to save lives and stop bleeding. We do only life-saving surgeries."



Return to the kibbutz 'This was Mum's little heaven ... Her absence is loud'

Emine Sinmaz
Nir Oz

It's a ghost town," said Noam Sagi as he returned to Nir Oz kibbutz for the first time since his mother, Ada, 75, was abducted by Hamas gunmen. He had arrived from London to campaign for the release of the 240 hostages snatched from their homes on 7 October. He also wanted to make sense of what happened to Ada, who last texted her family at 9.24am on what is known in Israel as Black Saturday.

Sagi, 53, was trying to piece together the horrifying clues he has uncovered in her home, bloodied, pockmarked with bullet holes and littered with spent casings.

"This was Mum's little heaven," he said, outside a lush patio now blighted by blood. "I expect Mum to come with a hug and apple cake and coffee and loads of kisses. But what you see is just devastation and she's not here. Her absence is really,

really loud. The birds continue, it's still green, but there is a void."

Inside, he stepped over shattered glass and broken furniture. A trail of blood leads from the safe room to the front door. "When I see the bloodstains and the signs of struggle it brings the story alive in my head. I see her, I feel her pain, I feel her terror," he said.

Ada, a retired Arabic teacher, had lived at the house for 54 years. It was looted after her abduction and Sagi, his wife, Michal Sagi, 53, and brother-in-law Sharon Sela, 47, were trying to find her treasured possessions among the chaos.

He entered a bedroom where Ada's six grandchildren often stay. "This is not just blood," Sagi said, pointing to thicker drops underneath a picture of a bird that his son painted. In another bedroom, a drawing by Ada's youngest grandchild had two bullet holes in it.

At the safe room - the scene of Ada's abduction - was a pool of blood by the entrance and smears on the door handle.

"We didn't find bullet holes in the safe room, but something happened here," said Sela. "I don't know if it's from a gun or a knife. We did find a bullet casing." He said he cannot understand why the gunmen would harm Ada when they had already breached the safe room, which did not lock.

Sagi knew before he came here that the Israel Defence Forces had found blood in the house, but not the extent. "The first thing that comes to my mind is the extent of her injuries and what the situation is now. My mum is very, very strong mentally. She's very positive. But I'm worried about her physical health. She has a lung condition and this is her lifesaver," he said, picking up Ada's inhaler from a small basket.

Sagi was trying to remain positive. "I feel, in a weird way, lucky because we have something to see and to understand. And we know that Mum is kidnapped and not dead. There are a lot of places that have been burned to the ground and you can't even bury

anyone because they're just teeth and that's it," he said.

Walking around the kibbutz, he pointed out some of the devastation: a torched house where a woman with motor neurone disease and her carers were terrorised; an empty burned-out bird cage; a blackened children's table and chair set.

Sagi, a psychotherapist, grew up on the kibbutz 2 miles from the Gaza border, before moving to London 22 years ago. His childhood memories of playing football and learning to ride a bike here are now tarnished. A quarter of the kibbutz's 400 residents were abducted or murdered. The IDF did not arrive for 8.5 hours, by which time the terrorists had left. Many of the homes here now looked more like mangled half-structures with their roofs caved in and insides torched.

"What happened is that they drilled into the gas pipes and then turned them in so the gas goes into the house," Sagi said, as he entered one such home. "People either



▲ Top, Michal Sagi, Noam's wife, at Ada Sagi's home which was looted by Hamas after her abduction. Above, a poster of Ada in the kibbutz



come out and die, or they just then throw a match in and kill them.”

He entered the burned-out home of Yocheved Lifshitz, 85, one of the four hostages who has been released, and her husband, Oded, 83, who remains captive. “They were peace activists,” Sagi said. “Sharon’s dad had medals from the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization] for the stuff they did for Palestinians. So [Hamas] took him from a place where he had plaques from Yasser Arafat. They took the best chance for peace.”

Walking along the border fence used as an escape route by Hamas, Sagi pointed to a breach: “You can see how people were taken through the gate here across the border; this is how they took them on mobility scooters, or in their own vehicles, or on motorbikes.”

Next was the kibbutz’s dining room, which had been sprayed by bullets and burned. Inside, Sagi’s friend, Natalie Roitman, whose mother, Ofelia, is being held hostage, has created an art installation. “In shock and horror and deep sorrow we announce the murder of our beloved community members in Nir Oz on the Black Saturday of 7 October 2023,” said a sign surrounded by names of the dead. Recently, two names had been added after a father and a son who were presumed to have been kidnapped were identified as dead by their teeth, Sagi said. Inside the

▲ A home at the Nir Oz kibbutz destroyed by Hamas on 7 October. A quarter of the kibbutz’s residents were killed or abducted by militants. Above left, Noam Sagi

next to blood stains at the home of his mother, who was abducted. Below, bodycam footage taken by a Hamas militant

PHOTOGRAPHS: QUIQUE KIERSZENBAUM/ THE GUARDIAN; IDF/AP

dining hall, posters of the dead and missing were laid out on tables. But each was more than just a picture for Sagi. He pointed out his maths teacher, a childhood friend and a mentor on one table alone.

Sagi was in Israel for three days for an “important” meeting. He didn’t want to elaborate, but said: “I feel very much that I can’t sit and wait for the government to do something. It’s on me. I’m trying to meet as many people as I can who can make a difference. I’m trying to do things that will keep the hostages as the main priority.”

Back at Ada’s house, Sagi stressed that residents of the kibbutz dreamed of peace. He became emotional for the first time: “I can talk to you like a tour guide, but it is too much. It’s so much loss in one place and they deserve only good.

“They stand for everything that is good - not only in this region, not only in Israel, but in the universe.”

Hezbollah Attacks escalate on Lebanon border as 18 Israelis injured in militia missile strike

Patrick Wintour
Diplomatic editor

Eighteen Israelis were injured yesterday, one critically, as the Hezbollah militia fired anti-tank missiles from southern Lebanon in a further sign the skirmishing along the border is escalating.

Several vehicles near the northern community of Dovev were hit in the missile attack, with the victims including Israel Electric Corporation workers who were repairing power lines that had been damaged by previous strikes from Lebanon.

Hezbollah sources had claimed they were soldiers, an assertion denied by the Israel Defence Forces (IDF). The Magen David Adom emergency service said one of the civilians injured in the attack was in a critical condition.

The chief Israeli military spokesperson, R Adm Daniel Hagari, said the IDF was “at a very high state of readiness in the north,” and warned that “Lebanon’s citizens will bear the cost of this recklessness”.

In a day of sporadic missile and drone exchanges, Israel also targeted two Hezbollah units that had launched mortars from Lebanon at areas near the communities of Menara and Yir’on. In the Menara incident, the IDF said seven soldiers were wounded.

Hezbollah-linked media reported that Israeli artillery targeted the

town of Labbounneh, in southern Lebanon, and that sirens sounded at the Naqoura headquarters of the UN interim force in Lebanon (Unifil).

The rightwing Israeli newspaper Maariv reported yesterday that the IDF was preparing to deal a “strong blow” to Iran-backed Hezbollah in response to the escalation of its attacks. The IDF said Israeli gunfire had killed at least 70 Hezbollah fighters since the start of hostilities.

An IDF spokesperson said later that a fighter jet and other aircraft had attacked several Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, including “a military compound containing a warehouse of weapons and military infrastructure”.

On Saturday, Hezbollah’s leader, Hassan Nasrallah, said his group was using new weapons including attack drones “for the first time in the history of the resistance” in Lebanon.

Nasrallah’s speech prompted a warning from the Israeli defence minister, Yoav Gallant, who said



▲ Israel’s defence minister, Yoav Gallant, visits the northern border

Lebanese citizens would “pay the price”, adding: “What we’re doing in Gaza, we can also do in Beirut.”

The caretaker Lebanese prime minister, Najib Mikati, praised Hezbollah for its “patriotism” and said he had drawn up a three-month contingency plan in the event of a full war breaking out involving Lebanon.

He added: “Caution is still being exercised and we hope that the contacts will lead to a cessation of Israeli attacks in the south of the country.”

Mikati said: “Hezbollah behaves very patriotically and I trust the rationality of this movement. What matters most to me is keeping Lebanon far from war. We have always sought stability.”

However, an Israeli military spokesperson said: “At a time the Lebanese premier has said that he is reassured over the rationality of Hezbollah’s actions, the saboteurs of the terrorist party fired anti-tank shells at Israeli civilians from the electricity company, wounding several of them.

“This is a terrorist, irrational attack that targeted civilians and is risking Lebanon as a state.”

In Iraq, rockets were fired at a military base on the outskirts of Baghdad used by members of the pro-Iran Popular Mobilisation Forces.

It was unclear who launched the attack, but there was speculation it came as retaliation by pro-Iran factions on US troops in Iraq.

In Syria, flights were diverted to Latakia international airport after the latest Israeli airstrikes hit airports in Damascus and Aleppo.

Sources told Asharq News that the government was likely to have completed repairing the two airports but did not want to resume flights in case Israel struck them again.

France March against antisemitism stirs bitter political rows

Jon Henley
Paris

More than 100,000 people, including senior politicians, marched in Paris against antisemitism yesterday amid a dramatic surge in anti-Jewish incidents across France and bitter political rows over whether - and how - to take part.

“Our order of the day today is ... the total fight against antisemitism, which is the opposite of the values of the republic,” said Gérard Larcher, the French senate speaker and a co-organiser of the largely peaceful demonstration.

His counterpart in the lower house and the march’s co-organiser, Yaël Braun-Pivet, said: “In France, we are able to unite around our common base, our history and our future.”

The prime minister, Élisabeth Borne, whose Jewish father survived Auschwitz but took his life when she was 11, said at the head of

the procession that when it came to antisemitism, the nation “must let nothing pass”.

More than 3,000 police were deployed along the route of what interior minister Gérald Darmanin called a “great civic march”, that was marred only by minor scuffles as a leftwing Jewish group tried to stop far-right party leaders joining.

Tensions have been mounting in France, home to Europe’s largest Jewish and Muslim communities, since the 7 October Hamas attack on Israel.

Nearly 1,250 antisemitic acts have been recorded since the start of the conflict - nearly three times as many as in all of 2022 - and more than 70 demonstrations against antisemitism took place around the country yesterday.

Emmanuel Macron, the French president, did not take part but said earlier he would be there “in my heart and in my thoughts”, adding that there could be “no tolerance for the intolerable” and France must



▲ Prime minister Élisabeth Borne, whose father survived Auschwitz

be “united behind its values, its universalism”.

In a letter published in Le Parisien newspaper, Macron condemned the “unbearable resurgence of unbridled antisemitism” in France. “A France where our Jewish citizens are afraid is not France,” he said.

Two previous presidents, François Hollande and Nicolas Sarkozy, and several former prime ministers joined the Paris march, as well as several well-known figures such as the former footballer Lilian Thuram.

Family members of some of the 40 French citizens killed in the attack on 7 October, and of those missing or held hostage, also took part.

The event divided France’s political class, with the attendance of the far-right National Rally (RN), whose recent support for Israel has been widely seen as an opportunistic attempt to bury its antisemitic past, drawing widespread criticism.

The party’s leader, Marine Le Pen, said the march should also mark resistance to “Islamic fundamentalism”, one of her party’s key talking points. But the French government’s spokesperson, Olivier Véran, called the RN’s attendance “indecent”.

The Communist party leader, Fabien Roussel, refused to march alongside the MPs of the anti-immigrant party, saying it had been founded by people who were “repeatedly condemned for antisemitic remarks” who “collaborated” with Nazi Germany.

Inside 'One of my father's final wishes' Irish woman to return family's African objects Page 21 →



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National

Rwanda court ruling What might result mean for Tories?

Peter Walker

Deputy political editor

Wednesday marks a potentially pivotal moment in the government's fortunes when the supreme court rules whether its plan to deport asylum seekers to Rwanda is lawful.

The decision could have significant implications not just for immigration and asylum policy, but also for the future direction of Rishi Sunak's government, and the Conservative party more widely. Here is what could follow from a government win or loss:

Government wins the case

While only the five law lords hearing the case will know for sure before their decision is made public at 10am on Wednesday, there is speculation that the relatively rapid process - a ruling was seen as more likely in December - could signal rejection of the government's arguments, endorsing the court of appeal's decision in June. Paradoxically, a loss is seen by some inside No 10 as not just likely but in some ways welcome.

If the highest court in the land gives the green light to the deportation scheme, Sunak and Suella Braverman will have to enact a policy that many critics viewed as largely performative and unlikely to achieve its one stated aim: to significantly reduce the number of people arriving unofficially in the UK on small boats.

Nearly 46,000 people made this Channel trip last year, and while numbers are down so far in 2023, they remain way above the number that could be flown to Rwanda.

Another risk for Sunak and Braverman, his - for now at least - home secretary is that while the policy is popular with some voters, images of tearful deportees, plus potential future stories of mistreatment in Rwanda or people embarking on the same journey to the UK again, might dent this.

It would be politically damaging for the government to see one of its flagship policies very obviously fail, something that could see hard right-leaning voters incline to the even more drastic migration ideas of Reform UK, while Conservatives on the other flank of the party get tempted by the Liberal Democrats.

All this is not necessarily to say that ministers want to lose: the consequences of the policy being struck down could be even

more destabilising for the Tories than a victory.

Government loses the case

The political chronology of the supreme court ruling the Rwanda policy illegal is not hard to predict. Sunak, and particularly Braverman, would lament the demise of a plan they could still argue would have done the trick, without having to prove it.

You could expect a Conservative-friendly barrage of condemnation from right-leaning media and commentators about interventionist judges, perhaps even with Lords Reed, Hodge, Lloyd-Jones, Briggs and Sales branded enemies of the people.

After that, matters would become more tricky. With stopping small boat crossings being one of the self-declared five pledges, Sunak would need to find other means, not least better cooperation with the French and EU more widely, not necessarily home turf for Braverman and the immigration minister, Robert Jenrick.

One recent success for the government has been a sharp drop in the numbers of Albanian nationals crossing the Channel, coinciding with efforts to swiftly return many people to what the Home Office deems a safe country.

Ministers have already set out plans to add India and Georgia to the list of safe countries, with reports that Turkey and Egypt could also be considered - although officials discount the idea that Jenrick has proposed Iraq as well.

For those on the right of the Conservatives, all this might be seen as tinkering, prompting renewed calls for Sunak to consider quitting the European convention on human rights (ECHR).

According to the Mail on Sunday, Braverman would want to put this at the centre of the next election, running a "quit the ECHR" campaign. Other reports suggest she might resign from government to push this goal.

Such a move would be far from risk-free for Sunak. While resisting Braverman's reported plan would bring anger from the Tory right, agreeing to it could split the party altogether, with centrist MPs fiercely resistant to the notion.

As ever with the prospects for a prime minister who arrived in No 10 both unelected and 12 years into Conservative rule, the best option of all would be the one he cannot have: to not start from here.



▲ Families are helped ashore at Dungeness after a Channel rescue

'Embrace of the Angel'

Professor hunts for the roots of a secret garden

Mark Brown
North of England correspondent

In a scrubby copse of alder trees near one of north-east England's busiest roads and in the shadow of one its most famous landmarks, the Angel of the North, is a spontaneous, secret garden of memories. An academic is on a mission to find out why.

"I'm interested in how objects and places help people, in terms of grief," says Prof Anne Whitehead. "What significance do the objects here have? What is it about this site that has drawn them to leave things here? Did they come here with the person they are remembering? Is it because of the Angel? Is it because they feel the Angel represents the region?"

Whitehead is speaking to the Guardian on a chilly November

morning at Antony Gormley's 25-year-old statue in Gateshead. The unofficial memorial area has developed over many years but most people would not have a clue it is there.

On one side there is the constant thrum of vehicle noise from the A1, just metres away. On the other, the Angel towers above you.

You can walk through the trees and see photographs, folded and unfolded notes, straggles of ribbon, baubles, garlands, plastic butterflies, artificial flowers, weather-ravaged stuffed toys,

T'm interested in how objects and places help people in grief

Prof Anne Whitehead
Newcastle University



◀ **Prof Anne Whitehead** at the secret garden between the A1 and the Angel of the North in Gateshead, Tyne and Wear

▲ **Messages and objects** are strung from tree branches at the memorial site

PHOTOGRAPHS: RICHARD SAKER/ THE GUARDIAN

empty bottles of a loved one's favourite tippie, a child's football shirt - each of them their own memory and story.

Whitehead, professor of modern and contemporary literature at Newcastle University, lives locally and started taking walks to the Angel during lockdown. It was then she spotted the memorials and became fascinated and intrigued.

"It is quite an unusual memorial in that it does seem to be a response to the Angel, it is not marking the site where something happened," she says. "It does have the feel of a roadside memorial because it is, obviously, between two roads and you can hear the traffic all of the time. But it's not marking an accident, each person is marking their own personal thing ... there is a communal aspect to it".

The Angel of the North, with its 54m (175ft) wingspan, is one of the world's best known examples of contemporary public art.

It is also a memorial in that it sits on what was once a pit and so reminds us of the coalminers who worked there, in the dark, for 200 years. Gormley has said this is one of three functions of the Angel. The second is "to grasp

hold of the future, expressing our transition from the industrial to the information age" and the last "to be a focus for our hopes and fears - a sculpture is an evolving thing".

Whitehead, who researches how we tell stories of loss and grief, wants to hear from people although she also has her own thoughts.

"I think it is people placing objects in that embrace ... it's in the shadow of the wings, in the embrace of the Angel."

If you have left an item at the site, contact anne.whitehead@ncl.ac.uk for more about the project

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Woman awarded £1m in damages over NHS vaginal mesh implant

Hannah Devlin
Science correspondent

A woman who suffered traumatic complications from a vaginal mesh implant has been awarded a record settlement of at least £1m from the NHS.

Yvette Greenway-Mansfield, 59, was given a mesh implant at Coventry's University hospital in 2009 and went on to suffer serious complications. Her medical negligence claim against the hospital trust found the surgery had been carried out prematurely and unnecessarily, and that her consent form had been doctored to include additional risks after Greenway-Mansfield had signed it.

Greenway-Mansfield said being awarded the compensation was a "huge relief", but she added that many other women who had suffered similar damage had received little or no compensation, and criticised the government's failure to establish a

financial redress agency for victims. "I'm not the only one - there are thousands of mes," Greenway-Mansfield said. "There should be a pot of money to provide damages for these women and a care plan in place as an automatic response to mesh damaged people."

"It comes down to a perception of women and women's health problems. We've all had enough of it."

Greenway-Mansfield initially visited her GP in 2009 after developing lower abdominal discomfort and increased urination frequency, causing anxiety about drinking fluids.

Her symptoms were attributed to a uterine prolapse and a consultant gynaecologist recommend a vaginal hysterectomy with the insertion of TVT-O mesh implant.

Initially the surgery appeared to have been successful, but in 2017, while on a work trip to New Zealand, she began to experience pain and bleeding. Her pain became more severe, but she was told there was not



▲ Yvette Greenway-Mansfield's form consenting to surgery was altered to add further risks after she had signed it PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW FOX/THE GUARDIAN

an obvious medical solution. In February 2020, the mesh was eventually removed following a private referral to the Spire Bristol hospital, but she now suffers from urinary and faecal incontinence and chronic pain.

The legal claim found Greenway-Mansfield's form consenting to the procedures had been altered after she had signed it. The hospital's version included a cystoscopy and extra risks, including failure, tape erosion, pain, overactive bladder and deep vein thrombosis.

The surgery was also deemed

to have been carried out before exploring other options, such as physiotherapy and bladder training.

A spokesperson for University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS trust said: "We have directly offered our sincerest apologies to Mrs Greenway-Mansfield and recognise how her life has been affected by this procedure in 2009."

"We hope the settlement will enable Mrs Greenway-Mansfield to meet her ongoing care needs and provide security for her and her family into the future."

Alert raised over high silver levels in period pants

Sarah Marsh

Some period pants sold on the high street have high silver levels, which could pose a health risk to wearers, a consumer group has warned.

Silver has antimicrobial properties, and tiny "nano" particles are typically added to fabrics to combat concerns about smell and hygiene.

However, scientists have warned of potential health effects. The US Food and Drug Administration found that nanosilver can kill lactobacillus, healthy bacteria in the vagina. Loss of these could put period pant wearers at higher risk of bacterial infections and pregnancy complications.

Which? tested a range of products and found nanosilver content varied from 0.9mg/kg to 126.7mg/kg.

Natalie Hitchins, the group's head of home products, said consumers should be "cautious buying period pants that contain silver" and called on brands to clearly label products "so shoppers can make informed decisions about what they are buying".

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National
Living hell:
Britain's rent crisis

'I don't sleep' Mould and damp putting health of Blackpool renters at risk



Josh Halliday
 North of England correspondent

Michelle Bromley is terrified she will be homeless by Christmas. For nine years she has lived in an Edwardian house near Blackpool's seafront but she's been told to leave by Friday. If she refuses, the landlord will go to court to evict her.

The four-bedroom property is where Bromley raised her son and two daughters, joined latterly by her three excitable chihuahuas. Her children now have their own babies – an 18-month-old, 17-month-old and a four-month-old – and they all lived under the same roof until two weeks ago when the daughters and grandchildren moved into temporary accommodation.

Their house once felt like a family home, Bromley says. Now it is “the house from hell”. Dark patches of damp and mould loom across the staircase, kitchen and bedrooms. The cooking area and dining room are out of bounds, covered in plastic sheets as thick dust blows in from the brickwork.

In the bedroom where two of Bromley's grandchildren slept, the mould around the windowsill is so potent that the Guardian's photographer chokes back a cough.

One of the babies spent two days in hospital last October with acute bronchiolitis and a respiratory infection – conditions known to be linked to damp and mould. That same month, Blackpool council inspectors assessed the property to be “in a state of disrepair” and found damp and mould that could cause “a serious and immediate risk to a person's health and safety”.

The landlord was given a formal improvement notice and started

▲ Edwardian housing stock built during Blackpool's heyday

PHOTOGRAPH: ANDREW COLE/ALAMY

work soon after. But a year later, repairs have stalled and the ground floor resembles a building site.

For months, the family have had to cook meals using camping stoves on the landing outside the toilet, washing up plates in the bathroom sink. “I'm mentally exhausted,” Bromley says, breaking down in tears against the din of an industrial dehumidifier in the cold, dark dining room.

The former beautician is locked in an interminable battle with her letting agent, Stephen Coles, who accuses her of persistently blocking the repair work and making life a misery for his staff – claims she denies. “I've done nothing wrong apart from asking them to fix the house. I'm not in the wrong here,” she says.

Coles served Bromley, 47, with a section 21 no-fault eviction notice on 15 September, two days after she gave an interview to the Blackpool Gazette about her situation. She described it as a “retaliatory” move, a claim denied by Coles. He said she was served a separate section 21 last March – this too came after her complaints about the property.

Bromley plans to fight the eviction order “all the way” but the threat of homelessness is enough to keep her awake at night. “I don't

'I'm in agony. I've felt like ending my life because I feel I can't help my kids'

Michelle Bromley
 Tenant facing eviction

sleep. I'm in absolute agony. In the evening I could cry in bed. I've felt like ending my life because I feel I can't help my kids,” she says.

Bromley's family are at the sharp end of a housing emergency that experts say is leaving hundreds of thousands of people trapped in squalid or dangerous private rented homes with little protection in law.

Faced with the threat of eviction or – more recently – a “revenge rent hike”, tenants are choosing to live with serious problems such as cold, damp and mould lest they be forced out when they complain. Their fears appear to be justified: landlords took more no-fault eviction notices to court this year than at any time since 2017.

Dr Andy Knox, a GP who leads on population health for the NHS in Lancashire and South Cumbria, said having to put up with sodden homes was having a profound effect on people's health, especially children – and was getting worse: “People are stuck between a rock and a hard place. This is becoming a really major health issue for us as a nation and we need legislation that is going to properly deal with it.”

Blackpool, long known as England's favourite seaside resort, has become a hotspot for some of the country's most hazardous rental properties. Every one of the town's 18,000 private rented homes has a damp and mould problem, according to official figures published in September. One in four were so badly affected they were classed as category 1, a serious threat to health and safety.

Proactive inspections by Blackpool council found that 70% of private rented housing in its most densely populated areas have a category 1 health hazard, a large proportion being damp and mould. Even for a council commendably willing to lift the lid on its deep-rooted housing and social problems, the results were a shock.

The causes of Blackpool's mould crisis go back a century or more. The tourism boom of the early 20th century led to an explosion of housebuilding, with Edwardians erecting homes in the resort.

The resort's golden era lasted longer than the nerve-jangling wait at the top of the Big Dipper rollercoaster (100 years old this year), but it came plummeting down with the advent of cheap foreign holidays in the 1990s. Former guesthouses were turned into homes of multiple occupation (HMOs), where landlords now make a profit of up to 20% (four times the average UK rental yield).

A room in a 21-bed former



▼ Michelle Bromley has rented her Blackpool home for nine years but now faces eviction PHOTOGRAPHS: CHRISTOPHER THOMOND/THE GUARDIAN



guesthouse in the centre of Blackpool costs £350 a month to anyone willing to share five bathrooms with the other tenants. That equates to a third of the average UK rent outside London.

Blackpool is also the victim of geography. It is one of the wettest sea-level places in Britain, buffeted by the unforgiving Irish Sea in the rainiest region of England. The council, faced with this formidable challenge, has waged war on bad landlords, taking more to court for renting out damp and mouldy properties in recent years than any other local authority in England.

It is, however, a low bar: only 14 of 306 English councils took any landlords to court in the year to March 2022, despite thousands of complaints, according to government figures.

Poor housing's effect on health has been recognised for years but has not yet triggered a joined-up national effort to tackle it, despite rising up the agenda with the Covid pandemic and the inquest into the mould-linked death of two-year-old Awaab Ishak, who lived 50 miles away in Rochdale.

Council leaders in some parts of England, including Blackpool, say they are doing what they can but are hampered by local authority budget cuts and record pressures on the NHS. About 60% of the 306 English councils which responded to a government review this year said a lack of resources was the biggest barrier to tackling rogue landlords.

"Damp and mould has been an issue for a number of years and it is definitely getting worse," said Knox, who focuses on health inequalities for the NHS. "If we look at these communities where the housing is the worst ... they have even higher admissions than you would expect for the level of disadvantage those communities are living with."

Bromley's smart terrace property was built in the early 1900s. Her family moved in in 2013, renting initially with the help of the council. The house and its two neighbours had been a retirement home, called the Laurels, before it was bought in 2009 by a local businessman, Simon Timothy Billington, and converted into three separate properties to rent out.

Billington said Bromley's home had been "completely refurbished before she moved in" and that he had spent more than half of the tenant's rent on repairs. He accused her of "creating" problems with the letting agents and tradespeople and acting aggressively toward them, which she denies.

He said repair works were due to resume this week, adding: "As an owner I am keen to keep my tenants happy and always agree to any work the property management companies have requested."

The Guardian spoke to tenants at four other rental properties owned by Billington and found three who had raised concerns about damp and mould. One mother of two said she had complained to Coles Property Management, but the



▲ Cooking stoves outside Bromley's toilet - the kitchen is out of bounds

letting agent was "a nightmare" to contact and had tried to blame the moisture on the tumble dryer.

The thought of her son, four, and daughter, six, getting ill was "one of my worst fears," she said: "They're so young and so vulnerable to getting certain illnesses. My health's not great as it is but I'm not in the position to move. It's so hard to find somewhere round here near their school and within our price range. We're stuck in a rut."

A short walk away, a 76-year-old widow gestured to the layer of thick black mould covering her bathroom wall. Her husband died from chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and her son, who lives with her, has asthma, but she is reluctant to complain in case her £540-a-month rent is increased or she is evicted. "Someone told me to do an improvement notice but I thought, well, I don't want to do that just in case I get evicted," she said. "Rents have gone up. Mine hasn't but I don't want it to. I would be struggling."

The Guardian is not naming the two tenants because they fear being evicted. Billington said he was not aware of their concerns. Coles, the letting agent, said that every report on its portfolio had been "investigated and works scheduled where required". He added: "Some tenants don't think they can report issues because they may be in arrears or fear a rent increase etc, but this isn't the case. We haven't raised rents in two years for any of the existing tenants even with the mortgage rates nearly doubling, but we can't do works if repairs [are] not requested."

Bromley is facing a bleak winter. She has been looking for somewhere else to live for over a year, fearing her days in her current home are numbered. But she is one of more than 6,400 households on Blackpool council's bulging housing waiting list, one of the lengthiest in England and which has grown from 5,200 in 2017.

Bromley says she cannot afford to put her possessions in storage, and it is doubtful any temporary accommodation found by the council will allow her to keep her chihuahuas. The house where three generations lived together until weeks ago will soon be cast adrift. She stares blankly at the iPad she is using to search for a new home: "I don't know where I'm going to go. There is literally nowhere."

Damp and mould What are the dangers?

How common is damp?

Across the UK about 3% of flats and homes are classified as having damp. This official figure counts only cases deemed severe enough to sway a surveyor's assessment. Far more homes are affected in practice. In white British households, prevalence of damp sits at about the national average. In some black and Asian households it is two to three times higher. Damp is five times more common in private rentals than in owner-occupied homes.

What causes damp?

The most common cause is condensation, visible as water droplets on windows or walls. It forms when moisture in the air from showers and baths, kettles and pans, and damp clothes hung over radiators condenses on colder surfaces. There is also rising damp, where groundwater is drawn up into walls, and penetrating damp, where water enters through the building's fabric.

Why is damp a problem?

Damp affects mental and physical health. Doctors see more depression and anxiety in people living in cold and damp homes, and the distress can impair immunity, hormone function and the cardiovascular system. Stress can also drive more smoking, eating and alcohol consumption. Damp also affects building materials and furnishings, driving chemical reactions and deterioration that release potentially harmful chemicals into the air.

What is mould?

Mould is a form of fungus that divides into about a million different species. Humans come into routine contact with about 200 of them, though fewer than 50 tend to show up in homes, schools and other indoor spaces.

How harmful is mould?

Moulds release tiny spores that are carried in the air and can trigger allergic reactions in about 5% of the population. Spores can cause itchy eyes and eczema and respiratory conditions. The most serious effects can range from a stuffy nose, coughs and wheezes to life-threatening asthma attacks and infections.

How do you prevent mould?

Damp is easier and cheaper to deal with the sooner it is acted on. Persistent leaks and water damage are likely to need professional repairs, with affected material ripped out and replaced, but finding the source of the water is a good place to start. A simple fix to a leaky pipe or damaged gutter may be all it needs. Simple measures can make a huge difference, such as cooking with pan lids on, not drying clothes on radiators, and putting cold water in the bath before adding hot to reduce the amount of steam produced.

Ian Sample

Burned-out doctors are leaving NHS - regulator

Mabel Banfield-Nwachi

A growing number of doctors plan to quit due to burnout and dissatisfaction, with fears the government's long-term strategy for the NHS has come too late, the General Medical Council has said.

The GMC's annual report on the medical workforce said the benefits of measures announced by the government in the NHS long-term workforce plan in June, such as the ambition to create more medical school places, "will only start to be seen a decade from now".

The report found the number of licensed doctors increased in 2022, with 23,838 joining and 11,319 leaving. However, vacancy rates remained high and the rate of doctors quitting returned to pre-pandemic levels, at 4%.

The regulator said there were "worrying signs" that a growing number planned to leave the profession because of dissatisfaction and a high risk of burnout, and that there was a limited opportunity to address the

current problems. Growth in the profession was driven by international graduates, who made up 52% of new joiners, while 63% of new starters trained overseas.

Charlie Massey, the chief executive of the GMC, said doctors trained overseas brought a breadth of experience that could improve care. But Emma Runswick, the deputy chair of the British Medical Association council, said continuously recruiting from abroad was not sustainable.

The government's NHS workforce plan said it would recruit more than 300,000 health workers over the next 15 years and double the number of medical school places to 15,000 by 2031. The new places will be available from September 2025, so this cohort would not be qualified until at least 2030, the GMC said.

A government spokesperson said: "The government is backing the long-term workforce plan with over £2.4bn over the next five years to fund additional education and training places, on top of existing increases to education and training investment, reaching a record £6.1bn over the next two years."

▼ Perseverance Ncube was stabbed to death at her home in Salford, Greater Manchester

PHOTOGRAPH: PA MEDIA



'She had created a beautiful community for herself and her children'

Statement from Ncube's family

described her as a "real angel", adding: "Words can't express how good this woman was."

In a statement issued by police, Ncube's family paid tribute to her: "It is with immense pain that we say goodbye to Perseverance Ncube."

"She was a loving and devoted mother who lived for her children, family and friends. Percy was an active member of her church and had created a beautiful community for herself and her children, but she was cruelly taken from us due to domestic violence."

"Percy had just celebrated her 35th birthday in October, and her passing has left us with an immeasurable sense of loss. Our focus now is on supporting her children as they continue their journey without their mother."

GMP has appealed to local motorists and residents to contact them with any potentially relevant footage from dashcams, CCTV or doorbell cameras from 2.40am on Friday.

Man charged after woman is killed in front of children

Josh Halliday

North of England correspondent

A man has been charged with murder after a "loving and devoted" mother was stabbed in front of her two children. Perseverance Ncube, 35, known to her friends as Percy,

was fatally stabbed at her home in Salford, Greater Manchester, in the early hours of Friday morning.

Police said she was found with a single wound to the chest. She was taken to hospital, where she died of her injuries.

Greater Manchester police (GMP) yesterday said Obert Moyo, 45, had been charged with her murder and possession of an offensive weapon. Moyo, from Bolton, was remanded in custody before an appearance at Bolton magistrates court today.

Friends and neighbours held a candlelit vigil near Ncube's home in Little Hulton on Saturday night. One friend

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Review

Dancers take the audience on a wild jazz ride

The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady
Shoreditch Town Hall, London
★★★★★

Lyndsey Winship

It's not about what it looks like, it's about what it feels like," says our MC for the night, Chloe Carter. And what does it feel like? It feels great. The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady



is the landmark 1963 album by the jazz bassist/composer Charles Mingus. Mingus always intended it to be danced to, but at the time it never was. That was an irresistible invitation to performance company Clod Ensemble, who hatched the idea of a live show where everyone - audience included - is invited to "let the music move through you". Peter Edwards, musical director of the Nu Civilisation Orchestra, transcribed the score by ear, and his band played with spirit (though the venue's high, arched ceiling means the sound is muddier than ideal). The performances last week

▲ Valerie Ebuwa is 'tinglingly tangible'
PHOTOGRAPH: TRISTRAM KENTON/ THE GUARDIAN



warmed up with three short pieces, setting out how it would all work. Loosely choreographed by Clod Ensemble's Suzy Willson, a company of dancers led the way, setting up a groove. The audience could join them on the floor (but didn't have to - no pressure); we fell into a circle while dancers took solos, then everyone flooded on to the floor with joyous faces. Dancers took up the mantle of the improvising musicians in Mingus's masterpiece. Classy Maycie-Ann St-Louis brought authority and sensitivity, her regal power melting into rich music; Valerie Ebuwa pushed deep inside a sax melody, transliterating with her body, her pleasure in the exchange tinglingly tangible. Arran Green's body became a full drum kit, scattering limbs/beats wildly across the floor; sharp-edged Faye Stoesser vogued to Spanish guitar, limbs knotting with muscle-power. All the while they were illustrating the slink and stretch of the sound, the raw brass and unexpected stylistic swerves. It's a different way of listening, getting inside the music with gentle guidance and expressive freedom. In the crowd, patterns were set in viral motion, and it was a delight to be caught up in it, swept up in the simple pleasure of synchrony, community and great music.

Critically ill baby girl is removed from life support

Josh Halliday
North of England correspondent

A critically ill baby girl has been removed from life support after judges ruled she should be allowed to die, a campaign group supporting her parents has said. Indi Gregory, who is eight months old, has an incurable mitochondrial condition and medics say they can do no more for her. Her parents, Dean Gregory and Claire Staniforth, wanted specialists to keep treating her but have lost fights in the high court and court of appeal in London. Three court of appeal judges ruled on Friday that life support treatment could be withdrawn only in a hospital or hospice, not at the family home. The not-for-profit organisation Christian Concern, which is supporting the family, said yesterday that specialists had withdrawn life support. It said Indi had been moved from the Queen's medical centre in Nottingham, where she was being treated, to a hospice.

WINTER REFUGEE EMERGENCY • WINTER REFUGEE EMERGENCY

"The walls are collapsing. Water is leaking from the ceiling. We burn rubbish and plastic on the stove...today we could not go out because of the snow and rain...we have not had a moment of joy since we came here."

Q hados*, the father of Mariam* (pictured), was displaced with his family from Kabul in 2021. His words (above) reflect the experiences of millions of displaced Afghan families. The country is enduring its third year of devastating economic decline with 97% of people living in poverty. Right now, with temperatures plummeting the most vulnerable families face a battle for survival. UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, has the logistical capabilities to get support to those who most need it, but critical underfunding means we urgently need your help. Please will you give £82 to help provide a Winter Survival Kit, which could protect a displaced family from the deadly cold of winter? Last winter, temperatures fell to -21°C and remote areas were cut off by heavy snow. People were killed in avalanches, and thousands of livestock froze to death. Families burned animal manure, old tyres and rubbish to keep warm. The situation this winter is equally precarious for displaced people and



refugees from Ukraine, where many are living in makeshift or bomb damaged shelters without electricity. Many refugees from Syria, meanwhile, are facing their 13th bitterly cold winter far from home. The scale of the refugee crisis can feel overwhelming, but a gift of £82, or whatever you can afford today, could help protect a vulnerable family through the winter. Your gift tells displaced people that, despite all they have lost, they are not alone... they have UNHCR, and they have you.



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Digital twins Computer models that could soon personalise medical care

Linda Geddes
Science correspondent

Imagine having a digital twin that gets ill, and can be experimented on to identify the best possible treatment, without you having to go near a pill or a surgeon's knife. Scientists believe that within five to 10 years, "in silico" trials - in which hundreds of virtual organs are used to assess the safety and efficacy of drugs - could become routine, while patient-specific organ models could be used to personalise treatment and avoid medical complications.

Digital twins are computational models of physical objects or processes, updated using data from their real-world counterparts. Within medicine, this means combining vast amounts of data about the workings of genes, proteins, cells and whole-body systems with patients' personal data to create virtual models of their organs - and eventually, potentially their entire body.

"If you practise medicine today, a lot of it isn't very scientific," said Prof Peter Coveney, the director of the Centre for Computational Science at University College London and a co-author of Virtual You. "Often, it is equivalent to driving a car and working out where to go next by looking in the rear-view mirror: you try to figure out how to treat the patient in front of you based on people you've seen in the past who had similar conditions.

"What a digital twin is doing is using your data inside a model that represents how your physiology and pathology is working. It is not



making decisions about you based on a population that might be completely unrepresentative. It is genuinely personalised."

The current state-of-the-art model can be found in cardiology. Already, companies are using patient-specific heart models to help design medical devices, while the Barcelona-based start-up ELEM BioTech is offering companies the ability to test drugs and devices on simulated models of human hearts.

"We have already run a number of virtual human trials on several compounds and are about to enter into a new phase, with our product being ready and deployed in the

cloud for external access," said the ELEM co-founder and chief executive, Chris Morton.

Speaking at the Digital Twins conference at the Royal Society of Medicine in London on Friday, Dr Caroline Roney, of Queen Mary University of London, described efforts to develop personalised heart models that would help plan surgery for patients with irregular and chaotic heartbeats (atrial fibrillation). "I think there are many applications in cardiovascular disease where we will see this sort of approach coming through, such as deciding what type of valve to use, or where to insert it

▲ Researchers say tailored digital models could help plan operations, cancer treatment and pregnancy care

PHOTOGRAPH: CHRISTOPHER FURLONG/GETTY

during heart valve replacement," Roney said.

Cancer patients are also expected to benefit. Artificial intelligence experts at the drug company GSK are working with cancer researchers at King's College London (KCL) to build digital replicas of patients' tumours by using images and genetic and molecular data, as well as growing patients' cancer cells in 3D and testing how they respond to drugs.

By applying machine learning to this data, scientists can predict how individual patients are likely to respond to different drugs, combinations of drugs, and doses.

"You can't do this repetitively with the real patient with multiple drugs and drug combinations," said Prof Tony Ng, of KCL. "We are trying to find a solution while the patient is still alive, so if they come back with a recurrence [of cancer] we will know how to treat them, or which clinical trial to put them on."

Proof of concept trials are expected to begin next year.

Researchers are even developing digital twins for pregnancy, which could help develop drugs for conditions such as placental insufficiency or pre-eclampsia, and a better understanding of the processes underpinning pregnancy and labour.

Prof Michelle Oyen, the director of the Center for Women's Health Engineering at Washington University in St Louis, said: "You can't do experiments on pregnant women in many cases, and there are also not good animal models for human pregnancy."

Oyen is building placenta models from ultrasound scans taken during pregnancy and high-resolution images after birth in women with healthy and complicated pregnancies, and training an algorithm to recognise and construct digital replicas of various tissues. "Our goal is to try to figure out things that we could measure on a live person to predict who is likely to have problems."

Other researchers are building digital twins of hospitals to try to improve the efficiency with which patients move through the healthcare system.

Dr Jacob Koris, a surgeon and the digital lead at Getting It Right First Time, an NHS England programme to improve treatment and care, said: "We can build a highly detailed, real-time picture of how patients with similar conditions move through the system. Doing so could identify areas we need to improve, but also good practice."

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Birmingham councillors 'crashed on regardless of danger signs'

Jessica Murray

Midlands correspondent

Councillors at Birmingham city council "ignored the warning signs" of its financial crisis and caused a "self-inflicted" disaster that will take years of cuts to rectify, according to the lead government commissioner drafted in to help.

Max Caller, nicknamed Max the Axe for his unsparing approach to budget cuts, was lured out of retirement to take on the task of fixing

England's largest local authority after it in effect declared itself bankrupt.

"They ignored the warning signs, crashed on regardless and they have created themselves a controlled disaster," said Caller, who is five weeks into the task of pulling the council from the financial brink.

It issued a section 114 notice in September, largely owing to a rapidly escalating equal pay claim bill of at least £760m and problems implementing an IT system costing £100m.

"There will be job losses, it's inevitable. There will be some services

that will no longer run, it's inevitable," Caller said. "It won't be easy. It will be painful, and some things will get worse before they get better. But it will be a smaller, more focused operation at the end of it."

Caller has worked in local government for decades, being drafted in to councils including Hackney, Tower Hamlets and Slough to sort out mismanagement and debt.

Birmingham looks likely to be his biggest challenge yet, after a financial report published last Wednesday showed the council has an expected

budget shortfall of £164.8m in 2024-25, rising to £177.1m in 2025-26.

The council must make £165m of savings in the next financial year, with usable reserves £670m in the negative. A statement from Caller's commissioning team, appointed by the levelling-up secretary, Michael Gove, said without "significant action" councillors would struggle to set a lawful budget for next year.

John Cotton, the council leader, said the budget shortfall came after "a decade of cuts and recent rampant inflation".

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Grenfell Tower cannot remain as permanent memorial - commission

Robert Booth

Social affairs correspondent

The Grenfell Tower disaster should be remembered with a permanent memorial reaching high into the sky but the building itself "cannot remain for ever in its current form", the commission established to determine the future of the site has concluded.

A memorial that lasts generations should consider incorporating the names of some or all of the 72 people who died in the June 2017 fire and "make sure the world can never forget", states a report by the Grenfell Tower Memorial Commission circulated to the bereaved, survivors and local people and seen by the Guardian.

After more than four years of consultation, the commission has cast doubt on hopes among some in the community that the burned-out structure could remain on the west London skyline as an indictment of institutional failures that led to the blaze.

Its plan describes the future of the 70s council tower block as "incredibly sensitive". It said the decision would ultimately be "one for the government", which now controls the site.

Some local people would prefer the tower be taken down, citing the mental health impact of its continuing presence on children growing up nearby.

Government engineers have also warned that the structure is damaged, particularly above 10 storeys. But the commission said it could carry out its own independent assessments "to understand what could be possible". One option could be to incorporate parts of the structure into the memorial or monument - such as the 14 pillars which support the tower and the concrete roof crown, it said.

The commission is chaired by Paul Boateng, a former Labour minister, and Thelma Stober, a solicitor who was injured in the 7 July 2005 London bombings. It includes representatives of the Grenfell community.

The 50-page report, circulated among the community on Friday, states: "Whether or not it is viable to use the structure or parts of Grenfell Tower as part of the memorial, the commission recommends that height and visibility should be considered within the future designs for the memorial. We encourage a creative approach to how this could be achieved including the possibility of using light or other ways to create the appearance of height."

The document, Remembering Grenfell: recommendations and next steps to a memorial, shows on its cover columns of light beaming upwards around the existing tower.

Stressing that the issue of what happens to the tower remained "hugely difficult", the commission said that in the coming months "we will all need to work through how we can respect the sensitivities on all sides".

By next spring the commission will publish a design brief for architects, landscape designers and artists, who will be shortlisted in the summer, with a winner selected around the end of 2024.

The commission is keen that the memorial complex - which is unlikely to start construction until at least late 2026 - should be looked after long-term by the Royal Parks. It should be designed to avoid activities such as dog walking "that may not respect its purpose" and should not become a tourist attraction.

"Designs for the memorial should make sure the world can never forget what happened to our loved ones and our community," the report concludes.



▲ Firefighters paying their respects at Grenfell Tower. The blaze that engulfed it in 2017 killed 72 people

Eyewitness



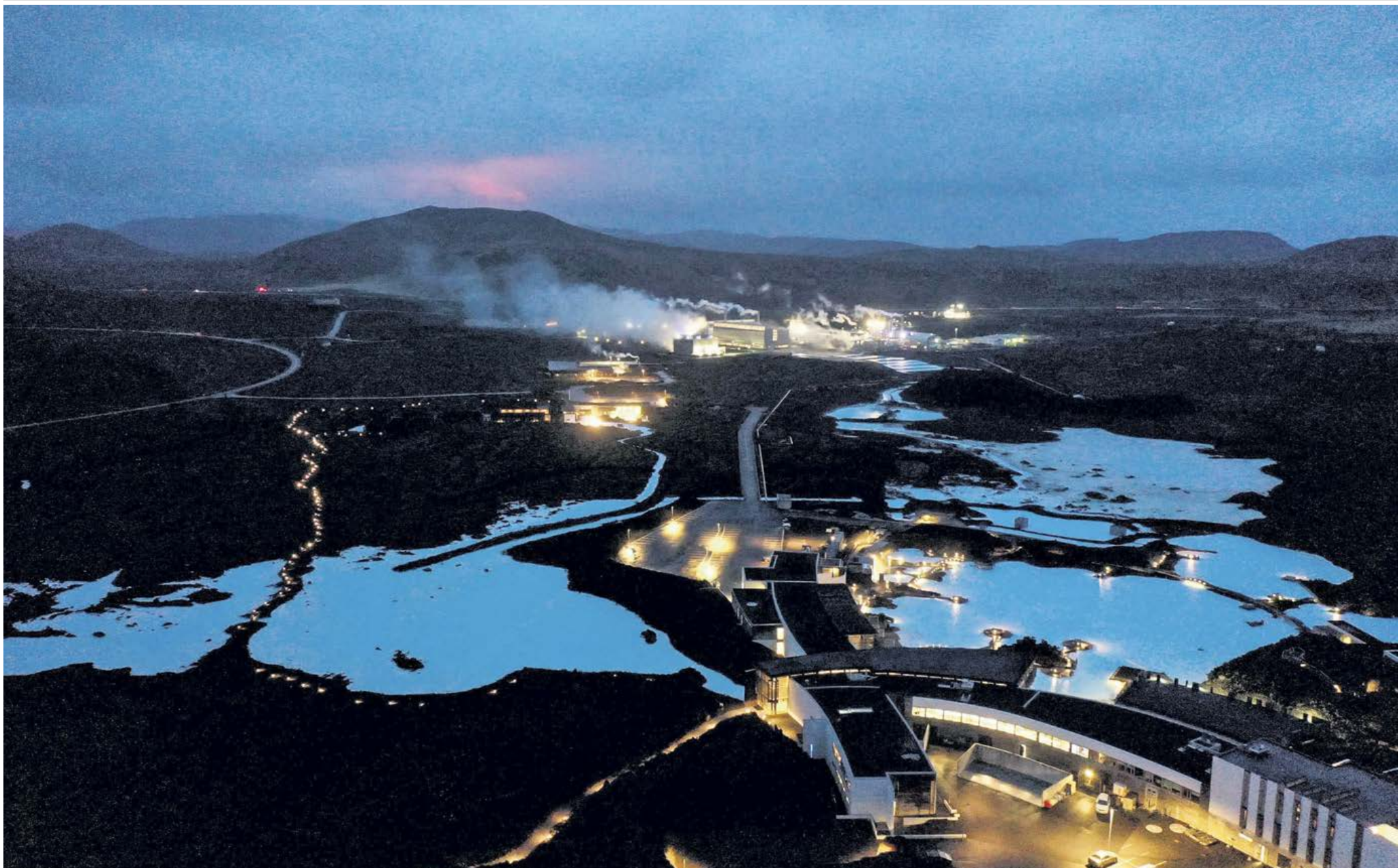


Like father, like son

Alberto Alza and his son wear traditional Cachacero costumes during the Cuadrillas de San Martín, part of an annual festival in San Martín, Colombia. The event, which dates back nearly 300 years, features a contest in which horsemen compete in 10 games representing the battle for territory between the Spanish and Indigenous people.

PHOTOGRAPH:
DIEGO CUEVAS/
GETTY IMAGES

World



Evacuees scramble back to save pets as Icelandic volcano poised to erupt again

▲ Clouds reflect the glow of lava during a 2021 eruption near Iceland's Fagradalsfjall volcano
PHOTOGRAPH: HALLDOR KOLBEINS/AFP/GETTY

Jon Henley
Europe correspondent

Some of the more than 3,000 residents evacuated from an Icelandic fishing town have been allowed to return briefly to their homes to collect pets and essential belongings, as experts warned a volcano could erupt within days or even hours.

One resident from each household in one district of Grindavík was permitted to enter their home for five minutes yesterday in what Iceland's civil defence force called a "planned and controlled operation under the orders of the police".

The returning residents were driven in emergency service vehicles and accompanied by civil defence workers, and the force appealed to other residents "not to drive towards Grindavík at all".

It added: "This is a responsibility and not a trivial decision."

A coastguard helicopter circled above the Þórkátlustað district of the town ready to airlift residents out if the volcano erupted while they were there, a spokesperson told the public broadcaster RÚV.

The town, about 25 miles from the capital, Reykjavík, on Iceland's south-western coast, was evacuated early on Saturday after magma shifting under the Earth's crust caused hundreds of earthquakes, which are likely to be precursors to an eruption.

Danielle Rodriguez, an American basketball professional who plays and coaches in Grindavík, described the emergency evacuation on X (formerly Twitter), saying her team's Saturday practice had been interrupted by "constant four- and five-magnitude earthquakes". While she and her girlfriend were leaving the town, one of

their cars broke down, she said. As they pulled over to discuss where to leave the vehicle, Rodriguez said she "felt the most scared for my life I have ever been".

The ground had "started shaking so much I had to grab a hold of the car and, honest to God, for a good

30 seconds I felt as though the ground was going to crack open and take us both". The pair had eventually left on a minor road out of town because "on our second attempt out on the main road, a huge bump appeared".

Víðir Reynisson, the head of the civil defence force, said yesterday

about 30 residents had been allowed to return for a short while, and authorities would decide today, after a further risk assessment, whether any more could follow.

One of the Grindavík residents allowed back, Sólveig Þorbergsdóttir, told RÚV that her house was fine but her neighbours' appeared to be badly damaged. "I couldn't save all I wanted to," she said. "I saved what I saw around me. Pictures of the grandchildren, the wedding dress, pictures of myself when I was little."

Iceland's meteorological office said seismic activity had decreased yesterday afternoon, but experts said that should not be interpreted as meaning an eruption was any less likely either on or just beyond the Reykjanes peninsula, a volcanic and seismic hotspot.

A tunnel of magma, or molten rock, extending north-east across Grindavík and about 6 miles farther inland was estimated early yesterday to be at a depth of less than 800 metres, compared with 1,500 metres earlier in the weekend, the office said.



◀ Iceland's Blue Lagoon geothermal spa resort, located near Grindavík, has been closed as a precaution

The business of sleep

Napping gadgets take hold in tired Japan

Page 26



On the frontline

Inside a Ukrainian field hospital

Page 27

25



▲ A cracked road in Grindavík, which was evacuated on Saturday

A meeting between meteorologists, civil defence officials and experts from the University of Iceland yesterday heard that seismic activity had continued overnight and during the morning, with about 1,000 earthquakes recorded since midnight.

Most of the quakes were recorded at a depth of 3,000-5,000 metres, with activity concentrated north and south of Grindavík.

Magnús Tumi Guðmundsson, a professor of geophysics, told RÚV the chances of an eruption were considerable. The seismic activity “started off really fast and thankfully has slowed down a bit”, he said. “However, that does not tell us anything about what happens next.” The eruption could happen near the town or – less likely – out at sea, he said.

Grindavík is near the Blue Lagoon geothermal spa resort, a popular tourist destination, which closed as a precaution this week.

The quakes and ground lift caused by the magma intrusion have damaged roads and buildings in Grindavík and the surrounding area, with a large crack tearing up a golf course.

Iceland, which has 33 active volcanic systems, has declared a state of emergency. Shelters and help centres have opened in several nearby towns, but most Grindavík residents were staying with friends or relatives.

There have been three eruptions on the Reykjanes peninsula in recent years near the Fagradalsfjall volcano, in March 2021, August 2022 and July 2023, all far from populated areas. Before 2021, the peninsula had been dormant for eight centuries.

Demonstrations across Spain over amnesty offer to Catalan separatists

Sam Jones
Madrid

Tens of thousands of people have gathered across Spain to protest against the acting government’s plans to secure another term in office by offering an amnesty to those who took part in the illegal and failed push for Catalan independence six years ago.

The proposed amnesty law, which would apply to hundreds of people who participated in the unilateral effort to secede from Spain, has already led to violent protests outside the Madrid headquarters of the governing Spanish Socialist Workers’ party (PSOE).

While the PSOE’s leader and caretaker prime minister, Pedro Sánchez, argues the act of clemency would promote coexistence after the tumultuous political and territorial crisis of 2017, his opponents have decried the move as a cynical and self-serving means of remaining in power.

The issue of an amnesty arose after July’s inconclusive general election. Although the conservative People’s party (PP) finished first, it has proved unable to form a government, even with the support of the far-right Vox party and other, smaller groupings.

However, the PSOE and its partners in the leftwing Sumar alliance have been able to muster the necessary backing by promising the amnesty to the two main Catalan



▲ Protesters in Barcelona voice their opposition to the acting government’s plans to do a deal with Catalan separatists PHOTOGRAPH: ZOWY VOETEN/GETTY IMAGES

pro-independence parties in return for their support. Sánchez is now expected to win congress’s approval to be reappointed as prime minister in a debate and vote this week.

Protests were held yesterday in towns and cities, including Madrid, Barcelona, Seville and Valencia. People congregating in the capital’s

Puerta del Sol square carried effigies of Sánchez as Pinocchio, chanted “Prison for Pedro Sánchez” and carried banners with messages that included: “Democracy in Spain is at risk”, “Sánchez traitor” and “No amnesty for terrorism – Europe save us”.

The PP said 500,000 people had taken part in the Madrid rally, while the central government’s delegate to the region put attendance at 80,000.

Speaking in the Puerta del Sol, the PP’s leader, Alberto Núñez Feijóo, once again accused Sánchez of “buying his investiture in return for giving

his partners judicial impunity” and said Spaniards would not remain silent over the amnesty.

“The office of prime minister of Spain can’t be an object to be bought and sold,” said Feijóo. “Spaniards want democracy, equality, justice and dignity. Spain has never sold itself, and [the PSOE] have tried to cover up the fact that they lost. The prime minister of Spain will always be the person that’s won the elections.”

His colleague Isabel Díaz Ayuso, the populist PP president of the Madrid region, went further, telling the crowd that Sánchez had finally revealed his “totalitarian” project.

“He’s decided that he will not lose power, whatever the cost for Spain; that nothing and no one will take it from him,” she said. “He’s decided to dynamite the rules of the game and to suppress institutions and state powers.”

Vox’s leader, Santiago Abascal, described Sánchez’s deal with the Catalan parties as “a coup d’état in capital letters” and said it was the “most delicate moment in Spanish politics in the past 40 years”. He also called for a “permanent and peaceful mobilisation” that went far beyond yesterday’s one-off demonstrations.

Sánchez himself has urged the PP to show “good sense” and to cease trying to stir things up.

“I ask them to respect the result at the ballot box and the legitimacy of the government we will soon form,” he said on Saturday. “I ask them to be brave and to say no to the bear-hug of the far right, and to abandon the reactionary path that they’re currently following towards the abyss. We will govern for all Spaniards – for four more years of social progress and coexistence.”

Biennale jurors protest against ‘anti-European’ art theme for Polish pavilion

Philip Oltermann
European culture editor

When the Venice Biennale opens next April with the title “Foreigners Everywhere”, exhibitions at the 29 national pavilions are expected to celebrate migration and non-belonging.

The Polish pavilion, however, will play to a different tune – one straight out of the playbook of the nationalist-populist Law and Justice party (PiS), which has ruled the country since 2015 and is thought to be entering its final weeks in power.

Featuring more than 35 works by the artist Ignacy Czwartos, the exhibition will paint a picture of a Polish state victimised throughout the 20th

century at the hands of its neighbours Germany and Russia.

According to an outline of the show, one as-yet-unfinished painting, called Nord Stream 2, will show the former German chancellor Angela Merkel and Russia’s Vladimir Putin connected by a flaming St Andrew’s cross that forms a swastika.

The outline document casts the show as a unique opportunity to draw international attention to what the curators perceive as Poland’s plight. “The Greeks invented tragedy,” it says, “the Poles rehearsed it.” Poland’s submission was announced by the PiS government’s culture minister, Piotr Gliński, last month.

In an unusual step, three members of the jury that selected the show filed a dissenting opinion, noting that Czwartos’s exhibition clashed heavily with the biennale’s official theme.

In their protest note, the three jury members said the pavilion presented Poland as a “homogeneous, unopen country focused only on itself and on speaking from the position of a victim” and that it “does not in any way reflect Poland’s contemporary art scene”.

Karolina Plinta, a deputy co-editor of the Polish art magazine Szum, said: “Czwartos’s paintings are an



▲ Self-portrait of Ignacy Czwartos, whose art is to go on show in Venice

‘The decision to select Ignacy Czwartos seems like the end game of eight years of rightwing rule’

Joanna Warsza
Biennale jury member

eclectic mix of everything that will please the conservative imagination. If his show goes ahead as planned, the Polish pavilion will amount to an anti-Russian but also an anti-European manifesto.”

Whether PiS will still be in power by the time the Polish pavilion opens to the public is unclear. The party, led by Jarosław Kaczyński, won the most votes at national elections in mid-October and has been given the first chance to form a coalition with a governing majority.

However, a broad coalition of opposition forces led by the former European Council president Donald Tusk have said they are ready and willing to form a government if PiS fails to do so, as is expected.

“To us the decision to select Ignacy Czwartos seems like the end game of eight years of rightwing rule,” said Joanna Warsza, a co-curator of Poland’s 2022 pavilion who, along with the Museum of Warsaw director Karolina Ziębińska-Lewandowska and the critic and curator Jagna Domżańska, was one of the three dissenting voices on this year’s jury.

She said: “What makes it even more tragic is that it is happening now when there is finally some optimism in Poland after the elections.”

Sleep tech

Japanese workers turn to gadgets to perfect their power naps

Justin McCurry
Tokyo

The Spanish have their siestas and millions of French people exercise their right to a postprandial power nap. The Japanese equivalent is the *hirune* – an afternoon snooze that goes some way towards compensating for their lack of sleep.

With long commutes, punishing working hours and the bare minimum of sleep at night, it is



little wonder that so many workers succumb to the power nap; more than 40% get less than six hours of sleep a night, according to a recent government survey.

Now the business of sleep has spawned an industry devoted to achieving the perfect nap, said by experts to be an undisturbed period of up to about 20 minutes, beyond which the body starts to fall into a deeper sleep, leaving people feeling groggy when they wake up.

In Japan, exhausted employees are turning to gadgets, from desk-mounted headrests and heated eye masks, in a quest to emerge from

▼ A much-needed kip. A survey of 33 countries found Japanese people get the least amount of nightly sleep

PHOTOGRAPH: CARL COURT/GETTY IMAGES

their afternoon nap refreshed and bursting with productivity.

For the most immersive experience, Giraffenap – a booth with strategically placed pads and platforms that support the backside, shins, head and feet – allows users to nap while standing.

Developed by experts from Hokkaido University, the prototype pods come in two designs – one that blocks out sound and light and another that lets in a little of both to reassure claustrophobic occupants.

“Giraffes sleep while standing up for about 20 minutes a day,” said Yoshihito Nohara of

Hokkaido-based Koyoju Plywood Corporation, which plans to sell the pods for 3m yen (£16,000) apiece to offices and airports from January. “In the same way, 20 minutes a day is just right for a nap.”

The health ministry is keen to get people sleeping more. A 2021 study by the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development indicated that Japanese people sleep an average of seven hours and 22 minutes a night – the shortest time of the 33 countries surveyed.

The Guardian tried out a couple of commercially available gadgets.

Dreamlight Heat Lite, an eye mask by the Tokyo-based Weatherly Japan, bathes the eye sockets in warmth as well as blocking out light. The heated element, though, was not particularly helpful on a warm autumn day in Tokyo.

Atex, a lifestyle company in Osaka, could be on to something with its massage-chair-inspired “afternoon pillow”. At around 8,000 yen, it is not cheap, but a lot of thought has gone into its design.

The idea is to hook the padded section over your desk to protect your chest, adjust the rest to the required angle, place your arms in front and your face in the hole in the middle ... and drift off. Users can set a timer for up to an hour and be woken by gentle vibrations.

Escaped lion roams streets of Italian town

Agence France-Presse
Rome

A lion prowled the streets of an Italian seaside town for several hours on Saturday after escaping from a circus.

Alessandro Grando, the mayor of Ladispoli, near Rome, told residents to stay at home before police and circus staff sedated and captured the animal.

Videos published in Italian media, apparently taken by locals, were said to show the lion walking through dark and deserted streets.

Rony Vassallo, from the Rony Roller Circus, insisted the lion, eight-year-old Kimba, posed little danger.



▲ The lion, Kimba, was from a circus



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◀ A team of Ukrainian medics treat a wounded soldier at a 'stabilisation point' near the Bakhmut front

PHOTOGRAPH: PHIL CALLER/THE GUARDIAN

'We save 98%'

Inside a frontline field hospital in eastern Ukraine

Luke Harding
near Bakhmut

In a field hospital on the eastern front all was calm. And then, suddenly, it wasn't. A casualty arrived - a badly wounded Ukrainian soldier. An enemy mortar had landed nearby, leaving him with shrapnel wounds. Within seconds the medics got to work. The operating theatre is in a former apartment, now functioning as a clinic. Children's drawings with patriotic messages - Glory to Ukraine! - adorn the wall.

The unconscious patient was transferred to an operating table. He looked more dead than alive. Doctors gave emergency transfusions of blood and plasma. A paramedic cut away his uniform. Another bandaged his left leg. A third gave him a shot of fentanyl, a powerful opioid painkiller. A heart monitor beeped. Outside were regular whumps from outgoing Ukrainian artillery fire. The

frontline with the Russians was 3 miles away.

After 20 minutes, the wounded man's condition stabilised. He began to groan: a good sign. Medics put him back on the trolley, tilting him upwards. The soldier was wrapped in a gold-coloured foil blanket. From the makeshift medical centre he was taken by ambulance to a fully equipped hospital. It is a perilous journey. Russian troops frequently shell the muddy route, which twists between drooping sunflower fields and semi-abandoned villages.

"He had lost an awful lot of blood. In another 30 minutes he would have been dead," said Dr Denys Sholom, the head of the medical team. "Now he will probably live."

The "stabilisation point" ensured soldiers with serious wounds survived long enough to be treated further down the line.

"We save 98% of our patients," Sholom said. Shrapnel accounted for "80-85%" of cases he saw in a conflict characterised on

both sides by relentless artillery bombardment. The latest casualty had been hit in the leg, stomach and head. Typically, the injured soldiers arrived in the early hours, brought in from trenches under cover of darkness. The dead went straight to the morgue.

The Russians frequently targeted the ground-floor clinic. Sholom, 37, who is a children's anaesthesiologist by training, said he and a surgeon would continue working whenever bombs fell, as his colleagues took cover. "I worry about them," he confided, adding: "Sometimes we have to amputate. If there's the smallest chance of saving a limb we send them for treatment elsewhere."

The location of the hospital cannot be revealed for security reasons. Nearby is Bakhmut. In May Russian forces occupied the city in the eastern Donbas region after a grinding year-long siege. Across a 600-mile front, in the east and south of the country, Russians forces are trying to advance. Further north, in Kharkiv province, they are pressing towards Kupiansk and the Oskil River.

In October, Russia staged its biggest offensive for months. At least three brigades mounted a dawn assault on Avdiivka, a Ukrainian-held frontline town near the occupied city of Donetsk. It involved tanks, armoured vehicles, and thousands of infantry. The Russians made some progress, but failed to encircle Avdiivka, which sits in a salient, and suffered big losses of men and equipment.

Ukraine's army has made a few tactical gains. In September its soldiers retook two villages - Klishchiivka and Andriivka - south of Bakhmut. There are intense clashes for control of the heights

along a railway track connecting the settlements. The conflict has become a battle of trenches and field guns - eerily reminiscent of the first world war - with the modern addition of electronic communications and killer drones.

Vladimir Putin's war plan remains unchanged 21 months on from the start of his large-scale invasion: he wants to capture fully Donetsk oblast, and the Ukrainian garrison towns of Kramatorsk and Sloviansk. In the south the Russian army has dug defences to thwart a Ukrainian counter-offensive.

Sholom said he was used to the daily carnage. He and his medics survive by guzzling energy drinks and puffing cigarettes during lulls. They congregate in a smoke-filled stairwell, protected by concrete walls. The shattered town they are based in has no water or electricity. A generator provides light for surgery and wifi. How did he cope with the constant presence of death? "The devil knows. It's OK."

Ivan, a 30-year-old doctor, said there was little prospect the conflict would stop. "I would like it to end."

'Sometimes we amputate. If there's the smallest chance of saving a limb we send them for treatment elsewhere'

Dr Denys Sholom
Field hospital chief



But I don't think it's going to." He said Ukrainians knew why they were fighting. "There is a difference ... they are slaves and we are not. Slaves go where they are told." A handful of his patients were wounded Russians. "We treat them like anybody else," he said.

Not all of the team are professional medics. Yevhenia Kolesnichenko used to be a teacher. She became a volunteer and nurse after her husband died fighting in Bakhmut last year. "He didn't get medical help in time. Now I try to save guys here." She arrived two weeks ago. Was she scared? "Not remotely. I'm focused on my work. I'm uninterested in the world."

The hospital has two main treatment rooms. Doctors sleep nearby. The corridor is decorated with pictures of Ukrainians through the ages, from a medieval knight to a Cossack warrior and a modern soldier.

Morale among Ukrainian soldiers appears high. On a break from fighting near Bakhmut, Serhiy Kravnyak - a member of the 5th brigade - said neither side was close to victory. "They have not completely lost the war. We have not completely won it," he reflected. The Russians had mined "everywhere", making progress extremely difficult. "Our sappers have to go forward inch by inch."

The chief problem was a lack of supplies - ammunition and shells, primarily, plus mid-range artillery systems and aviation in the shape of F-16 jets. In Kravnyak's estimate 70% of Russian soldiers were "idiots" and 30% "professionals". "The stupid ones will stare up at a drone. If you hear one, you have immediately to hide," he said. Rain was the soldier's friend, he said, as it meant drones could not fly.

Kravnyak shared videos taken by his unit. One, filmed in May, showed bodies of Russians in a grassy verge, west of Klishchiivka. A second featured street fighting in Bakhmut, before Ukraine relinquished the city, with snow on the ground. There is footage of Chasiv Yar, a town about 6 miles from Bakhmut, where two foreign aid workers died last month in a Russian attack on their car.

According to US estimates about half a million combatants on both sides have been killed or wounded - with 120,000 dead Russian soldiers, and 70,000 Ukrainian ones. Dmytro Bezvernyi - an actor from the western city of Lutsk, now serving with the 5th brigade - said it was tough when his friends got killed. "We feel angry. My heart hurts. But it doesn't stop us," he said. "We know that they died for Ukraine."

At the clinic the doctors relaxed again. Some scrolled their phones; others dozed or prepped equipment. A cat padded on a parquet floor. Percussive booms continued. "We need tanks and heavy armour, as much as you can give us," Sholom said, by way of a parting message. "The more we get the closer we come to victory. And then we can all go home."

News travels fast, now further too



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Zapp saps Shares in the UK electric scooter company collapse

Page 30



29

Business

Landlords continue to sell up as buy-to-let loses lustre

Miles Brignall

The great property sell-off by landlords has continued across Great Britain this year, in particular in Scotland, as the buy-to-let bubble appears to have burst.

As the property site Rightmove reported new seller asking prices had dropped by 1.7% or £6,088 last month to an average of £362,143, the estate agents Hamptons said landlords were on target to have bought the fewest number of homes since 2010 once the period of the first Covid lockdown was discounted from the data.

It said that while the 2023 sell-off had been less pronounced than over the last two years, it was continuing the recent trend started in 2021.

The share of homes sold by landlords fell from 15.7% in 2022 to 14% so far this year. Investors have bought about 11.2% of all homes put up for sale this year, compared with 15.7% in 2015.

Hamptons said individual landlords will have sold 294,300 more homes than they had bought since 2016, more than the total number of homes in Manchester or Cornwall.

Changes to the way buy-to-let incomes are taxed, massively higher mortgage costs that followed 14 consecutive interest rates rises, and changes to house emissions regulations have all played their part in reducing buy-to-let's attraction as an investment.

From 2028, landlord-owned properties will have to have an energy

► **Edinburgh's West End:** landlords have made up a record 12% of all property sellers in Scotland this year

PHOTOGRAPH: JANE BARLOW/PA WIRE

performance certificate rating of C or better. It is thought thousands of homes will require expensive upgrades to comply, with some landlords choosing to sell up as a result.

Hamptons said it believed 10% to 20% of landlords who had been forced to remortgage recently were now losing money on their investment. Overall there were 43% fewer homes available to rent in the first 10 months of this year compared with the same period in 2015, it said.

The biggest sell-off has been in Scotland. Landlords have made up a record 12% of all sellers in Scotland so far in 2023, up from 10% in 2022.

Tighter rules and regulations, predominantly in the form of rent caps, have seen landlord purchases fall to a record low of 6%, Hamptons said.

One factor influencing landlords has been the fact that the boom in property prices is over. Rightmove figures to be published today found new seller asking prices had dropped by 1.7% to £362,143 in November, as

43%

Drop in number of homes available to rent so far this year compared with the same period in 2015



PIC is the latest pension fund drawn to affordable housing

Julia Kollwe

The UK's pension funds are increasingly taking on building affordable homes as the housing crisis worsens.

Pension Insurance Corporation (PIC), a specialist insurer of defined benefit pension schemes, is the latest to enter the rental market, in a project to build 125 affordable homes in Kingston upon Thames, south-west London, in partnership with the developer London Square Group and its affordable housing subsidiary Square Roots.

The £50m project, due to be completed by November 2025, is backed by a £4.9m grant from the Mayor of London's affordable housing programme. It is PIC's first direct investment in affordable housing.

The firm intends to invest £500m over the next five years to build about 1,000 affordable homes across England and Wales.

"For every pension scheme that we take on, we need to back each of those schemes with a portfolio of assets," said Allen Twynning, lead manager on Kingston. "What it [affordable housing] offers is very predictable rental cash flows linked to inflation, a lot of

these driven by central government policy ... It is a really good match for what we're trying to do in terms of paying pensioners and helping create homes for people who desperately need them."

PIC, which insures 339,900 pension scheme members at FTSE 100 companies and in the public sector, and has £44.9bn in financial investments, has also invested in build-to-rent developments, student accommodation and senior living.

Its bigger insurance rival Legal & General pledged last year to construct 3,000 affordable homes over five years, starting with the Junction, a brownfield site that has lain empty for two decades in the West Midlands.

Partnering with Lovell, L&G is in discussions about creating 1,000 affordable homes there. The total programme is backed by a £138m grant from Homes England.

sellers "continue to adopt more pricing realism to attract a buyer".

It said average asking prices now stand at 3% below May's peak.

Lloyds bank recently predicted UK house prices would continue to slide this year and next, and would not start to recover until 2025.

Last week the estate agency Savills said it thought average UK house prices would fall by 3% in 2024 after a 4% drop this year.

Tom Bill, the head of UK residential research at the estate agents Knight Frank, said: "The story of this slowdown is a double-digit fall in transactions rather than a dramatic price correction, which has been kept in check by weak supply.

"Higher rates, the prospect of a general election, overseas conflict and ambiguity over when the bank rate will peak are all sapping sentiment. We expect prices and sales volumes to bottom out next year as the economic backdrop stabilises."

China's CO₂ emissions could peak this year, study says

Jillian Ambrose

Energy correspondent

China's carbon emissions could peak this year before falling into a structural decline for the first time from next year after a record surge in clean energy investments, research has found.

Emissions from the world's most polluting country have rebounded this year after the Chinese government dropped its Covid restrictions in January, according to analysis undertaken for Carbon Brief.

However, this rebound in fossil fuel demand emerged alongside an expansion of the country's low-carbon energy sources, which was far in excess of policymakers' targets and expectations.

Beijing's solar and wind installation targets for the year were met by September, according to the report, and the market share of electric vehicles is already well ahead of the government's 20% target for 2025.

"These record additions are all but guaranteed to push fossil fuel electricity generation and CO₂ emissions into decline in 2024," said Lauri Myllyvirta, a lead analyst at the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air and the author of the report.

The most striking growth has been in solar power. Solar installations increased by 210 gigawatts (GW) this year alone, which is twice the total solar capacity of the US and four times what China added in 2020.

The analysis found that China installed 70GW of wind power this year - more than the entire power generation capacity of the UK. It is also expected to add 7GW of hydro power and 3GW of nuclear power capacity this year.

Myllyvirta said the boom in clean energy generation could trigger a decline in China's emissions from next year despite a wave of new coal plants across the country.

"This is because - for the first time - the rate of low-carbon energy expansion is now sufficient to not only meet but exceed the average annual increase in China's demand for electricity overall," he said.

"If this pace is maintained, or accelerated, it would mean that China's electricity generation from fossil fuels would enter a period of structural decline - which would also be a first. Moreover, this could come about despite the new wave of coal plant permitting and construction in the country," Myllyvirta added.

Unplugged: UK electric moped brand hits the skids after listing in US

Alex Lawson

The future of the British brand Zapp looked promising as its top team gathered around one of its electric mopeds and stared up at a billboard bearing its logo close to Times Square, New York, in May. They threw their arms aloft as they marked the six-year-old company's listing on the Nasdaq stock exchange, in a deal valuing it at \$573m (£470m).

Six months on, the stock has hit the skids – losing 97% of its value, now \$12m – and Zapp looks increasingly like it will join a host of British vehicle companies that have seen their US listing turn into an investors' short-stay car park.

While the electric car market has matured, the technically more difficult task of manufacturing speedy, compact and affordable green motorbikes and scooters has created a sector filled with startups.

Established brands, which have long seen mopeds as low margin, have been wary of diving in while costs remain high.

Zapp achieved the listing through merging with CIIG Capital Partners II, one of the special purpose acquisition companies (Spac) often referred to as “blank cheque” firms designed to buy businesses. It said the listing would propel its growth in the “highly fragmented two-wheeler category”.

Zapp was launched, in 2017, by Swin Chatsuan, a dealmaker across the automotive, retail and hospitality sectors. He began tapping contacts for funding, including Cameron Parry, a blockchain entrepreneur whose firm, First Equity, invested in its 2018 seed funding round. Zapp promised deliveries of its first product, the seated scooter i300, by the end of 2019.

A public listing, including on London's Aquis exchange, was considered before Covid blew a chill wind through stock markets, which also delayed production plans.



▲ Zapp representatives celebrate the startup's listing on the Nasdaq stock exchange in New York this year

PHOTOGRAPH: VANJA SAVIC

‘They are very expensive. He gives the impression he is the Steve Jobs of scooters’

Anonymous source on Zapp's Swin Chatsuan

In 2022, Zapp finally debuted the i300, a “high-performance city bike capable of motorcycle levels of performance”, at the Goodwood Festival of Speed. Offering 0-30mph acceleration in 2.3 seconds and charging via a normal wall plug, Zapp hopes to tap into a market for nifty urban transport in congested cities.

The moped comes in four models, costs between €7,590 (£6,650) and €9,590 (£8,400). By contrast, many competitors, including the Piaggio 1 and the Sunra Robo, retail at between £2,000 and £3,500 – though BMW's CE 04 is nearly £13,000.

“They are very expensive,” said a source familiar with Zapp. “Swin

gives the impression he is the Steve Jobs of scooters ... He is a bit full of himself.”

Intense competition, notably from Chinese companies, has not helped either. “We are seeing a wave of Asian players bringing new electric scooters and mopeds to EU and UK markets,” said Patrick Hertzke at McKinsey. “Some are very inexpensive with low-quality reputations, while a few are entering as semi-premium brands.”

Zapp is headquartered in the UK and run from Bangkok. The bikes are assembled by Summit, which has operations across south-east Asia, notably in Thailand. In 2022, Zapp said it had the capacity to build up to 10,000 scooters in 2023, and launch in European markets. In an investor presentation last month, it targeted 300,000 units by 2026.

Long-term investors who have been unable to quickly sell their shares owing to lock-up agreements are understood to be dismayed at its stock market performance.

A switch away from Spacs, and an increasing scepticism over the prospects for electric startups, appears to underpin the stock's fall.

A Zapp spokesperson said it “continues its efforts to bring to market the award-winning i300 electric urban motorcycle, which we believe will set new sector standards in design, performance, sustainability and customer experience.”

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The Guardian Weekly

The low-growth trap Public investment offers a route out of this new age of anger

Larry Elliott



The past 15 years have been the most difficult for western economies since the 1920s and 1930s. Public anger has risen as living standards have been squeezed by weak growth. American politics is as ugly as it has ever been, while parties of the far right have emerged as powerful political forces in Europe.

The new age of anger is a far cry from the six decades between 1948 and 2008. Sure, there were recessions – often deep ones – during that period but growth resumed and living standards bounced back. Certainly, there were protests – sometimes prolonged as in the demonstrations against the Vietnam war – but the young people who marched eventually secured a stake in the system.

The expectation was that the capitalist system would deliver and, for most people in the west, it did. People were working fewer hours when the global financial system went pear-shaped in 2008 than they had been in 1948. They lived longer, took more holidays and could purchase consumer goods that had previously been the preserve of the rich.

Looking back, there were warning signs. Western economies grew faster in the first half of the 1948-2008 period than in the second half. The spoils of improvements in productivity were increasingly grabbed by the better off. The environmental costs of constant expansion only gradually started to attract political attention.

In his book *End Times*, Peter Turchin says historically there have been five leading indicators of looming political instability: stagnating or declining real wages for workers; a growing gap between rich and poor; over-production of young graduates with advanced degrees; declining public trust

with explosive results. “In the US, all of these factors started to take an ominous turn in the 1970s,” he says. “The data pointed to the years around 2020 when the confluence of these trends was expected to trigger a spike in political instability. And here we are.”

For the past 15 years, central banks and finance ministries – advised by the likes of the IMF – have been seeking a way to bring back the good times. They slashed interest rates to zero, they printed money, they paid the wages of workers furloughed during the Covid pandemic; they subsidised the energy bills of consumers when gas prices rocketed after Russia’s invasion of Ukraine. But this approach has been problematic in three ways.

First, it hasn’t worked. Growth

and investment rates have not recovered to their 1948-2008 average. The eurozone looks set for a recession this winter, while Britain will at best move sideways. The outlier is the US and even there a slowdown is looming. What’s more, young people are leaving university saddled with student debt and scant chance of buying their own home. Add in flatlining living standards and it is not hard to see why graduates are staying radicalised into their 30s and 40s.

Second, central banks and finance ministries have grown increasingly anxious about deviating for so long from the economic orthodoxy, and even more so after the surge in inflation from 2021 onwards. So, they have raised interest rates, sucked money out of their economies by selling bonds rather

than buying them, and – with the exception of the US – taken action to reduce budget deficits.

Even economists who opposed austerity in the aftermath of the global financial crisis of 2008 have raised eyebrows at the fact that the US is running a budget deficit of 7-8% of GDP despite strong growth and low unemployment.

Paul Krugman, writing in the *New York Times*, said: “The point is that the economics of deficit reduction are straightforward. It can be accomplished either by reducing social benefits or by raising taxes. Given that America has weak social spending compared with other countries, taxes are the most plausible route. But I don’t see any plausible political path to a tax increase that would make a large dent in the deficit.”

“So, serious deficit reduction, a bad idea a decade ago, is a good idea now. But I see no way to make it happen.”

Krugman’s payoff line illustrates the third problem: turning the clock back to 2008 involves much higher levels of interest rates, public spending restraint, tax increases and an acceptance on the part of voters that governments can’t solve every problem.

Last week, the National Institute for Economic and Social Research suggested a way out of the low-growth trap for the UK, although its message is applicable to other struggling economies. The thinktank called on the chancellor, Jeremy Hunt, to increase public investment from 2% to 3% of GDP for the next five years, saying spending on digitalisation, decarbonisation and transport infrastructure would crowd-in private investment and get the economy moving again. Eventually, higher levels of growth would mean higher tax revenues and stronger public finances.

That makes a lot of sense, especially given the alternative is another decade going nowhere.



Central banks and finance ministries have been trying to bring back good times. It hasn’t worked

◀ Young people who protested in the postwar years – here against the Vietnam war in London in 1966 – eventually secured a stake in the system

PHOTOGRAPH: CLIVE LIMPKIN/EXPRESS/GETTY

Ikea owner buys shopping mall in Brighton for reported £145m

Sarah Butler

Ikea’s parent company has bought its second UK shopping mall, in Brighton, for an estimated £145m as part of efforts to bring its furniture stores into city centres.

The world’s largest furniture retailer plans to convert an empty Debenhams site in the city’s Churchill Square centre, about a third of which is currently empty, into a new Ikea

store. It is expected to open within two years.

The acquisition comes almost three years after Ingka Group’s Ingka Centres division bought the Kings Mall in Hammersmith, west London, where it installed an Ikea in a former Debenhams and brought in new tenants including the Library of Things and Lidl to help fill the site, which it renamed Livat.

Ikea is also converting the former Topshop store on Oxford Circus, London, into an outlet. The opening date

was recently delayed by a year, until autumn 2024.

Ikea has tested but then closed smaller high street outlets, including one on Tottenham Court Road in central London, as well as large warehouse stores, in Tottenham in north London and Coventry.

Ingka has begun buying up moribund shopping malls to develop city centre destinations as the value of those sites has fallen amid hefty competition from online shopping, which has driven many retailers to slim down the size of their chains. The post-Covid shift to working from home has also hit city centres.

Churchill Square’s owner, the fund manager Abrdn, had hoped to sell the mall for £250m when it was put on the

market last year, but it agreed a deal with Ingka Centres for £145m, according to the property trade journal *React News*. Ingka did not comment on the price.

This summer Ikea reopened in San Francisco’s former 6X6 “ghost mall”, which had lain empty since its completion in 2016. The group is also redeveloping Toronto’s Aura Podium and a complex of shopping centres and offices in Place d’Italie, Paris.

The Brighton site, which will

£250m

Price the owner of Churchill Square, Abrdn, had hoped to get when the mall was put on the market in 2022

continue trading while the department store is being revamped, includes the Chartwell Court residential tower block and three car parks, two of which are freeholds. Retailers already at the site include Apple, Next, H&M and Urban Outfitters.

Cindy Andersen, the managing director of Ingka Centres, said Churchill Square “fits perfectly into our global expansion strategy, allowing us to transform a traditional retail space to a meeting place that is much more than just a place to shop”.

She added: “We’ve proven in Hammersmith that traditional shopping centres have a strong future when they are adapted and constantly evolving to match the real needs of local communities.”

Weather

Monday 13 November 2023

UK and Ireland Noon today

Sunny

Mist

Fog

Sunny intervals

Hazy

Mostly cloudy

Overcast/dull

Sunny showers

Sunny and heavy showers

Light showers

Rain

Sleet

Light snow

Snow showers

Heavy snow

Ice

Thundery rain

Thundery showers

Temperature, °C

Wind speed, mph

Windy

35C

30

25

20

15

10

5

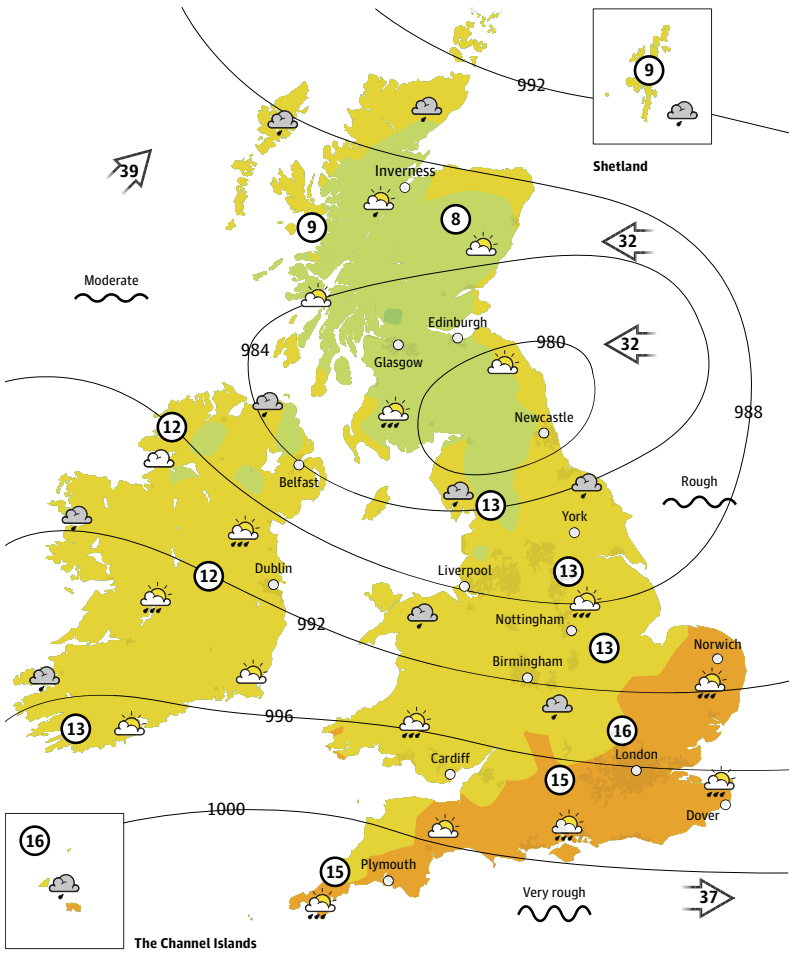
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-5

-10

-15

-20



Forecast

Low 9 High 12

Tomorrow

Low 6 High 11

Wednesday

Carbon count

Daily atmospheric CO₂ readings from Mauna Loa, Hawaii (ppm):

Latest

10 Nov 2023 419.44

Weekly average

05 Nov 2023 419.28

12 Nov 2022 417.00

12 Nov 2013 394.80

Pre-industrial base 280

Safe level 350

Source: NOAA-ESRL

Around the UK

London

Lows and highs 10 16

Precipitation 70%

Air pollution Low

Manchester

Lows and highs 9 13

Precipitation 25%

Air pollution Low

Edinburgh

Lows and highs 6 10

Precipitation 90%

Air pollution Low

Belfast

Lows and highs 8 11

Precipitation 70%

Air pollution Low

Birmingham

Lows and highs 9 14

Precipitation 25%

Air pollution Low

Brighton

Lows and highs 11 16

Precipitation 60%

Air pollution Low

Bristol

Lows and highs 10 13

Precipitation 45%

Air pollution Low

Cardiff

Lows and highs 11 14

Precipitation 25%

Air pollution Low

Newcastle

Lows and highs 6 10

Precipitation 75%

Air pollution Low

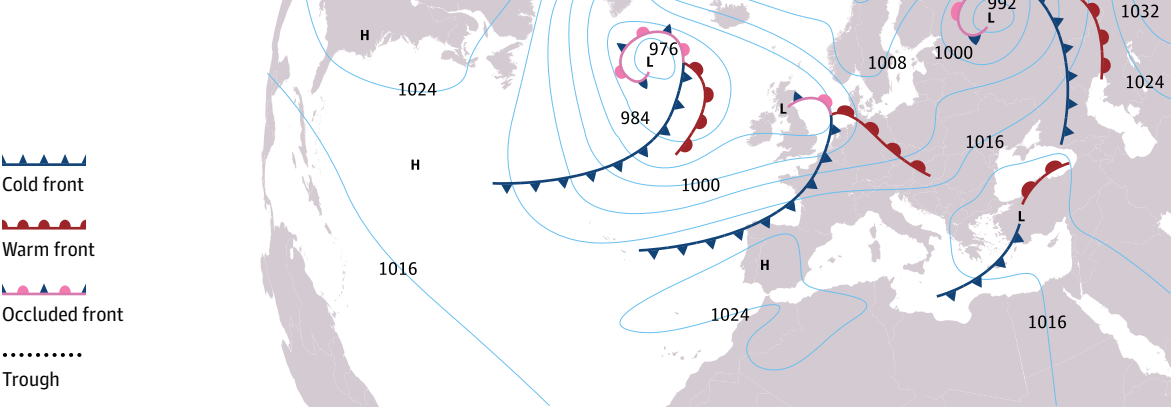
Penzance

Lows and highs 11 15

Precipitation 40%

Air pollution Low

Atlantic front



High tides

Aberdeen	0048	4.2m	1310	4.2m
Avonmouth	0654	12.6m	1911	12.7m
Barrow	1108	9.0m	2322	8.9m
Belfast	1047	3.4m	2256	3.5m
Cobh	0502	4.0m	1716	4.0m
Cromer	0600	4.9m	1825	4.8m
Dover	1035	6.5m	2254	6.5m
Dublin	1111	4.0m	2327	4.0m
Galway	0448	4.9m	1706	4.9m
Greenock	--	--	1224	3.4m
Harwich	1125	3.8m	2346	3.9m
Holyhead	0959	5.5m	2213	5.5m
Hull	0546	7.2m	1811	7.4m
Leith	0209	5.3m	1426	5.4m
Liverpool	1047	9.0m	2301	9.1m

London Bridge	0119	6.7m	1337	6.8m
Lossiemouth	1139	4.0m	2353	4.1m
Milford Haven	0550	6.8m	1805	6.9m
Newquay	0441	6.8m	1656	6.9m
North Shields	0253	4.9m	1516	5.0m
Oban	0524	3.9m	1732	4.0m
Penzance	0414	5.4m	1628	5.4m
Plymouth	0528	5.3m	1744	5.3m
Portsmouth	1112	4.7m	2326	4.6m
Southport	1015	8.7m	2236	8.8m
Stornoway	0627	4.8m	1834	4.7m
Weymouth	0636	1.3m	1852	1.2m
Whitby	0328	5.4m	1551	5.4m
Wick	1104	3.4m	2318	3.5m
Workington	1110	8.1m	2324	8.1m

Sun & Moon

Sun rises 0714

Sun sets 1614

Moon rises 0725

Moon sets 1556

New Moon 13 Nov

AccuWeather.com

Forecasts and graphics provided by AccuWeather ©2023

Lighting up

Belfast	1627 to 0753
Birm'ham	1617 to 0726
Brighton	1617 to 0714
Bristol	1625 to 0726
Carlisle	1612 to 0740
Cork	1646 to 0751
Dublin	1632 to 0748
Glasgow	1614 to 0751
Harlech	1625 to 0737
Inverness	1605 to 0757
London	1614 to 0715
M'chester	1616 to 0732
Newcastle	1607 to 0736
Norwich	1604 to 0715
Penzance	1641 to 0733

Starwatch

The Leonid meteor shower reaches the peak of its annual activity this week. On Friday evening and the early hours of Saturday, watchers will be rewarded with an average of about 10 to 15 meteors an hour.

That may not sound like many, but the Leonids are particularly well known because they are typically bright. This is because they hit the Earth's atmosphere at approximately 37 miles per second, making them faster than any other meteor shower. The meteoroid particles come from the tail of the comet Tempel-Tuttle, which circles the sun once every 33 years. This year, the Earth could clip the meteoroid stream deposited in orbit during the comet's passage in 1767. If it does, it is predicted to happen on 21 November, and the number of meteors may climb to about 100 an hour.

The chart shows the view looking east at 3am on Saturday.

Stuart Clark @DrStuClark

Around the world

Algiers	25	Lisbon	21
Ams'dam	14	Madrid	20
Athens	22	Malaga	23
Auckland	19	Melb'rne	20
B Aires	18	Mexico C	23
Bangkok	32	Miami	30
Barcelona	21	Milan	13
Basra	32	Mombasa	31
Beijing	8	Moscow	3
Berlin	8	Mumbai	36
Bermuda	21	N Orleans	20
Brussels	15	Nairobi	23
Budapest	9	New Delhi	26
C'hagen	7	New York	10
Cairo	30	Oslo	0
Cape Town	26	Paris	17
Chicago	17	Perth	29
Corfu	22	Prague	8
Dakar	31	Reykjavik	6
Dhaka	32	Rio de J	31
Dublin	12	Rome	20
Florence	16	Shanghai	12
Gibraltar	22	Singapore	32
H Kong	22	Stockh'm	2
Harare	31	Strasb'g	16
Helsinki	1	Sydney	22
Istanbul	17	Tel Aviv	28
Jo'burg	26	Tenerife	28
K Lumpur	32	Tokyo	13
K'mandu	24	Toronto	12
Kabul	17	Vancouv'r	10
Kingston	33	Vienna	7
Kolkata	31	Warsaw	7
L Angeles	25	Wash'ton	15
Lagos	32	Well'ton	18
Lima	22	Zurich	15

WSL

Haug pounces to earn Liverpool draw at Spurs

Page 38 →

Tennis

Dart delivers as GB keep seat at the top table

Page 38 →



Sport



▲ Holly Bradshaw has revealed winning Olympic pole vault bronze has damaged her physically and mentally

COLDAGH KILCOYNE/REUTERS

Above and beyond Honest Bradshaw deserves credit for bringing Olympians’ mental health to fore

Sean Ingle



‘I almost question, is it really worth it? If I’ve damaged myself for the rest of my life?’ It sounds like a lament from a punch-drunk fighter with holes in their memory and bank balance. Or an old rugby prop, slurry and soaked with regrets. But these words were uttered last week by a British Tokyo 2020 medallist, Holly Bradshaw, as she asked whether the relentless pursuit of sporting glory had harmed her body and mind.

It was a brave area to explore, given that most Britons reflexively believe the drive for Olympic success is a force for good – and that those who receive lottery money to chase their dreams should count themselves lucky. But Bradshaw’s raw yet vital testimony exposed the pitfalls lurking amid the garlands. In her interview with Athletics Weekly, Bradshaw spoke of having to starve herself for three months to get into shape. Of being hungry at night but only drinking water as she wanted to drop weight. And of suffering multiple illnesses and injuries since winning a pole vault bronze medal in Tokyo, including glandular fever, achilles problems, three hamstring tears and a broken bone in her back.

At one point it sounded as if she could even teach Jean-Paul Sartre a thing or two about existentialism. “I say to my husband: ‘I don’t know who I am,’” she said. “‘When I retire, who am I going to be? You’ve only known me as Holly the athlete. What if I’m a completely different person?’” The 32-year-old did acknowledge that her success in Tokyo had felt overwhelmingly positive. But then came the kicker. “Winning that bronze medal has damaged me

physically and mentally. I just worry, have I damaged myself too much that I can’t get back from that?”

What should we make of all this? Having spoken to multiple people in the Olympic ecosystem, a few things come across. First, Bradshaw, who has a masters degree in psychology and is known as one of the more self-aware members of Team GB, deserves huge credit for being so honest. Recently she has faced the death of her father, a split from her longtime coach, and injuries, so it is no wonder she sounds particularly vulnerable. But she has never shied away from difficult issues. Previously she has spoken about having body image issues around her stomach dating back to youth, and after finishing fifth in Rio she talked about how some in the system had made her feel like a failure.

True, there were some dissenting voices about her interview. Some pointed out the travails of being an elite athlete are minor compared to most people’s struggles in the real world, while someone I particularly respect also questioned why Bradshaw’s coach and federation had not done more to ensure she enjoyed a more balanced life. But there was broad agreement that Bradshaw was voicing in public what many more sports stars suffer in private.

The research backs that up. One academic study which looked at common mental disorders (CMDs) – such as stress, anxiety and depression – among 384 European professional footballers found that 37% had symptoms at some point over a 12-month period. While another, on elite Australian and French athletes, showed that the prevalence of CMDs ranged from 17% to 45% among those studied.

Commendably, Bradshaw has played a broader part in highlighting such issues having co-authored a 2021 academic paper on the post-Olympic “blues”. The study involved 14 anonymous Team GB athletes saying they felt they were “little more than medal producing machines”. The word “dehumanising” is used more than once, with many also suggesting the national lottery system – in which funding is given to a sport on the basis of medal success – is cold and transactional.

One star recalled the pressure they felt before an Olympic final following a conversation with a member of their governing body. “[They] said to us ... we were one medal down on our target and that meant that [the sport] would have had a big cut from UK Sport ... [after they] said: ‘Thank you so much you’ve just saved our jobs, funding.’”

Never mind having the weight of your own medal expectations – imagine having the responsibility for several people’s jobs, too. Another mentioned there was no congratulations after their success. “Instead [they] went straight on to ‘we haven’t met our UK Sport targets so we are going to have a really tough time over the next few months’.”

Athletes also said they felt unsupported during the Olympic Games and upon their return, and Bradshaw makes a number of suggestions to change that – including employing care officers, with the sole responsibility of ensuring people are OK, as well as more former athletes as mentors.

But while many in the system accept the lottery-funded approach isn’t perfect, they also rightly point out it has marched Team GB up the medal table since the failure of the Atlanta 1996 Games. They also stress the culture has improved in recent years. And what, they pointedly ask, is the alternative?

That, perhaps, is also a question that Bradshaw is mulling as she trains for her fourth Olympic Games in Paris, even though she admits: “I’m not doing it because I love it.” Her many admirers will hope she finds yet more success. But, more importantly, greater happiness and peace along the way too.

Social Media Pakistan 0342-4938217

Sky Bet Championship

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Leicester	16	13	0	3	29	10	+19	39
Ipswich	16	12	3	1	36	21	+15	39
Leeds	16	9	4	3	27	16	+11	31
Southampton	16	9	3	4	27	26	+1	30
Preston	16	8	4	4	23	24	-1	28
Sunderland	16	8	2	6	27	17	+10	26
West Brom	16	7	5	4	26	17	+9	26
Hull	16	7	5	4	22	19	+3	26
Cardiff	16	7	3	6	25	19	+6	24
Middlesbrough	16	7	3	6	23	23	0	24
Bristol City	16	6	4	6	16	16	0	22
Blackburn	16	7	1	8	24	26	-2	22
Watford	16	5	6	5	23	18	+5	21
Stoke	16	6	3	7	16	18	-2	21
Millwall	16	5	5	6	19	19	0	20
Norwich	16	6	2	8	29	32	-3	20
Swansea	16	5	4	7	22	21	+1	19
Birmingham	16	5	4	7	19	22	-3	19
Plymouth	16	4	4	8	27	27	0	16
Coventry	16	3	7	6	19	21	-2	16
Huddersfield	16	3	6	7	14	28	-14	15
Rotherham	16	2	5	9	15	32	-17	11
QPR	16	2	4	10	11	27	-16	10
Sheffield Wed	16	1	3	12	7	27	-20	6

Cardiff	(2) 2	Norwich	(1) 3
Bowler 39		Fassnacht 22	
Robinson 43		Wintle 82og	
21,271		Idah 84	
Coventry	(0) 0	Stoke	(0) 0
25,003			
Hull	(0) 1	Huddersfield	(0) 0
Delap 90+2		20,630	
Ipswich	(2) 3	Swansea	(1) 2
Taylor 17		Fulton 7	
Chaplin 22		Lowe 90+5	
Hirst 53pen		28,925	
Leeds	(2) 2	Plymouth	(0) 1
James 21, Piroe 28		Waine 84	
36,718			
Middlesbrough	(0) 1	Leicester	(0) 0
Greenwood 83		30,042	
QPR	(0) 0	Bristol City	(0) 0
17,540			
Sheffield Wed	(0) 0	Millwall	(2) 4
25,678		M Wallace 31, Saville 42	
		Harding 52, Norton-Cuffy 72	
Southampton	(1) 2	West Brom	(0) 1
Smallbone 5		Bartley 65	
A Armstrong 79		30,160	
Sunderland	(1) 3	Birmingham	(1) 1
Bellingham 17		Miyoshi 30	
Sanderson 57og			
Aouchiche 76		40,922	
Watford	(2) 5	Rotherham	(0) 0
Rajovic 10, 45+4			
Kayembe 54, Ince 86		17,349	
Martins 90+4			
(played on Friday)			
Blackburn	(0) 1	Preston	(1) 2
Szmodycs 49		Browne 35	
20,596		Lindsay 90	

LEADING GOALSCORERS
10 Szmodycs (Blackburn). **9** A Armstrong (Southampton); Clarke (Sunderland). **8** Piroe (Leeds, 2 for Swansea); Rowe (Norwich). **7** Whittaker (Plymouth).

Sky Bet League One

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Portsmouth	16	10	6	0	27	12	+15	36
Oxford Utd	16	11	2	3	31	16	+15	35
Bolton	16	11	2	3	30	18	+12	35
Peterborough Utd	17	9	4	4	31	18	+13	31
Stevenage	17	8	5	4	23	17	+6	29
Barnsley	16	8	3	5	31	18	+13	27
Derby	16	8	3	5	28	15	+13	27
Blackpool	17	6	6	5	24	23	+1	24
Lincoln City	16	6	5	5	20	17	+3	23
Bristol Rovers	16	6	5	5	22	20	+2	23
Charlton	16	6	4	6	27	23	+4	22
Wycombe	16	6	4	6	22	24	-2	22
Leyton Orient	16	5	5	6	16	21	-5	20
Burton Albion	17	5	5	7	16	21	-5	20
Cambridge Utd	17	5	5	7	13	20	-7	20
Shrewsbury	17	6	2	9	10	22	-12	20
Port Vale	16	5	4	7	13	24	-11	19
Wigan	17	8	2	7	26	22	+4	18
Northampton	16	5	2	9	17	21	-4	17
Exeter	16	5	2	9	12	22	-10	17
Fleetwood	16	4	4	8	18	25	-7	16
Carlisle	17	3	5	9	13	20	-7	14
Cheltenham	16	2	3	11	7	25	-18	9
Reading	16	3	2	11	15	28	-13	7

Bolton	(0) 1	Blackpool	(0) 0
Thomason 74		24,238	
Carlisle	(0) 0	Bristol Rovers	(1) 1
7,838		Lavelle 38og	
Cheltenham	(1) 1	Wigan	(1) 1
Sercombe 32pen		Freestone 6og	
4,235			
Derby	(1) 3	Barnsley	(0) 0
Collins 35pen 63			
Forsyth 48		28,019	
Fleetwood	(3) 3	Exeter	(0) 0
Broom 6			
Sarpong-Wiredu 32		2,688	
Patterson 42			
Leyton Orient	(0) 2	Oxford Utd	(2) 3
Stevens 48og		Rodrigues 32 47	
Sotiriou 64		Bodin 45+2	
8,614			
Lincoln City	(0) 1	Port Vale	(1) 1
Shodipo 90+3		Garrity 34	
7,751			
Northampton	(0) 2	Burton Albion	(0) 0
Leonard 54			
Hoskins 78		6,640	
Peterborough Utd	(3) 5	Cambridge Utd	(0) 0
Mason-Clark 34 37			
Poku 40 54, Bennett 86og		11,641	
Portsmouth	(1) 2	Charlton	(0) 2
Kamara 3		May 71	
Bishop 76pen		McGrandles 90+3	
19,404			
Shrewsbury	(1) 3	Reading	(2) 2
Bayliss 33		Smith 12	
Dunkley 90+2		Ballard 15	
Sraha 90+8		6,893	
Wycombe	(0) 0	Stevenage	(1) 1
4,936		Reid 45+14	

LEADING GOALSCORERS
12 May (Charlton); Reid (Stevenage). **11** Charles (Bolton); Cole (Barnsley). **10** Bishop (Portsmouth). **9** Hoskins (Northampton); Rhodes (Blackpool).

Sky Bet League Two

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Stockport County	17	12	2	3	37	18	+19	38
Wrexham	17	9	6	2	34	27	+7	33
Mansfield	16	8	8	0	29	13	+16	32
Crewe	17	9	5	3	36	25	+11	32
Notts County	17	9	3	5	33	29	+4	30
Barrow	17	7	7	3	20	15	+5	28
Morecambe	16	8	3	5	25	20	+5	27
Accrington	17	8	2	7	25	24	+1	26
AFC Wimbledon	17	6	7	4	25	19	+6	25
Gillingham	17	8	1	8	14	22	-8	25
Crawley	16	7	3	6	27	28	-1	24
Swindon	17	6	5	6	36	31	+5	23
MK Dons	17	6	5	6	26	24	+2	23
Harrogate	17	7	1	9	16	22	-6	22
Salford City	17	6	3	8	27	26	+1	21
Colchester	17	6	2	9	26	31	-5	20
Walsall	17	5	5	7	24	29	-5	20
Bradford City	17	5	5	7	18	23	-5	20
Doncaster	17	6	2	9	20	27	-7	20
Newport County	17	5	4	8	26	32	-6	19
Grimsby	17	4	5	8	23	28	-5	17
Tranmere	17	4	1	12	21	29	-8	13
Forest Green	16	4	1	11	18	30	-12	13
Sutton Utd	17	3	2	12	23	37	-14	11

AFC Wimbledon	(1) 2	Doncaster	(0) 0
Al Hamadi 45+2 63			
8,013			
Bradford City	(1) 1	Barrow	(1) 2
Smith 33		Telford 1	
17,247		Ray 77	
Colchester	(0) 1	Sutton Utd	(0) 1
Read 80		Sowunmi 90+5	
3,732			
Crawley	(1) 3	Accrington	(1) 1
Orsi-Dadomo 8 76pen		Nolan 2	
Wright 48		2,887	
Crewe	(0) 1	Notts County	(0) 0
Baker-Richardson 90+8pen			
5,663			
Grimsby	(0) 3	Morecambe	(1) 2
Rose 47		Mayor 2	
Green 49		McKiernan 86	
Pyke 59		5,939	
Newport County	(0) 0	MK Dons	(0) 0
3,777			
Salford City	(1) 1	Mansfield	(2) 2
Smith 22		Bowery 19	
3,281		Keillor-Dunn 37	
Swindon	(1) 2	Stockport County	(0) 4
Kemp 31		Collar 52pen	
Young 61		Wootton 69	
8,475		Bailey 73, Camps 89	
Tranmere	(1) 3	Forest Green	(0) 0
Omotoye 8og			
Dennis 47		6,461	
Apter 71			
Walsall	(0) 0	Harrogate	(0) 1
4,654		Thomson 84	
Wrexham	(1) 2	Gillingham	(0) 0
Palmer 1			
Tozer 71		10,268	

LEADING GOALSCORERS
14 Smith (Salford City). 12 Langstaff (Notts County); Young (Swindon). **11** Evans (Newport County); Kemp (Swindon); Mellon (Morecambe); Olaofe (Stockport County).

Non-league

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE								
	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Chesterfield	18	15	2	1	47	24	+23	47
Barnet	19	13	3	3	40	26	+14	42
Solihull Moors	19	10	7	2	29	20	+9	37
Bromley	19	10	6	3	29	19	+10	36
Altrincham	18	8	8	2	33	23	+10	32
Aldershot	19	9	3	7	33	32	+1	30
Gateshead	18	8	5	5	42	25	+17	29
Halifax	19	7	7	5	21	18	+3	28
Rochdale	19	6	6	7	33	32	+1	24
Oldham	19	5	9	5	27	28	-1	24
Eastleigh	19	6	6	7	28	32	-4	24
Wealdstone	19	6	5	8	23	27	-4	23
Hartlepool	19	7	2	10	31	36	-5	23
Woking	19	6	4	9	22	23	-1	22
Dagenham & Red	20	6	4	10	22	27	-5	22
Southend	19	9	4	6	34	20	+14	21
Boreham Wood	19	4	9	6	21	26	-5	21
Dorking	19	6	3	10	21	33	-12	21
York	19	4	7	8	27	37	-10	19
Maidenhead	19	4	7	8	19	29	-10	19
Ebbsfleet Utd	19	5	3	11	25	36	-11	18
Oxford City	19	4	5	10	27	38	-11	17
Fylde	19	4	4	11	28	38	-10	16
Kidderminster	19	3	5	11	12	25	-13	14

Aldershot 1 Kidderminster 0; Altrincham 2 Southend 0; Boreham Wood 1 Bromley 1; Chesterfield 4 Barnet 2; Dagenham & Red 1 Solihull 2; Fylde 0 York 2; Gateshead 6 Dorking 0; Hartlepool 2 Ebbsfleet Utd 2; Maidenhead 1 Halifax 0; Oldham 1 Eastleigh 1; Oxford City 3 Woking 2; Wealdstone 3 Rochdale 2

VANARAMA NATIONAL LEAGUE NORTH								
(top nine)	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Scunthorpe	17	10	4	3	38	15	+23	34
Tamworth	17	10	2	5	29	12	+17	32
South Shields	18	9	5	4	30	18	+12	32
Spennymoor	17	9	3	5	28	23	+5	30
Alfreton	16	8	3	5	30	21	+9	27
Chorley	16	7	5	4	20	17	+3	26
Curzon Ashton	16	7	4	5	21	15	+6	25

Sport

Cricket World Cup



◀ England have been left licking their wounds after a miserable title defence

ALEX DAVIDSON/ICC/GETTY IMAGES

appeared to be pretty much Rob Key's take on things too. It was the turn of England's MD of men's cricket to appear before the media, to offer not just the full tournament debrief and some squad selection chat but also a disarmingly honest mea culpa.

The message: don't blame Mott. Blame me. I appointed Mott. And then I took away his ability to be the best Matthew Mott, something I did by being a hugely inexperienced administrator in a confusing job, whose greatest quality is exactly this kind of yes-the-ship-is-sinking captain's honesty.

Zoom out and the story here remains the same, the sense that the dominant feeling around English cricket is powerlessness.

Perhaps the most interesting thing about Key is the fact he is, by accident, pretty good at his job. Despite being a hunch-hire, he has the intellect and the sense of gentleman-amateur clarity to speak freely, and to give the first honest appraisal of what has happened in India, and of those responsible.

So Key said Mott's only job is to improve his players, which he hasn't done. He said "we have to get back to defining every single role," because under Mott the roles have been undefined. He called out the basic inanity of fielding first in the furnace of Mumbai. He said Mott's England had "lost our identity" and had misunderstood how ODI cricket in India works, while at the same time "overthinking" things.

At which point, just as you wondered when and how the axe must surely fall, Key said: blame me. I put this coaching team in place. I made Tests the priority. This is basically who we have. This is what they have done with it. When life gives you Matthew Motts, you have little choice but to make Matthew Mott-ade.

There was a backhanded edge to this, with the addendum that Mott-Buttler will get one just more chance to fail with the T20 World Cup looming. This seems sensible. England have the talent to compete. Mott-Key may be able to find their rhythm by then.

Meanwhile, looming over all this is the real issue to have stalked the past few months. As Key pointed out, the real issue for England cricket is not six defeats in nine but the fact Ben Stokes, the England and Wales Cricket Board's greatest asset, has just turned down a three-year contract. The real reason the players are drained, wrung out, pulled in different directions is, essentially, the real-time dissolution of international cricket itself.

Even as the days ticked down to that ODI title defence the ECB was bullied into a messy set of contract negotiations that has cast a shadow not just over this World Cup but all the World Cups from here. Everyone is responsible. No one is accountable. In the middle of all this Matthew Mott probably deserves as much of a chance as anyone.

Downfall of the Mott-Key crew: Everyone is responsible and no one is accountable

The dominant feeling around English cricket is powerlessness after the flaccid World Cup defence

Barney Ronay
Kolkata



Everyone is responsible; no one will be held accountable. Welcome to England cricket 3.0. White ball era: the after-party. Actually, this isn't the whole story. It turns out, with tour squads announced and executive briefing complete, that one person will be held accountable for England's mind-bogglingly flaccid 50-over World Cup defence.

That person is Dawid Malan, who was England's best batsman during their mind-bogglingly flaccid World Cup defence, who now has the best England one-day international batting average of all time. And who has now been dropped from the team in all formats. Everyone is responsible for this mess; Dawid Malan will be held accountable. And this is fine.

The next item on England's

immediate post-World Cup review is incoherent messaging, a topic first raised by Eoin Morgan. We hear so much about it. But what does it actually sound like?

At which point, rewind to Eden Gardens on Friday, close to 10.30pm, with the sense already of things sliding into other things. Matthew Mott is standing at the bottom of a stairwell explaining for the first time why, under his watch, England's world champions have performed like a team drained of will, competitive verve and any plan. Here is summary of the things Matthew Mott said about this.

We did what we had to do. I'm really impressed with the professionalism.

We had our backs right to the wall and we pulled out some good performances. In many ways we've turned a corner.

A week after defeats against Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, New Zealand, India, South Africa and Australia, all by startling margins, Mott talked with a visible sense of pride about "character", "fighting back" and (seriously) "true leadership". He talked about tenacity and resilience. He said: "I couldn't be prouder."

And this is fine. It's not Matthew Mott's fault he sounds deluded when these words are set on a page.

It's not Matthew Mott's fault he isn't a good enough communicator to avoid sounding like this. The big thing about Matthew Mott? He's Matthew Mott. What were you expecting? Not Matthew Mott?

By the same token it's not Matthew Mott's fault that he feels no obligation to explain the collapse of a much-loved team, no emotional debt to England's



Matthew Mott has not explained England's failings

The sense of disjunction here speaks to the wider energy of England's World Cup

travelling fans, or those who care about and, in the end, pay for this thing. It's not Matthew Mott's fault his understanding of the role isn't complete enough to see the need, when he speaks of his "learnings", to share with the public some sense of what these might be. For the record that exchange ran like this:

Q Matthew you say you know what went wrong. Would it be a good idea to share some of that, given England came here as champions and finished seventh. Could you tell us two things you would change?

A No. No.

Q You don't feel any duty as coach to share your understanding of what went wrong?

A Whatever.

Q Really? No public duty at all?

A No.

In the interest of completeness Mott also announced, weirdly, in the middle of this, "I'm not going to be clickbait," the only serious response to which is gales of laughter. Seriously bro. You're pretty safe on that one. This stuff? This stuff isn't bait. It's barely click.

Why linger on any of it? Because the sense of disjunction here, of a man speaking from inside someone else's bubble, speaks to the wider energy of England's World Cup, and indeed England cricket.

The only real story in these exchanges is a helpful demonstration of how clarity is lost, of the stark difference between hyper-competence in sport versus those who merely fill the tracksuit. Where is the benefit, really, in blaming Mott for being Mott?

In an unexpected twist, this

New England starts here but only once lessons are learned

Captain and coach will be given a fresh start on the Caribbean tour after disastrous title defence

Ali Martin
Kolkata

At the end of a campaign that started badly and improved only mildly once semi-final hopes evaporated, Rob Key returned to India to count his weary England players back on to the plane. Before doing so came a dose of honesty about the problems faced.

In fact, the England men's team director was practically back in his old commentary role at the team hotel in Kolkata, running the rule over the latest omnishambles. The difference here being Key's own work was under the spotlight. But – in contrast to Matthew Mott, who declined the same opportunity the night before – he was open enough to flag his own shortcomings and the lessons learned.

Like plenty of the actual commentariat, yours truly included, Key thought that by bringing much of the 2015-2019 band back together England would make the top four before big-match nous gave them a sniff come the knockouts. When he started the job in April last year it was the Test side that needed urgent work and there was a T20 World Cup to target; the 50-over side, he and most others thought, was a well-oiled machine.

But the post-Covid schedule squeeze and those two more immediate challenges meant the core seldom played one-day international cricket as one. A degree of caution then set in during the reunion, England losing their aggressive identity as rival teams overtook a side which had failed to evolve. "I made the mistake of thinking that it will be all right when we get there and that's not been the case," Key said, the morning after victory against Pakistan at least confirmed a 2025 Champions Trophy spot.

"We made the assumption that even without playing lots of 50-over cricket, that this is such a good team that it will just slip into old habits and we'll be able to go out there and win. In 2019 our batting was miles ahead of everyone else and the rest of the world was playing catchup. And all that's happened in the time that we've stood still – and actually got more conservative – while everyone else has caught up with the bat. What we needed to do was get out here and understand 50-over cricket out here better, which we didn't do."



▲ Team director, Rob Key, admitted England have stood still since 2019

The T20 World Cup win in Australia came in part because Key got Mike Hussey to park his Baggy Green and don England kit as a consultant. Among the chief regrets in India was not repeating this with a local expert. Instead, Jos Buttler and Mott overthought things.

Age being a factor falls apart when considering the semi-finalists India, New Zealand and Australia similarly hover around the 31 mark. That said, as Key accepted, it was poor that, for all this experience, players still misread in-game situations. India is a country of wonderful variety, where 240 can sometimes be plenty and 340 sometimes not enough.

Key also acknowledged that a lack of proper warm-up cricket in Asia – something which surely helped Australia and New Zealand – was a factor. The World Cup's proximity to the English summer and a locked-in future tours programme left precious little space. When one of their two practice games in Guwahati was

I made the mistake of thinking it will be all right when we get there and that's not been the case



▲ David Willey was the only World Cup player not given a central contract

washed out, the problem was compounded. In saying all this, Key was essentially protecting Buttler and Mott. With credit in the bank from the T20 World Cup win, and just seven months until that trophy is back up for grabs in the Caribbean and the US, the duo Key put together last year have another chance to prove their chemistry works; that their messaging – something queried by Eoin Morgan and others these past few weeks – is indeed aligned.

Key did push back on central contracts being a distraction, everyone knowing where they stood before takeoff and the delay in announcing them because of the small print of the revised multiyear system. It was quite something to hear David Willey, the one player to miss out, say he wasn't sure if he wanted to fly on the day of departure. But even after the left-armer delivered off the bench, Key said he would make the same call again.

While a focus on Bazball might have been one issue it is seemingly now also part of the solution. The Test top three of Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett and Ollie Pope are among those handed the chance to feature in the post-World Cup rebuild in 50-over cricket, starting in the Caribbean next month. It is a tour for bleeding new fast bowlers in Josh Tongue and John Turner, furthering Rehan Ahmed's development, and gleaning information. Recruiting a West Indian consultant for next year is another objective.

Not every player to miss out has had their white-ball career terminated. One curio is Dawid Malan. Only just handed a one-year deal, and having been England's top scorer in this World Cup, the 36-year-old is out of both squads. Key urged Malan to rediscover his T20 form and push for a recall, with that deal – in contrast to Willey's snub – reflecting the fact he started this World Cup a first-choice pick.

No Jonny Bairstow on the other hand reflects his non-stop schedule since a broken ankle. This is a chance to truly work on his fitness. Bairstow, like Joe Root and Mark Wood, is being primed for the Test series in India early next year, while Ben Stokes faces a quick turnaround before then given his impending knee surgery.

The tour is cricket's ultimate challenge, expectations for which won't be nearly so complacent.

Bazball hype has 'made life harder' for Buttler and Mott, says Key

Ali Martin
Kolkata

Rob Key believes the hype around Bazball has "made life harder" for Jos Buttler and Matthew Mott, with the England men's team director deciding the white-ball duo will get a crack at trying to rebuild after the World Cup debacle in India.

Announcing a refreshed set of squads for the Caribbean tour next month, Key offered a mea culpa as regards the seventh-place finish. He blamed his own prioritisation of the Test team and a belief that things would simply click into place for the defending champions, as well as his own failure to augment the coaching staff with some local knowledge.

As such, when asked in the aftermath if Buttler and Mott simply did not have the same chemistry as Ben Stokes and Brendon McCullum do in the Test setup, Key said: "Something that makes life harder for them is that people talk about Bazball."

"I don't think [a lack of chemistry] is the case. I feel this actually should be the making of those two as a partnership. If it isn't, it isn't and you move on. But we have to make sure some good comes out of what has been a very poor World Cup."

"It's very hard for me to be critical of Jos Buttler and Matthew Mott, when I'm the one who, every single time the decision has been made for whether or not we focus on 50-over cricket, Test cricket or T20, I've always chosen Test cricket."

"I hold myself accountable for a lot of it. I've set up a coaching team that had no local experience, really."

As it happens, the reboot of the white-ball squads for the three

Ringing the changes

England's new-look squads for next month's white-ball tour of West Indies:

ODI J Buttler (capt), R Ahmed, G Atkinson, H Brook, B Carse, Z Crawley, S Curran, B Duckett, T Hartley, W Jacks, L Livingstone, O Pope, P Salt, J Tongue, J Turner
T20 J Buttler (capt), R Ahmed, M Ali, G Atkinson, H Brook, S Curran, B Duckett, W Jacks, L Livingstone, T Mills, A Rashid, P Salt, J Tongue, R Topley, J Turner, C Woakes.

one-day internationals and five T20 games next month is in part influenced by the Test tour of India that starts in January, with Key stating Joe Root, Jonny Bairstow and Mark Wood have all been rested – not dropped. Stokes, set for knee surgery this week, is also absent from both legs of the trip.

It appears England have moved on from Dawid Malan, despite the 36-year-old being their leading runscorer in India and receiving a new one-year contract. Moeen Ali, Chris Woakes and Adil Rashid are solely in the T20 squad to face West Indies, even if Rashid's absence is understood to be a case of handing game time to his fellow leg-spinner Rehan Ahmed.

Sam Curran and Liam Livingstone make for curious retentions given their poor World Cup returns; Harry Brook and Gus Atkinson less so. Impetus comes in the selection of Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Ollie Pope – all Bazball Test players – plus Will Jacks, with Hampshire's John Turner and Josh Tongue two uncapped seamers in short-form cricket. Jofra Archer will be missing due to injury.



▲ Matthew Mott and Jos Buttler must oversee a white-ball revamp

India complete unbeaten group stage

India completed a flawless World Cup group stage by hammering the Netherlands by 160 runs in Bengaluru. The hosts made it nine wins out of nine after posting a huge 50-over total of 410 for four, just three runs shy of their World Cup best against Bermuda in 2007.

Shreyas Iyer hit an unbeaten 128 from 94 balls and KL Rahul completed his century in the final over before being dismissed for 102. Rahul reached his hundred in 62 balls – the fastest by an Indian batter at a World Cup – and his fourth-wicket partnership of 208 with Iyer took the game away from the Dutch. Rohit Sharma (61), Shubman Gill (51) and Virat Kohli (51) also went past fifty as India claimed another record: the first time a top five have all hit half-centuries in the same innings in the

competition – and only the third time in the history of ODI cricket.

India were always in control on a flat wicket and the Netherlands were eventually dismissed for 250 from 47.5 overs. Teja Nidamanuru (54) and Sybrand Engelbrecht (45) offered resistance as Mohammed Siraj, Jasprit Bumrah, Kuldeep Yadav and Ravindra Jadeja took two wickets apiece. **PA Media**

Final table	P	W	L	T	NR	RR	Pts
India	9	9	0	0	0	+2.57	18
South Africa	9	7	2	0	0	+1.26	14
Australia	9	7	2	0	0	+0.84	14
New Zealand	9	5	4	0	0	+0.74	10
Pakistan	9	4	5	0	0	-0.20	8
Afghanistan	9	4	5	0	0	-0.34	8
England	9	3	6	0	0	-0.57	6
Bangladesh	9	2	7	0	0	-1.09	4
Sri Lanka	9	2	7	0	0	-1.42	4
Netherlands	9	2	7	0	0	-1.83	4

Tennis Billie Jean Cup

Boulter and Dart seal victory over Sweden in playoffs

Tumaini Carayol
Copper Box Arena

Four years after escaping the lowly zonal groups of the Billie Jean King Cup with a monumental win inside a pulsating Copper Box, Great Britain returned to the same venue as one of the best tennis nations in the world and confidently maintained their spot among the elite with a commanding 3-1 win over Sweden.

Katie Boulter continued to play her role as Great Britain's leader to perfection as she delivered her second win of the tie with a tough 6-1, 7-6 (5) win over Kajsa Rinaldo Persson. The contest was sealed by a solid performance from Harriet Dart, who kept her head and maintained her composure as she defeated Caijsa Hennemann 7-5, 6-2.

With their victory in the playoffs, Great Britain will advance to the qualifiers next April, where they will fight for a place in the finals.

"It's great that we got the job done," said Anne Keothavong, the British captain. "[There] may have



▲ Harriet Dart won her singles match against Caijsa Hennemann

Djokovic defeats Rune

Novak Djokovic secured the year-end No 1 ranking for a record-extending eighth time after beating Holger Rune 7-6 (4), 6-7 (1), 6-3 in their opening game of the ATP Finals in Turin. Djokovic was pushed all the way by his Danish opponent but ultimately prevailed. Earlier, Jannik Sinner delighted his home crowd by defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas. The 22-year-old Italian qualified for the Finals for the first time this season after claiming four ATP Tour titles and beat his Greek opponent 6-4, 6-4. PA Media

been a few bumps along the way but we did what was necessary today."

The tie had begun with a warning on Saturday afternoon as Persson, ranked No 372, played far above her ranking to dig out a 6-4, 6-1 win against the No 93, Jodie Burrage, who froze under the pressure of her Billie Jean Cup debut. Boulter quickly levelled the match with an efficient 6-2, 6-1 win against Hennemann.

From the beginning of the match against Persson, Boulter showed her quality by dominating from inside the baseline with controlled aggression as she blazed through an easy first set. But Persson again played extremely well, retrieving and counterpunching brilliantly as her defence began to elicit errors from the British No 1.

Persson led 5-3, 40-15 in set two, and a third set seemed inevitable, but Boulter rode her luck and demonstrated her mental toughness. Down two set points, Boulter struck a lucky net cord winner before a double fault from the Swede eliminated the set points.

But then Boulter found her feet, dragging herself back into the set and then taking control in the decisive moments right at the end of an arduous tie-break. From 4-5 down in the tie-break, Boulter won the final three points to advance.

"You're not gonna win a set after saving set points without a little bit of heart, a little bit of luck and a little bit of hard work, trusting the process and what I've put in these past many countless years," Boulter said.

After Burrage's unfortunate performance in the opening rubber, the team selections yesterday were unsurprising. Keothavong did not hesitate to replace the British No 2 with Dart, the world No 138, who led her team to the semi-finals last year. Dart's consistency and focus in the decisive moments drove her to a confident victory against Hennemann, ranked No 532, who performed admirably herself but could not keep up.

As she digested her final match of the season, Boulter reflected, with ample satisfaction, on both the best season of her career and her first without any significant injury issues. After being ranked No 157 in March, Boulter has shaved over 100 points off her ranking, reaching a career high of 50 and winning her first WTA title in Nottingham.

"It's been a whirlwind for many different reasons," Boulter said. "I think the work that I've put in the past 10 years has really started to show. You never know when you're going to get your little break, and I finally got one this year. I felt that I used the momentum from the grass court season to the hard court swing."

Keothavong echoed Boulter's satisfaction. At the beginning of the grass court season, with the absence of Emma Raducanu, there were zero British players inside the WTA top 100. Since then, numerous British women have performed well and they finished the tour season on a positive note in front of around 5,500 people on home soil.

"They're all in, generally, a good place at the moment," Keothavong said. "I don't want to get ahead of myself or think too far into the future, but if they keep on putting the work in, there's no reason why they can't be right up there."

Sport
Football



▼ Sophie Román Haug celebrates after scoring Liverpool's equaliser
HENRY BROWNE/THE FA VIA GETTY IMAGES

Women's Super League

Haug header denies revitalised Spurs

Tottenham	1
Bizet 27	
Liverpool	1
Haug 66	
Suzanne Wrack	
Brisbane Road	

Sophie Román Haug was the villain at Brisbane Road, the Norwegian forward heading in as Liverpool came from behind against Tottenham to secure a draw that denied the north London side a chance to climb to second in the league.

Haug's compatriot Celin Bizet had given Tottenham a deserved lead in the first half, but Matt Beard's Liverpool ensured they both stay on 11 points with Spurs ahead on goal difference.

The Tottenham manager, Robert Vilahamn, conceded the draw was "fair" but said the next stage in their development is finding ways to put games to bed. "They are a good team, so when they did [score it] was kind of fair," he said. "It's a tough game, high tempo, so I'm not really disappointed with the performance."

"We want to score more goals. We don't want to defend 1-0. It's the same scenario last week, but it's easier said than done to score goals ... We're in this transition where we're trying to dominate games and trying to [finish off teams], but we need one more step in the development."

Tottenham are a different beast under Vilahamn. Last season the England forward Beth England was the hero, scoring 13 goals in 14 games after her recruitment in January, helping Spurs to avoid the drop. Rehanne Skinner was sacked as manager after nine successive defeats in March and her assistant, Vicky Jepson, was tasked with navigating the relegation battle. They secured five

wins that season, including against relegation rivals Leicester immediately after Skinner's exit, before losing only one of their final five games of the season to claw themselves up to ninth.

This season Spurs are fighting at the top, such is the transformation under Vilahamn. Against Liverpool they could not quite seal a fourth win of the season, but they did move to 11 points, just seven fewer than their tally for the entire 2022-23 campaign.

There was one change to Spurs'

Brighton shock City

Lee Geum-min and Pauline Bremer combined to stun former club Manchester City in a 1-0 win for Brighton. Lee's late goal ensured a second defeat in a row for City, leaving them six points behind leaders Chelsea - who beat Everton 3-0. Arsenal took over as Chelsea's closest challengers after beating Leicester 6-2. Jonas Eidevall's side trailed 2-0 at the break but hit back through goals from Cloé Lacasse (below), Alessia Russo, Caitlin Foord, Victoria Pelova, Stina Blackstenius and Lina Hurtig. Aston Villa took their first points of the season with a 2-0 defeat of Bristol City. Manchester United beat West Ham 5-0. Suzanne Wrack



starting XI that drew 1-1 with Everton last weekend, Drew Spence absent with a hamstring injury and Kit Graham coming in. Beard returned Ceri Holland to Liverpool's starting lineup for the first time since she picked up a calf injury on international duty and Mia Enderby also came in, with Missy Bo Kearns on the bench and Jas Matthews left out of the matchday squad.

Against a similarly resurgent Liverpool, who have stuttered a little after a blistering start to their campaign, Spurs were dominant and patient and they were rewarded just shy of the half-hour. Bizet collected the ball inside her own half after Liverpool lost possession and ran and ran, with red shirts backing off her, before shifting to the right and firing low past Rachael Laws. It was a marvellous solo effort, aided by Martha Thomas drawing away defenders anticipating a pass.

They should have had more for their efforts and were made to pay for their profligacy after the break. Haug moved away from Angharad James and headed in Yana Daniëls's cross in the 65th minute to level.

"We rode our luck a little bit," Beard said. "I don't know if we have got away with one, but plenty of learnings today. We've drawn here today, drawn at West Ham, where we could have won. If you look at last year, we did not win a game on the road, this year we're unbeaten, so I think for us it's about making sure if we can't get three points, we get one."

Spurs searched for a reply and almost caught Liverpool on the break within minutes, Jessica Naz released through the middle before forcing a low save from Laws. Liverpool looked the more likely to score a winner as the clock ticked down, but Spurs clung on to secure a point.

Tottenham 4-3-3 Spencer; James, Bühler (Turner ht), Bartrip, Neville; Ahtinen (Ale 90), Summanen, Graham (Naz 61); Clinton, Thomas, Bizet (Brazil 84) Subs not used Votikova, Zadorsky, Petzelberger, Ayane, Zhang	Liverpool 4-3-3 Laws; Fisk, Bonner, Clark, Hinds; Nagano, Höbinger (Kearns 76), Holland; Enderby (Van de Sanden 43), Haug (Flint 75), Lawley (Daniels 63) Subs not used Spencer, Parry, Lundgaard, Kiernan
Referee Abigail Byrne	

Premier League

Soucek's late winner leaves Cooper angry at defensive lapses

West Ham

Paquetá 3, Bowen 65, Soucek 88

Nottm Forest

Awoniyi 44, Elanga 63

Possession

West Ham 54%

Nottm Forest 46%

Shots on target

6

5

Total attempts

16

10

John Brewin

London Stadium

To establish Nottingham Forest as a Premier League club - and keep Steve Cooper, a manager beloved among its fans in situ - an improvement in away form is desperately required. A game lost from a winning position, albeit one held for just 43 seconds of play, was a severe blow to both objectives.

Even though they knew what was coming, Forest's failure to deal with James Ward-Prowse's expert delivery from corners and Tomas Soucek's aerial prowess cost them the point to which they had been clinging since Jarrod Bowen's headed equaliser. That, too, arrived via Ward-Prowse's boot. One win from seven, four points away from the City Ground, and 15th place with Bournemouth improving fast, spells imminent danger.

"We've not done our jobs and been punished for it," said Cooper, for whom Ward-Prowse's "fantastic" delivery offered no excuses. "If you are not willing to stay with your man and head the ball then you are at the risk of conceding goals. I am really disappointed that we have not won, and it's all our own fault."

While speculation over the widely admired Cooper may seem odd to outsiders, Evangelos Marinakis is

an owner with his own, wilful mind, even if retaining the Welshman's steady hand seems a worthy route to becoming the next Brighton or Brentford. Or indeed a West Ham, even if David Moyes's team have lately been enjoying cup competitions and European expeditions rather than the Premier League. This was a first win in five league matches.

Ward-Prowse received his manager's compliments, gloved in criticism of his colleagues. "He is world class at his deliveries, if I was him I'd be disappointed that the other boys haven't scored more headers," Moyes said.

Forest's initial damage was self-inflicted rather than via Ward-Prowse. As Cooper became only the second Forest manager, after Frank Clark, to make it to 50 Premier League games, his team were down by the third minute. Nicolás Domínguez, trying to pass upfield, succeeded only in hitting the rear end of his teammate Ibrahim Sangaré and Lucas Paquetá required no invitation to smash beyond Odysseas Vlachodimos.

Forest's first-half response was admirable, their first big chance to pull level in the first half coming in the 12th minute, Alphonse Areola getting plenty of hang-time to claw away Taiwo Awoniyi's header. Vladimir Coufal against Anthony Elanga, down the Hammers' right flank, was becoming the key battle. Coufal's early yellow made his afternoon's work harder yet it was from the other flank that Forest's equaliser bookended a first half of which they had slowly gained. Sangaré pinged Morgan Gibbs-White clear and Areola could only palm into the path of Awoniyi.

After so many years of sterling service, Michail Antonio is being phased out as the leader of West Ham's line. Bowen's direct running is now the central foil for the twinned



▲ Tomas Soucek shows his delight after his matchwinning header

▼ Jarrod Bowen evades the Forest defence to equalise for West Ham



creative talents of Mohammed Kudus and Paquetá. Though with neither Paquetá nor Kudus much committed to pressing such artistry comes at cost. "I don't want us to lose that toughness," Moyes said, characteristically doubtful of marrying verve with endeavour.

Forest almost took the lead in slow-motion fashion as the second half began. Elanga and Awoniyi combined, and home fans sighed with relief when the striker failed to hit the target. To take the lead, Ola Aina, up from full-back, angled the ball to Elanga, who had escaped Coufal.

Yet Elanga's elaborate celebration was followed immediately by Bowen, performing an unlikely impression of Antonio, climbing to divert Ward-Prowse's arrowing corner.

For Bowen, that made it 11 goal involvements in 13 games, including nine goals. A bull-like physique honed in the potato fields of his native Herefordshire, as well as Ward-Prowse's nine assists and two goals in 15 games represent Moyes's best hope of arresting his team's slide from a decent start to the season.

Antonio, old dependable, was thrown on in search of a winner from a Forest team that had begun to sag and look to the clock. All 11 Forest players were in their box as Ward-Prowse repeatedly aimed for Antonio and Kurt Zouma but Soucek, just as dangerous, much improved after last season's dip in form, would prove the matchwinner.

First, he went headlong to produce a save from Vlachodimos, before Bowen forced another corner. This time, Vlachodimos, diving low, could not deny him. There was still time for Areola to save from Divock Origi but Forest's away travails were soon confirmed as an ongoing concern. A better away performance than usual was cold comfort for Cooper. That "we have just thrown this away" was as much as he could offer.

West Ham	Nottingham Forest
4-2-3-1	4-3-2-1
Areola; Coufal, Zouma, Aguerd, Emerson; Alvarez (Antonio 79), Ward-Prowse; Kudus (Agbonna 90+5), Soucek, Paquetá (Cresswell 90+9); Bowen	Vlachodimos; Aina (Aurier 76), Niakhaté, Murillo (Boly 76), Toffolo; Sangaré (Origi 90), Mangala, Domínguez (Danilo ht); Gibbs-White, Elanga; Awoniyi (Wood 76)
Subs not used: Fabianski, Fornals, Mavranos, Ings, Benrahma, Kehrer	Subs not used: Turner, Williams, Kouyaté, Yates,
Referee Michael Salisbury	

Saturday's talking points

Arsenal 3 Burnley 1

It was mildly amusing to see Oleksandr Zinchenko whipping up the crowd after winning a tackle during the closing stages at the Emirates. If there is a time for earnest gesticulating for fans to make more noise, it is probably not when you are beating Burnley 3-1, even if Arsenal had to see the game out with 10 men after Fábio Vieira's red card. That said, Mikel Arteta was pleased with Zinchenko, who always excels in possession but can be exposed at left-back. "I really liked how defensively committed he was today," Arteta said. Better opponents may still view him as someone to exploit in defence. **Jacob Steinberg**

Bournemouth 2 Newcastle 0

Two goals took Dominic Solanke to six for the league campaign, equalling his tally for the whole of last season. It has perhaps been longer coming than he would have hoped after winning the Golden Ball when England won the Under-20 World Cup in 2017 but, at 26, he looks a high-class Premier League striker. "He's doing all the good things, on the ball, off the ball," said his manager, Andoni Iraola. Solanke squandered one chance via a momentary hesitation, but then netted two classic poacher's goals, seizing on loose balls in the box to score with a fierce shot and then a clever improvised hip-high flick with his ankle. **Jonathan Wilson**

Crystal Palace 2 Everton 3

Roy Hodgson has backed Eberechi Eze to be called up for England's Euro 2024 qualifiers this week after the midfielder proved his fitness in his first start since the end of September. The 25-year was left out of Gareth Southgate's squad having been sidelined with a hamstring injury but starred in what was a thrilling 3-2 defeat against Everton. With Tottenham's James Maddison having withdrawn through injury, Hodgson is hoping the Palace playmaker could be handed an opportunity against Malta and North Macedonia. "I'm rather hoping that if they are looking for an alternative for Maddison then Eze could be an alternative." **Ed Aarons**

Manchester United 1 Luton 0

Manchester United's academy coaches will have been impressed by Teden Mengi's display on his return to Old Trafford. The United graduate moved to Luton in the summer and has grown into a quick and robust defender who reads danger before it happens and looks more than capable at this level. He will be hoping for more days out at Old Trafford, where he was joined by another United youth product when Tahith Chong came on. The success of any academy should not be measured by the number of players reaching its own first team but by how many careers it creates in the game. United are proving one of the best in class. **Will Unwin**

Wolves 2 Tottenham 1

Wolves have beaten the top two on home turf this season but Gary O'Neil acknowledges the next step is to find some consistency to climb the table. Wolves have gone toe-to-toe against Manchester City, Tottenham, Newcastle and Aston Villa but remain in the bottom half, via defeat at Sheffield United and a draw at Luton. There is a sense that Wolves are at their best when underdogs but they have a chance to assert some authority on Fulham and Burnley after the international break, either side of a trip to Arsenal. Regardless, impressive strides have been made. "We are ahead of the curve in terms of where I expected us to be," O'Neil said. **Ben Fisher**

Salah hits 200 mark as Frank marvels at 'best player in league'

Liverpool	3
Salah 39 62, Jota 74	
Brentford	0
Possession	
Liverpool 59%	Brentford 41%
Shots on target	
10	3
Total attempts	
17	16
Andy Hunter	
Anfield	

Brentford came in search of a club-record fourth consecutive Premier League win but faced the inescapable truth that it is Mohamed Salah who sets the records at Anfield.

The Liverpool phenomenon maintained his prolific form by scoring for the sixth home league game in

succession as Jürgen Klopp's side moved up to second in the table, in the process heightening the significance of their next outing at Manchester City.

Salah struck twice – the second his 200th goal in English football – before a fine finish from Diogo Jota sealed an ultimately impressive victory for Liverpool. Brentford were obstinate and dangerous as they so often are under Thomas Frank, and the hosts required assured defending from Virgil van Dijk, Alisson and company to protect the margin of victory, but they were no match for the quality of Liverpool's attack.

"Off the top of my head he is the best player in the league," the Brentford manager said of Salah. "What a level. He must be one of the best offensive players in the world. Not top 10, top three. When you have a player of that quality it's good."

For Liverpool, that is. "Crazy," was Klopp's take on the Egypt

international's numbers. "A pretty special player."

Liverpool were stretched, and not only by Brentford's potency on the counterattack. Injuries and a suspension for Alexis Mac Allister limited Klopp's options to such an extent that his bench featured seven players aged 20 or under. The roll call of inexperience included Trey Nyoni, who would have been Liverpool's youngest player in a league game had he appeared at the age of 16 years and 135 days. There was still recognisable quality throughout the starting lineup, however, and a centre forward in Darwin Núñez who relished the battle against Brentford's powerful five-man defence.

The Uruguay international was at the forefront of Liverpool attempts to break down a deep and well-drilled defensive line. He was denied twice in the opening stages by the Brentford keeper, Mark Flekken, when Liverpool's fluency in

the final third was amiss, and then had two goals disallowed in five minutes by a combination of an off-side flag and VAR.

Núñez's first finish beyond Flekken was via the inside of a post after Dominik Szoboszlai scuffed a shot into his path. VAR confirmed the assistant referee's original off-side decision, but only after a lengthy check of a marginal call. The second was an overhead kick after Flekken had saved superbly from Van Dijk's header, but Núñez clearly came from an offside position before converting Joël Matip's follow-up header.

Boos circulated around Anfield after VAR's second review but it took the performance of Klopp's *bête noire* in black, the referee Paul Tierney, to truly rile the home crowd. Chants against Tierney rolled from the Kop after he penalised and booked Matip for a foul on Christian Nørgaard, despite the defender first winning the ball. An ironic rendition of "We

love you Tierney" followed when Liverpool were awarded a free-kick.

The breakthrough arrived amid the referee-bashing. Núñez was heavily involved again, beautifully controlling Trent Alexander-Arnold's pass to the edge of the Brentford area and playing an equally impressive ball into the path of Salah as he swept into the box ahead of Mads Roerslev.

Salah steered a trademark finish into the far corner to create yet more history in a Liverpool shirt. He became the first Liverpool player to score in the opening six home league games of a season and only the fourth in total in the Premier League era, following Alan Shearer, Les Ferdinand and Thierry Henry. It also extended Salah's run of scoring or assisting in Premier League home matches to 15 games, a sequence stretching back to January.

Salah's second, and 10th league goal of the season, was a routine header at the back post from a Kostas Tsimikas cross. But no one celebrated, suspecting the ball had gone out of play before Tsimikas delivered. Brentford players appealed as the ball floated across their area. Salah stood still as soon as his header found the inside of Flekken's near post. Eventually VAR ruled the whole ball had not crossed the line and Liverpool could finally savour the moment. They had another to savour when Jota received

First step on the path to victory

Mohamed Salah beats Brentford goalkeeper Mark Flekken to give Liverpool the lead in the first half

ALEX LIVESSEY/GETTY IMAGES



6

Six wins and a +15 goal difference is Liverpool's **best start** to a season from their opening six at home since 1990-91

14

Mo Salah has scored in **14 of his last 15** league appearances at Anfield – 17 goals in total

Tsimikas’s pass on the edge of the Brentford area, cut across the substitute Frank Onyeka and crashed a superb shot beyond Flekken.

The margin of Liverpool’s victory was convincing but the contest would have been much tighter with sharper finishing from Brentford and without the formidable presence of Alisson in the home goal. The Brazil international denied Bryan Mbeumo when the tireless striker was released through on goal by Roerslev, although it was a weak shot from the forward, and made fine saves from a Mathias Jensen free-kick plus an Ethan Pinnock header in the second half.

“I know we lost 3-0 and Liverpool were close to their ‘A’ game but we had big moments and didn’t take them,” said Frank, who claimed Wataru Endo could have been sent off under current VAR interference for a foul on Nørgaard. “The big moments are unfortunately why we didn’t get anything from a good game.”

Liverpool 4-3-3 Alisson; Alexander-Arnold (Quansah 90), Matip, Van Dijk, Tsimikas; Szoboszlai (McConnell 90+4), Endo, Galpo (Elliott 83); Salah, Núñez, Jota (Díaz 83) <i>Subs not used</i> Kelleher, Chambers, Doak, Scanlon, Nyoni	Brentford 5-3-2 Flekken; Ajer, Collins, Pinnock, Mee, Roerslev (Ghoddos 72); Jensen (Yarmolyuk 72), Nørgaard, Janelt (Onyeka ht); Mbeumo, Wissa (Maupay 72) <i>Subs not used</i> Strakosha, Zanka, Peart-Harris, Baptiste, Olakigbe
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Referee Paul Tierney Attendance 50,151



Emery’s Villa show sparkle in the rain to equal club legends

Aston Villa	3
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Robinson 27og, McGinn 42, Watkins 64

Fulham	1
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Jiménez 70

Peter Lansley
Villa Park

The rain teemed down for most people in B6 but all Aston Villa fans can see right now are clear blue skies.

Unai Emery’s free-scoring team equalled the club’s post-war record of winning at home for the 13th league game in a row, matching the run set by the European Cup-winning team across two seasons in 1983. Even as Antonee Robinson inadvertently played a role in all four goals to leave Fulham two places above the relegation zone, Villa moved to within two points of second place in the Premier League.

Robinson’s own goal plus efforts from John McGinn and Ollie Watkins took Villa to 29 goals scored – second only to Manchester City – and means they have won 22 games in this calendar year, equalling another club record, set in 1998. Next up at Villa Park? Only the Premier League champions, on a Wednesday night next month.

Win that, and Villa will have equalled their all-time run of home victories from 1937. Not that Emery is getting too excited, not least as Villa have some other important games before then.

“I don’t want to think a lot about

what we did; but I don’t want to think a lot about what is coming,” the Villa manager said.

“Really I want to enjoy each moment. I want to share with the players the analysis that we are doing. And then try to take full energy again and prepare for the match against Tottenham. Then we are playing here at home again against Legia Warsaw and City and Arsenal.

“They are going to be amazing matches and very big challenges for everybody; so we are going to be very excited.”

Fulham have been as meek on the road as Villa have been vibrant at home. Notwithstanding winning at Ipswich in the Carabao Cup, Marco Silva’s side have not won away in the



▲ Moussa Diaby and Youri Tielemans celebrate Aston Villa’s opening goal
CARL RECINE/REUTERS

league since the opening day of the season at Everton. So Villa could hardly have asked for more obliging opponents. Two goals ahead by the interval, there was an inevitability about proceedings as the Villa Park crowd took to its feet to applaud the team off at the break.

“It was a frustrating afternoon for us,” Silva, the Fulham manager, said. “The first half we were poor on the ball. We didn’t exist on the ball in the first half. HT, we gave them belief, asked them to be more expressive on the ball. Felt we did that. The players fought until the end, much better in second half, but a game is 95 minutes at least.”

VAR encouraged the referee, Simon Hooper, to rule out the penalty he had awarded for Timothy Castagne’s handball in the seventh minute but Villa were undeterred. Youri Tielemans, on his first Premier League start for Villa, made the opening goal, dispatched a superb left-footed cross that eluded both Moussa Diaby and Bernd Leno but deflected in off Robinson.

Matty Cash made a brilliant last-ditch tackle to prevent Willian breaking clear on goal on a rare Fulham foray just before the second

goal. It was a pivotal tackle. Robinson headed clear Lucas Digne’s lofted cross but only as far as McGinn who had time to take a touch away from João Palhinha before driving home his third goal in the past five games from the edge of the area with his favoured left foot.

At least Fulham came out with their tails up after the break and Raúl Jiménez shot against a post, Willian sidefooting the rebound over as Villa sat back.

The improvement from Fulham also played its part in Villa scoring the goal that killed the game, however. When Watkins headed clear Willian’s corner, there appeared no immediate threat as the ball fell to Robinson. The hapless full-back slipped, however, inviting Leon Bailey – just on as a substitute – to run half the length of the pitch and play the ball into the feet of McGinn.

The Villa captain uses his bulky frame so well and stuck his backside out to act as a pivot, taking out two defenders to return the ball outside for Bailey to cross for Watkins to sidefoot in his 11th goal of the season.

There was some consolation for Fulham as Jiménez rolled in his first Premier League goal in 34 games and 20 months, after Wilson played a diagonal pass over the Villa midfield for Robinson to square for the former Wolves striker.

Carlos Vinícius had a goal disallowed for offside while Watkins covered his head with his shirt after nodding wide from four yards out after Palhinha had deflected McGinn’s cross against his own crossbar. But Villa were already home if not dry.

Aston Villa 4-4-2 Martínez; Cash, Konsa, Torres, Digne; McGinn, Kamara, Douglas Luiz, Tielemans; Diaby (Bailey 62), Watkins <i>Subs not used</i> Olsen, Traoré, Moreno, Chambers, Lenglet, Zaniolo, Dendoncker, Durán	Fulham 4-2-3-1 Leno; Castagne, Bassey, Ream, Robinson; Iwobi (Reed 82), Palhinha; De Cordova-Reid (Wilson ht), Pereira, Willian (Traoré 82); Jiménez (Vinícius 74) <i>Subs not used</i> Rodak, Tete, Cairney, Ballo-Touré, Lukic
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Referee Simon Hooper

‘I don’t like 80% of referees,’ says De Zerbi as Brighton held

Brighton	1
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Adingra 6

Sheffield United	1
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Webster 74og

Roberto De Zerbi said he does not like “80% of Premier League referees” after 10-man Brighton were held to a 1-1 draw with Sheffield United at the Amex Stadium.

Simon Adingra had put the hosts ahead with an excellent solo run but the game changed on Mahmoud Dahoud’s 69th-minute red card. The midfielder stamped on Ben Osborn’s achilles, with Adam Webster scoring an own goal moments later to take

United off the bottom of the table for the first time since 23 September.

De Zerbi, who was booked for his touchline behaviour, did not disagree with the red card shown by the referee, John Brooks, but the Brighton manager said afterwards: “I am honest and clear, I don’t like 80% of English referees. That isn’t a new opinion. I don’t like them. I don’t like their behaviour on the pitch.

“England is the only country where when there is VAR, you are not sure that the decision is right. In other countries, you have to be sure 100% that the decision taken is right. In England, no, and I am not able to understand.”

Both teams have scored in all of Brighton’s past 16 matches, equaling Everton’s Premier League record, including 12 since the start of the campaign – last achieved in the top flight by Liverpool in 1966-67.

De Zerbi is now on his longest run without a league win as Brighton manager, with his side having gone six games without taking three points. “We are spending time in an unlucky period,” the Italian said.

“I think we have lost four points; two against Fulham and two today. There wasn’t a game until the red

card. There was only one team on the pitch. Brighton could have won the game two- or three-nil, but after the red card the game changed. We lost order and our style.”



Simon Adingra’s goal proved too little for Brighton

Adingra went on a mazy run before finishing after a give-and-go with Facundo Buonanotte in the fifth minute. But after the red card, Jayden Bogle’s powerful cross was diverted into his own goal by Webster. It was the first time United had strung together two games without defeat in the top flight since July 2020.

“Maybe getting off the bottom is important because people keep mentioning it but I’m not bothered. Not yet,” the visiting manager, Paul Heckingbottom, said. “What is pleasing is how we’ve played against a good team. It is always about the points. I can give lots of reasons why we haven’t picked up more points this season: the way we started the season, final moments in games where we could and should have.” PA Media

Brighton 4-2-3-1 Steele; Gross, Webster, Van Hecke, Igor; Gilmour (Baleba 71), Dahoud; Buonanotte (Pedro ht), Lallana (Mitoma ht), Adingra; Fati (Veltman 71) <i>Subs not used</i> Verbruggen, Joao, Moder, Hinshelwood, Boalitey, O’Mahony	Sheffield United 3-4-2-1 Foderingham; Baldock, Trusty, Robinson; Bogle (Osula 90), Vinicius Souza (Osborn 52), Norwood, Thomas; McAtee (Slimane 85), Hamer; Archer <i>Subs not used</i> Lowe, Fleck, Traoré, Osborn, Laroui, Brooks, Amisiah
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Referee John Brooks Attendance 31,367

Erling
Haaland
bundles in
Manchester
City's third
goal off his
backsideJOHN SIBLEY/
ACTION IMAGES/
REUTERS

Palmer makes a point against former club as the goals fly in at the Bridge

Chelsea 4

Silva 29, Sterling 37, Jackson 67, Palmer 90+5pen

Manchester City 4

Haaland 25pen 47, Akanji 45+1, Rodri 86

Possession



Shots on target



Total attempts



David Hytner
Stamford Bridge

So, Cole Palmer. How are your nerves? The question came in stoppage time, at the end of a breathless advert for the global pull of the Premier League. Manchester City led 4-3 but now the

player that they sold to Chelsea in August stood over a penalty.

Palmer had joined the City academy at the age of eight. He started the season with goals for them in the Community Shield and the European Super Cup. Now it fell to him to derail the momentum they had built over a five-game winning sequence; to fire Chelsea's season some more, too, after the win at Tottenham last Monday.

The wait seemed to stretch for an eternity. But when Palmer stepped up he made no mistake, scoring for a fourth time in Chelsea colours; each of them nerveless conversions from the spot. Pep Guardiola had said the really big clubs did not care to whom they sold. Had he tempted fate?

Palmer was excellent here and so was another former City player, Raheem Sterling, who had scored

for 2-1 at a point towards the end of the first half that came to feel like a lifetime ago. City thought they had nicked it when Rodri watched an 86th-minute shot deflect off Thiago Silva and fly into the opposite corner.

Erling Haaland scored two more to make it 4-1 in 47 league appearances for City, Manuel Akanji got the other and it looked set to be a tale of heart-break for Mauricio Pochettino and Chelsea. The manager was close to combusting on a number of occasions, driven to distraction by the decisions of the referee, Anthony Taylor – a perennial villain in these parts. Pochettino boiled over spectacularly upon the full-time whistle, feeling there had been a big foul on Sterling by the City substitute Mateo Kovacic moments before it.

But, after Rúben Dias had dived in on another substitute, Armando



Kyle Walker
clashes with
Axel Disasi
as tempers flare

Broja, to concede the last-gasp penalty, it was over to Palmer to put himself at the centre of the story.

What a game it was, the touch paper lit midway through the first half by a penalty award for City that was controversial – and not only because the visitors had played on while Chelsea had three players down. First Conor Gallagher pulled up after hurting himself in the act of closing down Dias and then, after City went up to the other end, Reece James collided with Moisés Caicedo as they went for a high ball. There was no obvious clash of heads.

When City pumped it back into the area, Haaland put his hands on Marc Cucurella, who responded in kind and watched the City striker go to ground. Taylor gave what had to be described as a soft spot-kick and Haaland converted with relish.

Chelsea's response bristled with personality. They had brought the intensity at the outset, moving the ball quickly and smartly. Now they went up another notch. James led by example, driving from right-back; Gallagher was a non-stop source of energy. City celebrated when Ederson tipped over a James free-kick. But Chelsea had the last

Top 10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	GD	Pts
Manchester City	12	9	1	2	32	12	+20	28
Liverpool	12	8	3	1	27	10	+17	27
Arsenal	12	8	3	1	26	10	+16	27
Tottenham	12	8	2	2	24	15	+9	26
Aston Villa	12	8	1	3	29	17	+12	25
Manchester Utd	12	7	0	5	13	16	-3	21
Newcastle	12	6	2	4	27	13	+14	20
Brighton	12	5	4	3	25	21	+4	19
West Ham	12	5	2	5	21	22	-1	17
Chelsea	12	4	4	4	21	16	+5	16

laugh when Gallagher sent over the corner and Silva timed his run in front of Haaland to glance a brilliant header inside the far post.

Phil Foden shimmered with menace. He almost supplied Haaland with a cross after beating Cucurella and then, after stepping inside the same opponent, he blasted inches past the far post.

Chelsea scored next, Sterling tapping home at the far post, although he had the presence of mind not to celebrate in front of the City fans after running past them. Palmer started the move, trying to play in James, who watched the ball break off Josko Gvardiol's foot before firing over a low first-time cross. Back came City. Haaland was denied by a fine Robert Sánchez save after slicing on to a Julián Álvarez pass and Pochettino was incandescent when his team switched off on a City short corner in first-half stoppage time. Bernardo Silva's delivery was wicked but who had tracked Akanji's run? Nobody.

There was no let-up from City at the start of the second half. Not from Foden. And certainly not from Haaland. City's third goal had its origins by the corner flag on their defensive left and was fired when Haaland rolled away from Caicedo's attempted interception in the centre of the field. Foden waited for Álvarez to overlap, which he did at pace and there was Haaland sliding in on the cross to bundle home.

City looked ready to pile on the pain. Their counters were sharp and threatening, although Jérémy Doku did err with a dive inside the area for which he was booked.

Chelsea revived, again. Palmer almost tricked through on the hour, beating three players but not Ederson and the next equaliser followed a spill by the City goalkeeper after Gallagher had unloaded. Nicolas Jackson took a touch on the rebound and guided into the net.

Who could land the knockout? The home crowd howled when Kyle Walker got away with a handball on the edge of his own area and then some more when the substitute Malo Gusto lifted a gilt-edged chance high after Sterling had robbed Rodri. So to Rodri at the other end. And then to Palmer. With practically the last action, Walker had a chance from a free-kick after Sterling had scythed through Foden. He blasted high. A City winner would have been too much.

Chelsea	Manchester City
4-2-3-1	4-1-4-1
Sánchez; James (Gusto 64), Disasi, T Silva, Cucurella; Caicedo (Broja 90), Fernández (Mudryk 64); Palmer, Gallagher, Sterling; Jackson (Ugochukwu 90)	Ederson; Walker, Dias, Akanji, Gvardiol; Rodri; Foden, Álvarez (Kovacic 79), B Silva, Doku (Grealish 59); Haaland
Subs not used: Petrovic, Badiashile, Madueke, Maatsen, Matos	Subs not used: Ortega, Carson, Phillips, Nunes, Bobb, Lewis

Referee Anthony Taylor Attendance 39,532

Analysis

Jonathan Liew *Stamford Bridge*



Pochettino unleashes Chelsea's attacking force, and City feel the sting in a dizzying encounter

There was a moment's silence before the start of the game, not that you'd have noticed. Matchdays at Stamford Bridge these days dawn with a curious mixture of fascination and foreboding: roughly akin to the sensation of sitting down in a restaurant that has a 3.3 rating on Google Maps. Nobody really knows what to expect any more. What constitutes success amid the permanent concussion of post-Abramovich Chelsea? Top four? A sense of stylistic progress? An unchanged starting XI?

In this respect, it was tempting to suggest that these 104 minutes of football changed little. We knew that Chelsea thrive against opponents who give them space to run into; that they remain barely competent at defending the areas around their penalty box. That they are capable of producing moments of sublime quality and moments of abject calamity, and as you scan the barcode on your ticket you have no idea of knowing which will prevail.

It was a game that defied narrative, a game that both teams led and then neither did, a game you wanted to inhale even as it sucked all the air out of your lungs. And yet by the end, something vital and important *had* changed here, at least for Chelsea. Perhaps it was the sight of Mauricio Pochettino screaming at the fourth official as the final whistle blew, his eyes wild and dancing, his hair sodden and skewed, as if he had missed the team bus and been forced to swim the last two miles. For much of his time at Chelsea, Pochettino has sought to paint himself as the

▼ Rúben Dias fouls Armando Broja leading to Chelsea's late penalty JAVIER GARCÍA/SHUTTERSTOCK



▲ Cole Palmer scores a penalty in injury time to equalise for Chelsea

professional face of this runaway football club, the sanity amid the chaos. Here, instead, he looked like a man finally beginning to feel something again.

And perhaps this was the game when Chelsea finally started to feel something again. Buoyed by the weirdness of their derby win against Tottenham on Monday, they tore into the champions with a sense of focus and purpose that has been so rare from them this season. A game that began in a subdued and almost eerie quiet ended with the Stamford Bridge roof being blown off its hinges, with a crowd incensed by the refereeing but ultimately thrilled by the spectacle, by the speed and ambition, by the way they kept smashing open a game that Manchester City were trying their hardest to shut down.

They did it by doing what so few teams dare to do against City. So many teams seek safety in numbers, massing numbers behind the ball and taking their chances on the break. Instead Chelsea trusted themselves to win the individual

battles, embraced the collisions and duels, tried again and again to dribble their way through the best defence in Europe. Reece James dealt so handily with Jérémy Doku on the right flank that Pep Guardiola was forced to take him off. Enzo Fernández, for all his rich flourishes on the ball, did superbly to neutralise the threat of his international teammate Julián Álvarez. Marc Cucurella held his own against Phil Foden despite playing almost 80 minutes on a yellow card.

And then there was Raheem Sterling. For much of his Chelsea career, Sterling has jogged around the pitch like a man staging a mellow protest at the madness unfolding around him. He no longer makes the England squad. Cole Palmer now takes the penalties. Occasionally Sterling would pop up with a cursory goal against Nottingham Forest or Luton or somebody like that. But quietly, over the past few weeks, some spark of the old ambition seems to have been smouldering within him. This was the game when he finally burst into flames.

Was it the fact that it was his old club? Probably not. But perhaps it was no coincidence that the two players who unlocked City here were those who know how the Guardiola mainframe works. While Sterling ran at Kyle Walker, dragging him inside, Palmer ghosted into the open spaces left behind, wriggling through gaps, taking the ball on the sidestep in the classic Guardiola style. It was Palmer who helped create Sterling's first-half goal - his first for Chelsea against a top-half club - and Sterling who created the injury-time penalty that Palmer converted.

Occasionally Chelsea would regret their decision to turn the game into an arm wrestle. Cucurella conceded the City penalty by allowing Erling Haaland to steal ahead of him, a place from which there are no good options. The second-phase defending for Manuel Akanji's equalising goal was a free-for-all. And Moisés Caicedo was partly responsible for City's third goal, gambling on winning the ball against Haaland and putting himself out of the subsequent phases. These are the errors that will always give opposition teams a sniff.

But the devil here was not in the detail but the design. This was Chelsea finally unleashed as an attacking force, finally beginning to push the outer limits of their potential, finally playing the sort of football that raises the pulse. And this was Stamford Bridge as a fortress, a crowd finally beginning to believe in what it sees, finally beginning to respond. What sort of standard should Chelsea expect from themselves these days? This game, in its own dizzying way, was an answer.

FA investigates 'Hitler' post from council member

Jacob Steinberg

The Football Association has launched an investigation into one of its own council members, who has been forced to apologise for saying that "Adolf Hitler would be proud of Benjamin Netanyahu".

Wasim Haq, who joined the FA as a "BAME Football Communities Representative" in 2019, sparked fury after commenting on social media about Israel's war with Hamas. Haq, who also holds positions with England Golf and the Lawn Tennis Association, deleted the post and denied that he is antisemitic.

The FA initially said Haq had deleted the post and had apologised for causing offence after the post was brought to the governing body's attention yesterday afternoon. But there were soon calls from Lord Wolfson, who chairs the FA's Football Regulatory Committee, for further action to be taken.

Haq, who previously held a role on the FA's Inclusion Advisory Board, had posted on X: "Netanyahu has sacrificed his own people to maintain power ... whilst #Palestinians are trying to maintain their sanity. Adolf Hitler would be proud of Benjamin Netanyahu."

Lord Wolfson said: "Taking down the tweet and apologising is the minimum. That is necessary but it plainly can't be a sufficient response. Using the language of nazism to attack Jewish or Israel is one of the examples of antisemitism by the IHRA [International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance], and the FA adopted the IHRA in January 2021. I've asked [the FA chair] Debbie Hewitt for a formal and urgent investigation. It is something to be treated with the utmost seriousness."

The FA later confirmed an investigation will take place. A spokesperson described Haq's post as "unacceptable" and "highly offensive". The LTA also disassociated itself from the post and will be investigating Haq, who has expressed support for Palestine in recent days.

After deleting the post, Haq said: "It has been brought to my attention that a tweet I published yesterday has caused offence. I have deleted the tweet and apologise unreservedly to anyone that has felt offended."

The FA has faced criticism for its response following the attack by Hamas on Israel on 7 October. Leading Jewish groups were disappointed with the refusal to light the Wembley arch in the colours of the Israeli flag last month. A minute's silence in memory of all victims of the conflict was held before England's matches against Australia and Italy.

The FA also caused anger following a perceived failure to condemn historic tweets on boycotting Israel by Deji Davies, the chair of the FA's inclusion advisory board. Davies deleted the posts, which were sent in 2013.

Barney Ronay

Mott-Key crew have no answers to explain England woes



Page 36 →

Sean Ingle

Bradshaw's brutal truth shines light on mental health

Page 33 →

The Guardian
Monday
13 November
2023



Sport

► Cole Palmer plays it cool after firing home Chelsea's dramatic fourth goal at Stamford Bridge
DYLAN MARTINEZ/REUTERS



Chelsea

4

Silva 29
Sterling 37
Jackson 67
Palmer 90+5pen



Manchester City

4

Haaland 25pen 47
Akanji 45+1
Rodri 86

Cole and the commotion

Palmer seals epic draw as Pochettino is sorry for rant

David Hytner
Stamford Bridge

Mauricio Pochettino apologised for his meltdown at the end of Chelsea's 4-4 draw with Manchester City as he saluted the burgeoning mental strength of his team.

The Chelsea manager raged at the referee, Anthony Taylor - who had earlier given City a controversial penalty for 1-0 - after he blew for full-time rather than for a foul by Mateo Kovacic on Raheem Sterling.

Pochettino, who had to be held back from Taylor and was shown a yellow card, felt that Sterling might have been able to get away for a last-gasp chance. Pep Guardiola, the

City manager, waited for Pochettino to shake hands with him. It did not happen as his rival contended with the red mist.

"I need to apologise to Anthony and the [assistant] referees and the fourth official," Pochettino said. "In this moment, I feel maybe Raheem



▲ Mauricio Pochettino displays his fury with referee Anthony Taylor

can go through and go to score the fifth and when the game finishes, I turn and say: 'What the...?' I said: 'Why stop in this moment?' Then I turned and said: 'I deserve to be booked.' Because I crossed the limit so I want to apologise because it's not a good image for me and for football, this type of behaviour."

Guardiola said he had zero problem with the lack of a handshake with Pochettino. "No, it's not a problem," he said. "It's completely fine."

Pochettino said: "I want to apologise to him [Guardiola] also because in this moment I didn't see [him waiting]. I was focused on this action."

Chelsea have now drawn against Liverpool, Arsenal and Manchester City and won at Tottenham.

"We showed character, mentality," Pochettino said. "We showed we also have tools - against a team like City - to dominate and create chances. We are still far away in terms of the table. But there is a different noise in the stadium and this kind of performance we can really use for the future."

Guardiola said: "If you expect everyone to come here and win 0-7 then you are wrong. Do you know what Chelsea have done [to build this team]? In the past it was City, City, City who have done that. Chelsea is Chelsea, one of the great teams in the past 25 years. I know how good they are. For us, it was a good test. We take a good point. It was a fair result."

Report and analysis Pages 42-43 →

Klopp rails at early kick-off for crucial City showdown

Andy Hunter
Anfield

Jürgen Klopp has criticised the decision to switch Liverpool's visit to Manchester City to a 12.30pm kick-off after the international break and claimed it was made by "people who cannot feel football".

The game at the Etihad Stadium on 25 November, in which first will host second in the Premier League, was originally planned for 5.30pm but a late kick-off time was rejected by a safety advisory group following several incidents between supporters of the two clubs. The rescheduled time for the high-profile contest, and another early kick-off for Liverpool after an international break, has been greeted with incredulity by Klopp.

"Today was about getting through the game and we did," the Liverpool manager said following his team's 3-0 win against Brentford. "The boys responded sensationally well. Now they are all gone and we can train once before Manchester City. How can you put a game like this on Saturday at 12.30pm? Honestly, the people making these decisions, they cannot feel football, it is just not possible."

"These two teams could have, all together, about 30 international players. They all come back on the same plane by the way, all the South American players. They all fly back together, we put them on the plane from Uruguay, Brazil, Argentina and Colombia. One game, one plane, they all come back. We just have to make sure we are ready for this game."

Liverpool moved up to second with an impressive defeat of Thomas Frank's team. Mohamed Salah continued his prolific form with two goals and Klopp claimed there is much more to come from his new-look side.

"We didn't play perfect football yet, not even close, but we fight our way through in moments, we showed a top reaction today and it is all fine."

Liverpool up to second Page 40 →



▲ Mohamed Salah scored twice in Liverpool's win against Brentford*