

# 'Slow' ocean may cause climate chaos

NEWS BULLETIN

## Journalist's complaint about minister dismissed

The Cabinet Office has dismissed a complaint about Kemi Badenoch, the equalities minister, by arguing that her tirade at a journalist was issued from a "personal" Twitter account.

Ms Badenoch was widely criticised for accusing Nadine White of "creepy and bizarre" behaviour after the *HuffPost* reporter sent a standard request for comment to a Government press office.

The row led to an alert about the risk to media freedom being registered with the Council of Europe.

Alex Chisholm, the Cabinet Office permanent secretary, said Ms Badenoch was responsible for her own conduct on her social media account.

## Watch firm goes crypto to move with the times

A small Welsh watch business is believed to be the first company in the world to use new payment technology which allows customers to purchase items with cryptocurrencies.

Watches of Wales, based in Cardiff, says it hopes the move to accepting digital currency like Bitcoin will offer a "VIP experience" to customers around the globe and was prompted by a desire "to move with the times".

The payment technology, Utrust, facilitates transactions with any of the major cryptocurrencies and allows customers to choose which digital assets to pay with.

The digital currency is automatically converted into cash for businesses.

## Small businesses given online security advice

Cyber security guidance for small businesses is being offered through an online tool from the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC).

The Cyber Action Plan is being rolled out in response to an increase in small businesses moving online for the first time. The most recent Government Cyber Security Breaches survey found that almost half of small companies had reported a cyber attack in the past year.

Sarah Lyons, NCSC deputy director for economy and society, said: "Small businesses are the lifeblood of this country, but we know they can be a target for cyber criminals, particularly as they move more operations online."

## Mill cleaner who died in blast wanted to quit job

A mill cleaner killed in an explosion told a neighbour the night before the blast that she was looking for another job because the working conditions were so bad, a court has heard.

Dorothy Bailey, 62, died along with Derek Barks, 51, a maintenance fitter, Derek Moore, 62, a mill worker, and Jason Shingler, 38, a chargehand, in the explosion at the wood mill in Bosley, Cheshire, on July 17 2015.

Wood Treatment Ltd, which ran the mill, denies corporate manslaughter. George Boden, 65, its owner and director, denies gross negligence manslaughter and a health-and-safety offence. The trial at Chester Town Hall continues.

## Ofcom inquiry into DJ's 'pay-for-play' radio deal

Ofcom has launched an investigation after it was alleged that a Capital Xtra DJ asked artists for payments of £200 to play songs on his weekly radio show.

The watchdog is looking into the actions of DJ Tiiny, who has toured with stars including Stormzy. One listener complained to Ofcom about the reported pay-for-play deal, which breaches the watchdog's code on commercial arrangements.

DJ Tiiny, whose real name is Frank Boakye-Yiadom, had been on Capital Xtra since 2018 but he was dropped earlier this month.

DJ Tiiny released an apology on Twitter in which he said he had learnt "a much-needed lesson".

## Father to be sentenced over murder of daughter

A father will today be sentenced after being found guilty of murdering his five-month-old daughter.

Philip Peace, 43, of Dudley, West Midlands, was convicted after a five-week trial at Birmingham Crown Court.

Jurors heard how Summer Peace had been shaken and thrown and suffered serious injuries, including fractured ribs, retinal bleeding and a brain injury. Peace had been alone looking after Summer in 2017 when he called 999, telling the operator she had become unresponsive.

Summer was taken to hospital but life support was withdrawn the next day, as it became clear nothing could be done to save her.

## The Daily Telegraph

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The Daily Telegraph, 111 Buckingham Palace Road, London, SW1W 0DT

## Atlantic 'conveyor belt' at its most sluggish in 1,000 years may lead to extreme weather, warn scientists

By Emma Gatten ENVIRONMENT EDITOR

THE Atlantic current system that maintains mild weather in Europe is at its weakest in over a millennium, most likely because of climate change, scientists have found.

The Atlantic Meridional Overturning Circulation (Amoc) is part of a system of ocean currents that acts as a conveyor belt to move water around the Earth, redistributing heat and acting as a key link in maintaining the world's climate. It began a serious slowdown around

1850 and is now at its slowest in 1,000 years, according to a study in the journal *Nature Geoscience*.

It is not certain what the impact of further weakening will be on weather patterns, but scientists believe it could bring more heatwaves in Europe, and sea level rise on the east coast of the US.

The impact of changing water temperatures is also potentially devastating for some marine life, with the slowdown already linked to lower cod numbers off Maine.

Some evidence suggests there could be a "tipping point" sometime after 2100 when the system collapses, which could cause intense winter storms in Europe and a significant cooling effect across the northern hemisphere that would not be offset by global warming. Co-author Dr David Thornalley, from

University College London, said: "This study shows the increasing evidence in support of the modern Atlantic Ocean undergoing unprecedented changes in comparison to the last millennium, and in some cases longer."

## 1850

The year, roughly, that the ocean 'conveyor belt' began to slow. It could now cause more heatwaves in Europe, it is claimed

Scientists from Ireland, Britain and Germany looked at 11 different sources of data, including tree rings, ocean sediment and corals.

The Amoc has only been directly

measured since 2004, leaving scientists to rely on indirect measurements such as these to monitor historic change, which produce imprecise results.

Dr Laura Jackson, a Met Office scientist specialising in Amoc who was not involved in the study, said there were "still uncertainties associated with using these indirect observations".

But the paper adds to previous research that found a weakening of the Amoc, with one study suggesting there has been a 15 per cent decrease since the mid-century.

Climate change models assume a slowing of the Amoc, because the water is driven by its density, which is due to low temperatures and salinity.

Both of these are expected to change as greenhouse gases warm the atmosphere and melting ice and increased

rainfall reduces saline content. Dr Andrew Meijers, deputy science leader of polar oceans at British Antarctic Survey, said: "The Amoc has a profound influence on global climate, and particularly in North America and Europe, so this evidence of an ongoing weakening of the circulation is critical new evidence for the interpretation of future projections of regional and global climate."

But Tim Palmer, a professor in climate physics at Oxford University, said: "The extent to which Amoc variability affects European weather is a matter of great uncertainty, as there are many other drivers for variations in European weather, including atmospheric chaos."

"Overall, this is an interesting study. However, it shouldn't be over-interpreted."

## Sunak's Budget may be sunk by Tory rebels and tactical Labour

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yet to rule out increases in capital gains tax or allowing a 5p per litre increase in fuel duty to go ahead as planned. He is also expected to freeze the personal income tax allowance thresholds of £12,500 and £50,000, a "stealth" tax raid that could raise billions of pounds.

Some revenue-raising measures may be pushed to November, his next major financial statement, when it is hoped the economy will be better placed, with the worst of the Covid pandemic over.

Mr Sunak has made clear in the past he is by instinct a low-tax Tory, but his willingness to countenance tax rises has concerned some Conservatives. Mr Cameron told CNN: "Today we do face very different circumstances. So piling, say, tax increases on top of that before you've even opened up the economy wouldn't make any sense at all."

"I think it's been right for the government here in the UK and governments around the world to recognise this is more like a sort of wartime situation."

Mel Stride, chairman of the Treasury select committee, said the Chancellor risked a Tory rebellion if he pushed up capital gains tax. And Sir Keir Starmer, the Labour leader, came out firmly against tax rises on families and businesses, aligning his party to the Tory backbench in a way that could increase the possibility of a successful rebellion.

About 68 Tory MPs have written to Mr Sunak demanding a "significant cut in beer duty" before the 2024 election, saying it would help pubs shuttered during the pandemic. It came as the Chancellor was warned in a letter from hospitality leaders that one in five businesses had insufficient cash to survive the rest of February.

Allegra Stratton, the PM's press secretary, said No10 considered Tory votes against the Budget as a confidence issue, meaning rebel MPs could lose the whip. A Treasury spokesman declined to comment on the Budget's specifics.

## HMRC boss receives scam tax call as fraud reports rise

By Daily Telegraph Reporter

THE chief executive of HMRC received a call from fraudsters pretending to be the taxman, he has revealed amid a spike in reported scams.

Jim Harra issued the warning on Twitter as he advised the public to report any suspect contact from criminals.

He said: "We've seen an increase in scam calls recently so are doing what we can to warn people."

"As chief executive of HMRC, even I received a scam call this week."

The fake call was a common scam the revenue body has been hearing about – a pre-recorded message from someone purporting to be from HMRC and falsely claiming his national insurance number had been compromised.

HMRC said earlier this week that NI scams allowed fraudsters to demand payment on a fake debt or to harvest personal and financial details.

It released figures this week showing that the number of phone scam reports tripled from 10,997 in December to 33,053 in January, as people worked from home. Reports of scam texts and emails also spiked last month as criminals tried to cash in.

Criminals pretending to be HMRC officials have been targeting taxpayers at the height of the self-assessment tax return period, usually offering bogus tax rebates. They have also called people directly to threaten legal action over unpaid tax, or sent emails or texts offering fake support or grants.

Fraudsters have also taken advantage of Covid-19 to approach people with fake offers of government support for people and businesses.

In the past year, HMRC has responded to 259,675 reports of phone scams, up 31 per cent on the previous year.

People who are worried that they have fallen victim to a scam should contact their bank immediately and report it to Action Fraud.



**Golden touch** A conservator works on one of 12 wrought iron panels by Jean Tijou, a Huguenot who came to England in 1689, in the Privy Garden at Hampton Court Palace.

## Britain cannot 'wash its hands' of IS brides, MPs warn

By Charles Hymas and Robert Mendick

REFUSING to repatriate Shamima Begum and other British Islamic State brides will fuel the terrorist threat against the UK, senior Tories have warned.

In a letter to Dominic Raab and Priti Patel, the four MPs, including three former ministers, said that Britain should not "wash its hands" of the 40 Britons detained in camps for IS fighters and their families in northern Syria.

The MPs, Andrew Mitchell, David Davis, Tom Tugendhat and Tobias Ellwood, warned that it would "necessar-

ily create even more security risks for the UK in the future".

Today, the Supreme Court will rule on whether Begum, who left London as a 15-year-old schoolgirl to join IS in 2015, should be allowed back to the UK to challenge the removal of her British citizenship.

Writing exclusively online for *The Daily Telegraph*, Mr Mitchell, the former international development secretary, said that whatever the judgment, leaving Begum and other Britons "swirling around in unguarded space" had the potential to backfire.

"If they are judged to be a risk, then all the more reason why they should be

returned to Britain where they can be processed by the British criminal justice system," he said.

"There are a host of potentially applicable offences on the statute book, such as preparation of terrorist acts under Section 5 of the Terrorism Act 2006, which can carry a life sentence."

"The Director of Public Prosecutions has made crystal clear Britons returning from Syria can be prosecuted, saying he expects this to happen 'in the vast majority of cases'. Any returning prisoner who committed crimes in Syria will face British justice."

"Our justice system is also best placed to deal with the deep complexities of

these cases." Begum's British citizenship was revoked on national security grounds after she was found in a Syrian refugee camp in February 2019.

The Appeal Court ruled last July that the only way she could have a "fair and effective" appeal against the decision was to return to the UK.

But the Home Office said it would create "significant national security risks" and expose the public to "an increased risk of terrorism".

In their letter, the MPs say failure to bring the Britons back would "abdicate our duty as a responsible nation" and warned that British inaction had already caused the US to express "extraordinary

frustration". The US, which recently repatriated 28 Americans, had even offered the UK operational support, they said.

Maya Foa, director of Reprieve, a human rights charity, said: "Abandoning British women and children in these camps is a cowardly abdication of responsibility, and out of step with our allies' efforts to repatriate nationals."

There is concern in government that repatriation of the Britons would still provide security services and counter-terrorism police with a problem in how to control them. Round-the-clock surveillance is prohibitively expensive and requires significant manpower.

## Peer backs moving more government jobs out of London

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would help make sure decision-makers are "acquainted with the challenges faced by those outside the metropolitan bubble". Lady Finn threw her support behind the plan for the Treasury to build a major new campus in the North. Teesside is the "obvious location", she said, given its transport links and proximity to the universities of Durham and Newcastle.

In addition, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government is set to relocate to the Midlands. She said that Wolverhampton, with good rail transport links and an up-and-coming university, offered a "compelling opportunity", instead of the "easy choice" of Birmingham.

While she backed moving central government infrastructure and jobs out of London, however, she warned it was "not enough". There must also be "respect for and inclusion of different voices and life experiences".

The "career ladder" within the civil service should be broken up, so that private sector employees can be welcomed in for periods of two years or more in order to share their expertise in sectors such as renewable energy, she said.

She also singled out the Civil Service apprentice programme as an engine of change and called for its acceleration.

## Success of 'levelling-up' agenda depends on Civil Service drawing on talent from across UK

### Commentary



By Baroness Finn

Levelling up is usually used to describe the strategy of funneling investment to deprived areas, but the essence of levelling up is to make opportunity more equal. Talent is spread equally across the country, but opportunity is not. In the Brexit referendum of 2016, overlooked families and undervalued communities expressed their discontent with a political system they regarded as aloof, arrogant, remote and centralised. A key part the Civil Service can play in drawing together a renewed sense of common purpose is making sure it draws on all the talents of every part of the UK, and ensuring that decision makers are acquainted with the challenges faced by those outside the metropolitan bubble.

When it comes to questions of welfare policy, being intimately involved with the decisions made by citizens in Mansfield or Merthyr Tydfil

can only bring an additional level of granularity and effectiveness to policy formulation. What the Government should do is make a strategic choice about relocating parts of the state and its infrastructure to significant parts of the UK, but also ensuring that in those areas there is a critical mass or a concentration of jobs – not just to ensure career opportunities for those who are operating in those new locations, but also bringing to those new locations a sense of identity, purpose, and civic pride.

The Treasury is in the lead on this, with the new northern economic decision-making campus. Various sites are being canvassed, but compelling logic says Teesside is the obvious location. Taking advantage of the transport links provided by Tees Valley and Teesside International Airport and acknowledging Darlington's proximity to the universities of Durham and Newcastle, it could be an attractive exemplar of change. Another example would be the relocation of the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to Wolverhampton, which is on the West Coast Main Line and is also a city with an up-and-coming university.

However, it is not enough simply to relocate jobs. Those leading the Civil Service also need to think harder about cognitive diversity. Levelling up means not only geographical diversity, but respect for and inclusion of different voices and life experiences.

This means welcoming people into the service not just for secondments but for periods of two years or more, so that the Civil Service can gain from people whose expertise is in, for example, renewable energy. The Civil Service apprentice programme should also be accelerated. The success of the Boardroom Apprentice programme in Northern Ireland demonstrates the enormous benefits of enabling people from different backgrounds, ages, and abilities to bring a greater range of experience and perspective to public sector and third sector boards.

There also has to be a recognition that you cannot simply mandate economic growth from the centre if there is no foundation on which to build. State interventions must work with the grain of economic activity that already exists, and ensure the enabling environment acts as an accelerator. This is particularly the case with digital and physical

infrastructure which is needed to help tackle climate change and boost transport connectivity. We need to address the lack of capability in the Civil Service to deliver successful projects across the UK and create the right enabling environment. The Treasury is also changing the Green Book, the rules used to determine the value of government schemes.

The Government must be allowed to take on genuine risk and invest at earlier stages when the risk cannot be fully quantified and would therefore be out of bounds for early-stage venture capital. There are enormous challenges if the levelling-up agenda is to be a success and there is a proper transfer of power to the regions. The Civil Service needs to become more open to new ideas and decision making, more commercially aware, and less risk averse. If the Government gets this right, it will be able to deliver opportunities for the whole country.

Baroness Finn is the Downing Street deputy chief of staff and a non-executive board member at the Cabinet Office. This article was first published in *Centre Write*, the magazine of the liberal conservative think-tank *Bright Blue*.