

PRIME MINISTER

MAIN EVENTS


Local election results

Prime Minister meets Prince Baudar of Saudi Arabia

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Business: PRIVATE MEMBERS' BILLS
Abortion (Amendment) Bill: Remaining Stages. (Mr David Alton)
Empty Property and Community Aid Bill: 2nd Reading.
(Mr Ken Hargreaves)
Indecent Displays (Newspapers) Bill: 2nd Reading.
(Ms Clare Short)



Adjournment Debate: Closure of the District Labour Organisation of
Hackney Borough Council (Mr B Sedgemore)

MINISTERS - See Annex

PRESS DIGEST

Local elections message is Labour boost as Alliance suffers major setback and Tories hang on with results deepening north-south divide.

Criticism of French Government's actions to free hostages with further claims that they paid ransom. French deny payments made saying negotiations were done with dignity and honour.

You stop short of saying you are satisfied with French explanation.

John McCarthy's girlfriend accuses Government of leaving Britons "to rot" but John Waite says deal might put others at risk.

TV-AM survey shows you have 54% support for your no-deal stance.

BBC decide at last minute to show film on IRA killings in Gibraltar, but only in Northern Ireland.

Downing Street aide in arms arrest after police find rifles, handguns, grenades, thunderflashes, ammunition and machetes at his home.

Alton's Abortion Bill looks doomed but supporters say if they fail they will bring back a new Bill in the Autumn.

Britain's car-makers had all time sales record last year but Ford warn 1988 might not be so good.

Norman Fowler rejects arbitration calls in P&O dispute.

Airman killed in Holland to be given full military honours when bodies arrive at Northolt today.

Ulster-Unionists say Tom King should have briefed MPs about Anglo-Irish conference and not issued statement.

Commons row over left-wingers branding SAS as "assassins".

Merseyside shipyard cook wins historic equal pay victory for working women.

PRESS DIGEST

Birmingham judge sentences Pakistani social security cheat to do 2 years learning English. Been here 23 years and still needs an interpreter. Star leader says he should be kicked out of the country.

Australian soldier picked to guard Buckingham Palace ordered by court to pay £570 compensation after he attacks five cars following drunken spree in Earls Court.

John Wakeham indicates to Commons that he will give sympathetic treatment to calls for an early Government statement on Dounreay.

Bishop of Leicester reinstates vicar eight months after he admitted his second homosexual offence. admitted his second homosexual offence.

LOCAL ELECTIONS

Mail - Steel feels the squeeze with results looking better than Labour expected and not as bad as Tories had feared.

Alliance parties suffer major setback in local elections, giving Labour a boost while you appear to be hanging on to your support.

Sun says the brunt of Labour's success was taken by the remnants of the old Alliance parties and not the Tories. Mirror says Labour's poll victory rocks Maggie.

Times - page 1 headline - Labour boost as "Alliance" suffer losses. Labour made significant gains in yesterday's local elections which far out-stripped the hopes of the party leadership and the former Alliance parties suffered significant losses. The indications from early voting were that Conservatives had suffered some backlash.

Independent - Labour makes strong gains in local elections as the party beats Tory challenge. The conclusion being drawn by Labour was that the Tories had been severely damaged by social security changes and the community charge rebellions in the Commons.

FT - Labour tightens its grip in local council elections. Both the main political parties taking comfort from many of the results, but the big losers of the night were the merged Liberal Democrats and Dr Owen's Social Democrats.

PRESS DIGEST

Guardian - Tory trials give Labour poll fillip; as Labour begin to capitalise on recent difficulties over social security and community charge.

FRENCH HOSTAGES

Mail says France paid £1.5million to kidnapers but money was paid by wealthy Lebanese businessmen so that the Government can maintain it has not been involved in ransom deal. Leader says the release of three hostages may be good for Chirac's electoral chances but it is bad for democracy and the West as countries try to create a common front with a common message that with terrorists there are no deals.

Sun leader says it has always warned that you can't trust the French. They care only for themselves. Unlike the French, we do not crawl at the feet of scum.

Today says claims that French did not pay ransom treated with scepticism and you are especially annoyed because Sunday also marks second anniversary of Tokyo treaty; leader says you are boiling with outrage, and so you should be. Your refusal to negotiate the release of the British hostages is the best guarantee of safety the rest of us have.

Freed hostage says Terry Waite, John McCarthy and Brian Keenan are still alive.

Today - Release of French hostages triggers a split in Britain over whether to strike a deal for freedom of our hostages being "left to rot" in Beirut. TV-AM poll shows 54% back your stand, while 46% call for the terrorists to be paid.

Times - You did little yesterday to allay Backbench suspicions that France did a deal with Iran and Lebanese kidnapers. You told MPs that Britain had been informed that no ransom had been paid, but the tenor of your remarks fell well short of unqualified approval of the surrounding circumstances.

Times - Hostage triumphs bolster Chirac in latest election polls.

FT - leader says that the French joy over the hostages' release makes a detached observer uncomfortable. There is no doubt that there was a bargain. It is not a happy position for future French governments to know that Iran can resort again to this kind of pressure with some reasonable expectation of success.

PRESS DIGESTGIBRALTAR

Express - BBC defy you over Gibraltar film but show it only in Northern Ireland.

Mirror says you were furious last night after the BBC screened its controversial programme about Gibraltar IRA killings, but Hattersley congratulates them for withstanding Government "attempts to censure television".

Times - BBC refused to yield last night to Government pressure and screened documentary on IRA Gibraltar shooting containing interview with a new witness. Michael Checkland personally decided the programme should be broadcast in spite of an official request from Foreign Secretary that nothing should be shown which might prejudice an inquest.

Independent - Angry Tory MPs demand resignation of Duke Hussey; leader says that the full facts are not yet known but what seemed at first to be an unequivocal victory over terrorism has become more confused. What you and Sir Geoffrey Howe fail to appreciate is that a free press contains a self-correcting mechanism. It does not deny that proceedings in Gibraltar might be affected, but cannot see why the Government is so angry. The Government has handled the Gibraltar incident clumsily and is giving the impression that the authorities have something to hide.

Guardian - Leader says good journalism from time to time involves need to publish - or broadcast - and be damned. The Government has gone too far, too hysterically.

Telegraph - Kinnock welcomes BBC decision as "sustaining the integrity of independent broadcasting in Britain".

P&O/UNIONS

Times - Sealink pressing its 2,300 crew to undermine the negotiating authority of the seamen's union leadership by demanding a secret ballot on a return to work.

Times - NUS make public internal Kent police memorandum which is likely to embarrass P&O with criticism of the handling of the Zeebrugge ferry disaster. P&O say allegations are inaccurate and irrelevant.

PRESS DIGEST

Independent - P&O decides to take fresh legal action for contempt of court against beleaguered NUS after rejecting new attempt to resolve ferry strike.

PARLIAMENT

Chris Buckland writing in Today under the heading "No wonder Mrs T thinks the Lords are revolting" says before the Lords take their rebellion too far over education reform and community charge they had better remember that Hell hath no fury like a Maggie scorned. Already in the depths of Downing Street dark plans are being laid that will rob the Lords of ever more power if they dare to challenge the Prime Minister.

POLITICS

Independent - You mark your 9th year in power with an impassioned defence of the morality of Thatcherism in a private unpublished speech to the Centre for Policy Studies. At its core was a powerful attack on the uncaring image of your style of Conservatism. You are said to be deeply hurt by accusations of callousness.

COMMUNITY CHARGE

Times - Group of senior Conservative peers set to defy Government next week by tabling amendments to band the proposed community charge to take account of people's ability to pay. Approval for amendments in the House of Lords will both anger and embarrass Ministers who will be forced to appeal again to MPs to reverse the defeats or grant further concessions.

MEDIA

Mail - Government plan to break BBC's monopoly gets big boost with all-party Parliamentary Committee backing plans for three new national commercial radio stations.

Times - Britain's newspaper proprietors are being asked to help to save the Press Council. The demand comes against background of growing pressure for statutory regulation of the press after much publicised excesses by some tabloid newspapers.

Telegraph - You are quoted as favouring reliance on the TV authorities to properly uphold the rule of law than take stronger powers of control.

PRESS DIGESTINDUSTRY

Geoffrey Levy writing in the Mail under the heading "The tragedy of Norman Willis, the nice guy taking the TUC nowhere" says no resolve has charged out of Congress House since he took up residence four years ago. No passion, no vision either. Perhaps no future.

Times - The leader of the biggest Civil Service union is to challenge Militants by starting long-term pay negotiations with the Treasury.

FT - A slimmed and strengthened management structure is to be put into place by January 1 next year on Airbus to improve the four nation consortium's efficiency and its ability to compete with Boeing.

Telegraph - The Government drops plans for complete sales of the 3 companies being formed for electricity privatisation. Instead they have opted for partial disposal.

KUWAIT INVESTMENT/BP

Telegraph - leader says the real question about the referral to the Monopolies Commission is whether the Commission is an appropriate convenience to which issues of temporary political controversy can be despatched at Ministerial whim If the Government wants to use foreign bids for British firms as a lever to obtain equality of treatment or to stop foreign governments building up substantial stakes in British companies then it should take the powers to do the job itself. Otherwise, if it is disregarded by Commission - under existing monopolies legislation - the Government will be powerless to intervene.

NUCLEAR POWER

Times - The pace of the nuclear power station building programme to be stepped up by CEBG as its privatisation approaches, with announcement next week of two new PWR power stations at Anglesey and Sizewell.

SUNDAY TRADING

Times - One of your trusted aides, Roger Boaden, is leaving Conservative Central Office to head a new campaign pressing for a relaxation of the Sunday trading laws.

PRESS DIGESTROWNTREE

Times - Rowntree may fall to Swiss within days as they have become powerless to prevent control passing to Nestle. John Banham makes impassioned plea to the MMC to look into the affair.

FT - Rowntree planning large-scale rationalisation of its manufacturing facilities. This could mean job losses running into thousands and also affect the views of MPs who have been pressing for the Nestle bid to be referred to the MMC.

LAW & ORDER

Mail - BMA says mercy killing should remain a crime and doctors cannot be allowed to collaborate with patients in their deaths.

Mail - Lord Kagan's son appears in court on drugs charge.

Express - Foreign Office official with access to No 10 arrested after police find cache of weapons and ammunition at his home.

Alton's Abortion Bill looks doomed as opponents plan to talk it out; Express leader, supporting 24 weeks, says if Alton loses he has only himself to blame.

Today leader says abortion is a profoundly serious business and urges MPs to vote for Alton's Bill.

Express - Scotland Yard order urgent inquiry as London's violent crime jumps by 34%.

Frances Gibb writing in the Times under heading "Legal Aid in need of rescue?" discusses the fears of a Treasury squeeze and concludes that providing legal service in the most cost-effective way possible is how John Pitts, new chairman of Legal Aid Board sees the job. But for the scheme to retain the support of those who do the work, he is also going to have to demonstrate a robust independence from Government control.

Independent - Row between solicitors and court officials over responsibility for informing defendants of their trial dates is threatening to throw the Crown Court system into chaos.

Telegraph - Bryce Harland, New Zealand High Commissioner, knifed and robbed at his home in Chelsea Square early yesterday.

PRESS DIGESTDEFENCE

FT - Venezuela set to buy 84 British-made scorpion tanks. The £47million deal would be the largest single military purchase from Britain by a Latin American country since the Falklands conflict.

FT - Carlucci, while acknowledging the allies' "substantial contribution" to the common defence, urges them to pay more for defence.

HEALTH

Today - NHS cancer surgeon critical of private breast screening clinics as they do not fully explain test results.

Times - Health authorities should publish death rates for hospitals so that people know if they are getting good quality care said health clients in Wales.

Guardian - Government is funding research into how much plutonium children have in their teeth and whether there is any link with high incidence of leukaemia around Sellafield.

EDUCATION

Mail - Lady Hooper tells Lords that some GCSE courses are not up to scratch.

Mail - CBI says teachers' pay should be linked to their classroom performance.

PRESIDENT REAGAN

Telegraph - President Reagan will report on the Moscow summit in a speech to be delivered at the Guildhall to be attended by you.

IRELAND

Times - A co-ordinated security operation is to be mounted by the British and Irish Governments to counter a cross-border smuggling operation which is earning the IRA millions of pounds in protection money; Leader on your Irish policy says the Government has recently begun a fresh series of moves to squeeze the IRA and Sinn Fein. It is now recognised that there is far greater scope

PRESS DIGEST

for bureaucratic and financial pursuit of terrorism. The heart of this policy is a drive to isolate terrorists both from the community and to deny them their sources of emotional and material support.

POLAND

Independent - Riot police besiege Lech Walesa and thousands of Solidarity strikers in Gdansk in order to crush Polish labour unrest.

Telegraph - Yesterday Downing Street were scratching their heads over the advisability of proceeding with your visit to Poland in October.

PEOPLE

Ferdinand Mount in the Telegraph considers the state of Britain as you enter your 10th consecutive year in office. Your would-be successors are now capitalising on the Government's successes to offer "a softer, more eirenic style of leadership". But he says the dominant imperative in British politics remains "the reality principle": the omens still favour a Prime Minister with an appetite for the difficult and a taste for prodding sleeping dogs" - ie yourself.

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

DEM: Mr Fowler visits NACRO, Birmingham

DEN: Mr Parkinson addresses the Electricity Council, Guildford

DES: Mr Baker visits Lamport Hall, Leicestershire

DHSS: Mr Moore visits South Cumbria Health Authority

DOE: Mr Ridley visits Telford to open Epson factory

DTI: Lord Young addresses London International Capital Markets conference, QE 11 Conference Centre London

HMT: Mr Lawson addresses Royal Mint on the Trial of the Pyx, London

HO: Mr Hurd visits Northeye Prison

DES: Mr Jackson visits Essex University

DHSS Lord Skelmersdale opens Little Court residence for the mentally ill, Burnham-on-Sea

DOE: Lord Caithness visits Lincolnshire to tour Development Commission projects

DOE: Mr Moynihan visits Exmoor National Park

DTp: Lord Brabazon visits Felixstowe

DTp: Mr Bottomley opens the A21 Penbury Bypass, Kent; later attends the Chartered Institute of Transport Western Section annual dinner, Bristol

HO: Mr Thompson visits Nottingham County Agricultural Show

HO: Baroness Trumpington attends Cocoa Association dinner, Grosvenor House, London

MAFF: Mr Thompson visits Nottingham County Agricultural Show

MAFF: Baroness Trumpington attends Cocoa Association dinner, Grosvenor House, London

SO: Lord Sanderson opens Employment Workshop for former drug misusers, Leith, Edinburgh

MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

FCO: Mr Eggar visits Bermuda, Belize and Jamaica (to 16 May)

TV AND RADIO

"Today": BBC Radio 4 (6.30)

"A Bloody Union Jack on Top of It": BBC Radio 4 (11.00) 2 part series on the history of Britain's nuclear deterrent

"Business Daily": C4 (12.30)

"The Parliament Programme": C4 (14.00)

"Any Questions?": BBC Radio 4 (20.20) with Michael Heseltine, Ken Livingstone, Alistair Graham and Margaret Jay

"The World Tonight": BBC Radio 4 (22.30) followed by "Today in Parliament" and "The Financial World Tonight"

"Newsnight": BBC 2 (22.40)
