

Patisserie Valerie in trouble

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Ronaldo returns to Manchester

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Getty Images

UK contemplates action as Khashoggi murder becomes international incident

Suspicion that the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi in the Saudi Arabia embassy in Istanbul on October 2nd was a planned assassination by Saudi authorities have led to wide-scale condemnation of the Middle Eastern nation. Within the voices have been calls for countries to re-examine their relationships with the oil-rich state.

Khashoggi was a known critic of various Saudi leaders, including the king, and fled the country in September 2017. Despite initially saying the writer walked out of the embassy, Saudi officials have since stated Khashoggi was killed in a fight with a team trying to extradite him. However, questions remain unanswered, notably the location of the body.

Saudi Arabia has long been criticised for its human rights violations, including recent activity in Yemen. Yet such matters are



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

often overlooked due to the country's oil wealth and weapons purchases. In 2017, the Saudis bought over £1bn in weapons from the UK, and signed a \$350bn weapons deal with the US.

The UK's foreign secretary, Jeremy Hunt, has said that a UK response 'will be considered' if Saudi Arabia is connected to Khashoggi's death. He gave no indication the country would stop its weapons deals, stating the UK has 'a very strict arms sale control mechanism'

Brexit rumbles on as May's position weakens



John Thys/AFP/Getty Images

Slow progress in reaching a deal for Britain's departure from the European Union continue to cause political unease in the UK. Theresa May's proposal has met resistance from her own party, who feel the plan is too soft.

Meanwhile, hundreds of thousands of Britons marched through London on October 20th demanding a vote on Britain's Brexit agreement. Major causes of concern include the Irish border, the UK's place in the EU customs union, and how pro-Europe Scotland is accommodated.

London Stock Exchange slumps

Shares on the London Stock Exchange have continued their downward trend throughout October. Since the beginning of the month the FTSE 100, listing London's top companies, has fallen over 500 points, or around 6%. The volatile AIM all-share has fallen around 9%.

Several reasons have been given for the drop, including concerns about the US-China trade dispute, on-going Brexit disagreements, and concerns about Italy's financial restructuring.

Railway strikes to continue in November

Britain's railways face more problems as staff at two of its largest providers continue strike action.

Workers at South Western Railways, which connects London to the South Coast and West Country, are holding a five day walkout from Tuesday October 23rd to Saturday October 27th. They will follow this with further action each Saturday in November. Users of South Western lines will be given a reduced number of services on these days, with several routes cancelled and passengers offered replacement bus services instead.

Northern, the main franchise in the north of England, is also targeting Saturdays, with 70% of services affected on October 27th, November 3rd, and November 10th. Northern staff have been striking each Saturday since the end of August.

Railway staff have been striking intermittently since 2016 in opposition to plans to bring in 'driver-only operations'. Trade unions claim that having drivers operating train doors would jeopardise safety, although many believe this is a cover story and the real concern is that this is the first step to removing guards from trains.

Fracking in Lancashire paused after tremors

Controversial fracking operations near the town of Blackpool have been halted after a series of earth tremors were recorded in the area. While under the magnitude 0.5 reading that would bring a complete end to the project, the readings were in the 'amber zone' requiring caution.

Fracking - in which liquid is used to fracture rocks to release hydrocarbons - has proven to be deeply unpopular with the British public. The practice was banned in 2011 after a series of small earthquakes, but became legal again in 2012 with new safety regulations.

The Blackpool project, run by Cuadrilla, is the first operation since the ban was lifted.

The announcement that fracking would begin in Lancashire caused protests in the area, with 4 protesters arrested and three sentenced to over a year in prison. However, the protesters have since been released by a higher court, who claimed the original decision was excessive. Complaints were also made about the judge in the original case, whose father and sister have connections to the fracking industry.

Patisserie Valerie in trouble after discovery of accounting 'black hole'

Cake and café company Patisserie Valerie is facing an uncertain future after an unpaid tax bill and possible accounting fraud came to light. Company owner Luke Johnson has put £20m of his money into the business this week to keep it afloat in the short term.

Johnson's cash injection will help the company pay a £1.14m tax deficit that would have seen the company wound up if unpaid. However, audits have revealed that rather than having £28m in cash reserves, as the company claimed in April this year, it is in fact £10m in debt.

The suggestion of account fraud saw Patisserie's finance officer arrested - although he has since been released on bail - and the company's shares suspended on the stock market. Investigators from the Serious Fraud Office have been called in to investigate.

There is also interest in investigating how the finance officer and chief executive received £2m and £2.6m in shares between 2014 and 2016, despite annual reports listing their share bonuses as significantly lower. The accounts also valued Patisserie at £446m, but this is likely to be seriously revised if the business survives.



Juventus beat Manchester Utd in Ronaldo's return

Juventus defeated Manchester Utd 1-0 at Old Trafford in the Champions League on October 23rd, with Uruguayan Paulo Dybala scoring the decisive goal in the 18th minute. The win keeps the Italians on maximum points in Group H after three straight wins in which they have yet to concede a goal.

The game was billed as Cristiano Ronaldo's return to Manchester, where he excelled in his early 20s, although the Portuguese star had previously come back once with Real Madrid. There has been a cloud over Juventus's recent signing after police in Las Vegas re-opened a 2009 rape case against the player, but he still played a part in setting up Dybala's strike.

While Juventus have enjoyed a strong start to the season and already sit 4 points clear in Italy's Serie A, United's form has been so poor that some have demanded manager Jose Mourinho be fired. The team, which is the richest in world football, sits only 10th in England's Premier League.

Ross from Friends is not a suspect in theft

The theft of objects from a restaurant in Blackpool gathered unusual interest when police footage showed the suspect to look remarkably similar to David Schwimmer, the actor best known for playing Ross in TV sitcom Friends.



The suspect (left), and Schwimmer imitating him (right)

As many on the internet took to making Friends-themed jokes, Schwimmer joined in, posting a video of himself acting like the suspect but in New York. "Officers, I swear it wasn't me. As you can see, I was in New York." the actor wrote.

The police have confirmed Schwimmer is not a suspect. To date, the crime remains unsolved.

New Top Gear presenters announced

The BBC have unveiled the new presenters for their flagship motoring show, Top Gear. Former cricketer Andrew Flintoff and comedian/presenter

Paddy McGuinness will join current co-host Chris Harris for the show in 2019. They will take over from Matt LeBlanc, whose upcoming series will be his last.

On air since 1977, Top Gear became one of the world's most popular programmes after changing styles in 2002. However, the show has been in flux in recent years. Its

three main hosts left for Amazon Prime in 2015 after presenter Jeremy Clarkson was fired for punching a producer. Reaction to replacement presenters has been mixed



UK Box Office

5/10 - 11/10

1. Venom
2. A Star is Born
3. Johnny English Strikes Again

12/10 - 18/10

1. A Star is Born
2. Venom
3. Johnny English Strikes Again

19/10 - 25/10

1. A Star is Born
2. Halloween
3. Johnny English Strikes Again



UK Charts

5/10 - 11/10

1. Promises (Calvin Harris & Sam Smith)
2. Happier (Marshmello ft. Bastille)
3. I Love It (Kanye West & Lil Pump)

12/10 - 18/10

1. Funky Friday (Dave ft. Fredo)
2. Promises (Calvin Harris & Sam Smith)
3. Happier (Marshmello ft. Bastille)

19/10 - 25/10

1. Promises (Calvin Harris & Sam Smith)
2. Funky Friday (Dave ft. Fredo)
3. Happier (Marshmello ft. Bastille)



UK TV Ratings

(ratings delayed 1 month)

27/8 - 2/9

1. The Bodyguard
2. The Great British Bake Off
2. The X-Factor

3/9 - 9/9

1. The Bodyguard
2. Strictly Come Dancing Launch Show
3. The Great British Bake Off

10/9 - 16/9

1. The Bodyguard
2. The Great British Bake Off
3. Coronation Street

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