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The power of plants' healing

Rare book 'A Curious Herbal', created in 1730s, is centrepiece of Leeds exhibition

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'One pupil was awarded £4,000 after burning a lip on a toasted marsh-mallow.'

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Yorkshire's National Newspaper

NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

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Burnham to focus on cost of living

Ralph Blackburn
WESTMINSTER CORRESPONDENT

ANDY Burnham and his new Chancellor John Healey have told ministers they will have to renege on promises to help tackle the cost of living crisis.

The new Prime Minister, instead, told his first Cabinet meeting yesterday that an announcement to cut VAT on energy bills showed "the government was prepared to renege on promises to help tackle the cost of living crisis."

He said that "people across Britain were finding life hard and ministers should think every day about what they could do to take a little bit of pressure off."

From October 1 electricity bills will be VAT free, saving households about £45 a year as part of Mr Burn-

Ministers told they must make crisis their priority as VAT on energy bills cut saving £45 a year

ham's promise to help ease the cost of living.

But Darren Jones, a key ally of former prime minister Sir Keir Starmer who lost his Cabinet post on Monday when Mr Burnham took office, said the policy was "unfunded".

Mr Burnham used the first meeting of his Cabinet to say that ministers must give people "a sense that help is coming".

He vowed to always "show how we're going to pay" for policies to help hard-pressed people.

The Government said the electricity bill VAT cut would be funded in part by scrapping Sir Keir's digital ID project, which had been estimated to cost about £600m a year over three years.

But that falls short of the estimated £850m hit to tax revenues from the VAT cut, and funding for digital ID was meant to have come from unidentified Whitehall savings.

Mr Jones, who was the minister in charge of the digital ID scheme, said in a post on X: "Good news that VAT

will be cut on electricity bills. It's a simple way for families to save a few quid, and to mechanically help to keep inflation that little bit lower.

"But the Digital ID program was unfunded."

"The government will have to set out how it will pay for its new policies at the budget."

His public criticism is a sign that Mr Burnham's premiership could face problems from Starmer loyalists.

The Government said the £1.8bn cost of the digital ID scheme over three years had been "scored" by the Office for Budget Responsibility, meaning the money would have had to be found.

The money that would have been

used has been reprioritised to fund the tax cut, ministers said.

Mr Burnham told the Cabinet that they needed to examine "all possible ways" to help families struggling with high costs.

After arriving to applause, the Prime Minister told his new-look top team in Downing Street they needed to consider "What can we do just to take that little bit of pressure off people's shoulders, just to give them that little extra sense that help is coming so that they can have that bit of hope that things are getting better."

He asked his colleagues to look into what measures "big and small" their departments could do to help.

"We need to be a cost-of-living Government, getting that cost of living down, looking at all possible ways of doing that."

Mr Burnham sat opposite his new Chancellor John Healey, and was flanked by Cabinet Secretary Dame Antonia Romeo and Education Secretary and deputy Labour leader Lucy Powell.

Mr Healey, who resigned from Sir Keir's government in protest at military funding, warned his colleagues that "we've got some big challenges" ahead and that they needed to look closely at departmental budgets.

The South Yorkshire MP reiterated that it would allow the government to make life more affordable whilst maintaining fiscal discipline. Burnham's new era: Pages 4 & 5; Comment: Page 12.

Burnham is urged to back airport plans

ANDY Burnham has been urged to back plans to reopen Doncaster Sheffield Airport by the city's Chamber of Commerce.

Dan Fell, chief executive, said the project would be transformational for South Yorkshire and the entire North, and would show the new Prime Minister's commitment to growth in every postcode.

While regional organisations such as City of Doncaster Council and the South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority have led on much of the work, he said national backing is needed for DSA to realise its full potential as a nationally significant airport.

Mr Fell was speaking at "Meet the Buyer" event, organised by the council, FlyDoncaster and Business Doncaster to allow local firms to explore opportunities relating to DSA.

He said: "Every time the business community has stepped in, it has been to remind decision-makers of the strength of support behind this project. The economic prize is significant and becoming clearer every day."

"DSA is exactly the kind of ambitious regeneration project that deserves Government backing, and we hope ministers will support future infrastructure investment, including a railway station serving the airport."

Sunflower yellow shines brightly



Sophie Ibbotson amid a stunning sea of yellow sunflowers at Barlow Sunflowers, Dronfield, near Sheffield. The centre in Barlow near Dronfield is open for visitors to take photographs, share picnics, pick the sunflowers and enjoy the scenery by taking part in country walks.

Ex-Minister 'hit 21 times by hammer', court told

A man allegedly hit Ann Widdecombe 21 times over the head with a hammer in a "planned and targeted" attack carried out with a "ferocity of violence" in her kitchen, prosecutors say.

The Reform UK spokeswoman and former Tory Minister was having lunch at her home when Joshua Kerry, 28, from Rotherham, South Yorkshire, allegedly burst into her bungalow earlier this month, the Old Bailey heard yesterday.

Kerry was arrested on suspicion of murder on July 11, two days after Miss Widdecombe, 78, was found dead at her property in Haytor on Dartmoor, Devon. He was also arrested on suspicion of the commission, preparation or instigation of acts of terrorism – but he has not been charged with this offence. But he will have to wait almost a year if the case goes to trial after a provisional date was set for June 8 2027.

Prosecutor Alistair Richardson said that on July 8, Miss Widdecombe had been eating lunch when Kerry allegedly pulled up outside the front of her house in a red Vauxhall Corsa and entered through the front door.

Kerry then allegedly used a hammer to hit Miss Widdecombe on the top of her head 21 times, the court heard. He is accused of tipping her from her chair and taking a wallet out of her handbag before leaving, having only been in the house for two minutes, the court heard.

A provisional cause of death was given as a blunt force injury to the head, the court heard. Kerry had earlier appeared in the dock at Westminster Magistrates' Court and spoke only to confirm his details. He will next appear at the Old Bailey on October 9 for a case management hearing before a further plea and trial preparation hearing on November 20.

WEATHER



Cloudy skies, breezy, light rain expected.
Full forecast: Back Page

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Rioter inquest

A MAN who was found dead in his cell two months after he was jailed for his part in disorder outside an asylum seeker hotel tried to kill himself in another prison, a fellow inmate has told an inquest. Peter Lynch, 61, died at HMP Moorland in October 2024. Full story: Page 2.

Tanker attack

IRAN attacked a tanker in the Strait of Hormuz early on Tuesday, forcing its crew to abandon the ship even as the United States conducted yet another round of airstrikes targeting the Islamic Republic over control of the key waterway. Full story: Page 10.

Puzzles Post

16 daily crosswords and puzzles: Pages 2 and 18.



Billington boost

YORKSHIRE-BASED structural steel firm Billington Holdings has announced a string of new contract wins worth a total of £28m. The Barnsley-based company announced three new contracts across a range of sectors including education and defence. Full story: Page 19.

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A REYT GOOD DAY OUT.
SINCE 1776.

doncaster
racing & events

BETFRED
250 ST Leger
FESTIVAL
1776 - 2026
SEPTEMBER 10-13

DATeline

JULY 22

1298: The English used longbows for the first time, when they defeated the Scots at the Battle of Falkirk.

1812: The Battle of Salamanca took place in west Spain in which the Duke of Wellington was victorious over the French in the Peninsula War.

1932: Florenz Ziegfeld, the US impresario famed for his girls and staircases in his Follies shows, died.

1933: Wiley Post, one-eyed pioneer aviator, became the first to fly solo round the world.

1946: After a failed wheat harvest, bread was rationed in Britain.

1986: MPs voted to abolish the cane in state schools.

2005: Jean Charles de Menezes was killed by police as the hunt began for the bombers responsible for the 7/7 London bombings.

2013: The Duchess of Cambridge gave birth to her first child, Prince George.

BIRTHDAYS: George Clinton, funk musician, 85; Don Henley, rock singer, 79; Willem Dafoe, actor, 71; Bonnie Langford, dancer/actor/singer, 62; David Spade, actor, 62; Rhys Ifans, actor, 59; Ben Foden, rugby player, 41; Selena Gomez, actress/singer, 34; Prince George of Wales, 13.

PICTURE PAST



IN THE PICTURE: Daily Express photographer Hilaria McCarthy holds a Canon SLR camera fitted with a 'super telephoto' lens at Newmarket Racecourse, Suffolk, on July 22, 1973.

Necessity is reshaping the role of women today

Dr Nirma Jayawardena

ENTREPRENEURSHIP is often presented as a matter of ambition, innovation or personal aspiration. We tend to picture entrepreneurs identifying opportunities, taking calculated risks and building something new. But my research suggests a different reality for many women, particularly single mothers from South Asian backgrounds. For them, entrepreneurship is often not a choice at all. It is a response to necessity.

Across countries such as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, many single mothers face a unique combination of responsibilities and constraints. Traditional gender expectations, limited access to employment opportunities and the realities of caring for children alone can leave them with few realistic routes to financial security. In these circumstances, entrepreneurship becomes less about pursuing a dream and more about ensuring survival.

While my research focuses primarily on South Asia, many of these experiences will feel familiar to members of South Asian communities here in Britain, including those living across Yorkshire. The specific circumstances may differ, but the challenge of balancing cultural expectations, family responsibilities and economic realities is not confined by national borders.

What makes these women's experiences particularly interesting, however, is not simply their resilience. It is what their stories reveal about how social and economic change happens.

Throughout history, some of the most significant shifts in gender roles have occurred

when necessity collides with social expectations.

During the Second World War, millions of women entered workplaces in unprecedented numbers, taking on jobs and responsibilities that had traditionally been reserved for men. When the war ended, many were expected to return to their previous roles and make way for returning servicemen. Yet something fundamental had changed. The experience had demonstrated women's economic capabilities on a scale that could no longer be ignored. Progress was uneven and often frustratingly slow, but the assumptions underpinning society had begun to shift.

While the circumstances facing single mothers in South Asia today are very different, there are echoes of the same dynamic. Faced with economic pressure and limited alternatives, women are finding practical ways to support themselves and their families. In doing so, they are quietly challenging assumptions about who earns, who leads and who creates opportunities within a household.

Our recently published book, titled *Shaping Entrepreneurial Marketing: A South Asian Perspective*, examines how these women navigate entrepreneurship and the forces that shape their experiences. We found three themes emerging consistently: financial responsibility, social expectations and emotional resilience.

First, there is financial responsibility. For many single mothers, a business is not merely a source of income but a lifeline. Without the security of a second income, they often carry sole responsibility for housing, food, education and childcare.

Second, there are social expectations. Many women continue to operate within

cultures where traditional ideas about gender roles remain influential. Single mothers can face particular scrutiny or stigma. Yet it is often these very constraints that help foster adaptability, creativity and determination. Working within limitations requires resourcefulness, strategic thinking and the ability to make difficult decisions quickly.

Third, there is emotional resilience. Running a business while raising children alone can be exhausting. Many women are managing grief, isolation or social judgement alongside the everyday pressures of entrepreneurship. Yet business ownership can also provide something equally valuable: a sense of agency.

These findings are not only academic for me. They also resonate on a personal level.

I often think of my own mother, who found ways to contribute financially and support her family despite significant challenges. Like many women of her generation, she did what was necessary. Looking back, I can see that what appeared at the time to be individual acts of perseverance were

also part of a broader story about expanding opportunities for women.

Similar stories can be found in many families, including those within South Asian communities here in the UK, where successive generations have often navigated the delicate balance between tradition, economic necessity and social change. This is why I believe it is important not to view the experiences of single mothers solely through the lens of hardship.

What we are witnessing is also a process of adaptation and, potentially, transformation.

Dr Nirma Jayawardena is assistant professor from the School of Management at the University of Bradford.



British Steel had to be renationalised

Chris McDonald

FOR thousands of workers and families across Yorkshire and the Humber, British Steel is far more than a company. It is a source of pride, skilled employment and economic security. Its success supports local businesses, supply chains and communities that have helped power Britain's industrial economy for generations.

I know what the steel industry means to communities like these. Before entering Parliament, I spent more than 20 years working in the industry. I have seen first-hand the skill, determination and pride of Britain's steelworkers.

That is why the Government has decided to bring British Steel into public ownership, making steel for the nation.

This was not a step we took lightly, but faced with the risk of losing steelmaking capability that is important to Britain's industrial strength, supply chains and critical infrastructure, standing back was simply not an option.

I know it is the public interest, the national interest, to nationalise British Steel. This action provides the stability needed to

maintain production and give the business a future and put ownership in the hands of all the people in this country.

I understand that many people will be asking what this means for workers and their families.

Our focus is on securing a long-term future for British Steel and giving workers, suppliers and customers confidence in what comes next. Public ownership provides the stability needed to keep production going while we deliver our wider plan to rebuild a competitive and resilient steel industry for the future.

This action does not mean that every challenge facing the steel industry will disappear overnight, but what we can do now is provide certainty where there was uncertainty and create the conditions needed to plan for the future.

That future matters to those people directly employed by British Steel and to the wider economy. Businesses across Yorkshire and the Humber rely on a strong domestic steel sector. The jobs supported by steel extend far beyond any single place, reaching into local supply chains, engineering firms, construction transport and manufacturing businesses.

We also recognise the importance of British Steel to the local economy and remain committed to working closely with elected representatives as we consider the company's long-term future. We will continue to engage with workers, trade unions, businesses and local leaders, and where support is needed we will work with partners to ensure it is available. This is about more than securing stability today. It is also about creating the foundations for success tomorrow.

Through our Steel Strategy, we have set out a long-term plan to rebuild a competitive and resilient steel sector. We are backing the industry with up to £2.5bn this Parliament. Public ownership gives British Steel the stability to move forward while options for modernisation and long-term investment are considered. Steel has helped build our country's prosperity. Our task now is to ensure that steelmaking communities across Yorkshire and the Humber continue to play a leading role in Britain's future, supporting good jobs, driving growth and strengthening our industrial resilience for generations to come.

Chris McDonald was appointed Minister for Industry in 2025.



SARAH TODD on Wednesday

Why would you want to visit London now?

HOWEVER you put it, the arrival of our once great country's seventh Prime Minister in a decade – or fifth in four years – is nothing to be proud of. How Labour has the brass neck to usher Andy Burnham from Manchester in – who wasn't even an MP at the General Election – is beyond belief.

Or, in a further display of the metropolitan elite's disregard for normal people's opinions, what about Keir Starmer's parting shot of handing a peerage to controversial London Mayor (already a Sir) Sadiq Khan? Having said in a radio interview – at the time criticising Rishi Sunak – that he wouldn't give a resignation honours list, that they were 'hard to justify', Starmer just goes ahead and gives seats on the red benches anyway.

A school visit to London, aged about ten, has remained a favourite childhood memory. Our own children have all gone at about the same age, the first to see *War Horse* at the theatre and the second to take part in a scout harvest festival at Westminster Abbey.

This country's capital city is not somewhere, under the current Mayor's rule, that most families would surely feel entirely comfortable packing their young children off to now.

There were some pictures in the newspaper the other day of rough sleepers among the rubbish on Oxford Street, outside the main entrance to the flagship Marks and Spencer store.

For somebody who hasn't bothered with visiting the capital for a fair few years, how sad to realise that an area that was once iconic now looks so down-at-heel.

Rough sleeping is a disgrace. None more so than the estimated five per cent in London who are Army veterans.

Also nothing to be proud of is the number who are care leavers – youngsters who have previously been in the system – along with those whose last address was at His Majesty's pleasure in prison.

The late politician Ann Widdecombe, who served for the Conservatives as Minister of State for Prisons and was Reform UK's current justice spokesperson, often warned about the importance of finding emergency accommodation to house inmates on their release 'at all costs'.

Our country's trend towards early release might sound wonderful for those offenders who are let loose, but it must be the exact opposite if they have nowhere to live and find themselves out on the streets where the temptation to return to a life of crime must be around every corner – or in every doorway.

Around 46 per cent of those on the streets in London are, sadly, first-time rough sleepers and many of their stories are

all situations that anybody we know could find themselves in.

Our country will continue going down the drain until it goes back to basics and concentrates on domestic issues before taking on the wider world's problems. Getting a grip on local councils – or more specifically the draft money they are wasting – would be a good starting point.

Over the weekend the *Mail on Sunday* did an excellent piece exposing the scandal of children receiving thousands of pounds in compensation claims after sustaining injuries that their parents and grandparents would surely have brushed off as part of the normal rough and tumble of growing up, such as being hit by tennis balls and tripping over tree roots.

The feature found five-figure sums were paid to children who injured themselves in playground falls and PE lessons, such as tripping on astroturf or being accidentally clobbered by a hockey stick. One pupil was awarded £4,000 after burning their lip on a toasted marshmallow, another £20,000 when they tripped while running towards a bouncy castle.

It quoted Shimeon Lee, policy analyst at the TaxPayers' Alliance, saying: 'Serious negligence deserves compensation, but some of these pay-outs will leave taxpayers baffled. Councils must prevent genuine safety failures without encouraging a compensation culture around ordinary accidents.'

Figures from local councils reveal £3.75m was paid out in the past two years after 6,000 cases in which schools were sued by parents over what campaigners called out as 'ordinary childhood accidents'.

Heaven knows what those claimants would make of this correspondent's school days, back in the days of that first trip to London.

In summer, we rode our bikes the four miles to school and when it snowed, we spent the afternoons sledding down the hills on plastic fertiliser bags. Anyone who fell off either jumped up quickly for fear of being branded a cry-baby.

