

MAIN EVENTS

Local elections - Prime Minister votes

Prince Edward attends a Gala Performance of 'West Side Story' by the Young Vic Youth Theatre, London

PARLIAMENT

Commons

Questions: Home Office; Prime Minister

Business: Australian Constitution (Public Record Copy) Bill: All Stages

Opposed Private Business

London (Local Authorities) No 2 (Lords).

Motion to take note of EC Documents relating to Education Training. Details will be given in the Official Report

Adjournment Debates: The North Wales Coast railway line (Mr I W Jones)

Lords: Starred Questions
National Health Service and Community Care Bill: Committee (5th Day)
Fishing Vessels (Acquisition and Improvement) (Grants) (Amendment)
Scheme 1990: Motion for Approval

PRESS DIGESTMain News

Pressure on British Govt to open talks with Iran to secure the release of British hostages after liberated American says he had recently been with McCarthy and Keenan. Archbishop of Canterbury's aide calls for direct talks.

Peter Temple-Morris and Anthony Meyer call for renewed diplomatic links with Iran and Syria.

Britain said to have increased tension by expelling Iranian student suspected of plotting to kill Rushdie.

Student denounces British hostility towards Muslims and Iranian students in particular on his return to Tehran (Independent).

Row over IBA's refusal to allow an advert of the plight of John McCarthy because of its political content when Sky screened it.

Robin Oakley, in the Times, says Conservatives could end up holding fewer than a fifth of the 5,327 seats at stake in today's local elections if opinion poll trends are reflected in voting.

Good leaders in your support in Times, Telegraph, Express.

William Hill make you odds on to stand down before the election.

NOP poll suggests Conservatives should hold Wandsworth; Kenneth Baker says: vote Tory or you will pay for it.

Jack Cunningham reining back his prediction of Labour success. Kenneth Baker says the tide has turned (Mail).

Peter Jenkins, writing in the Independent, says today's elections are expected to result in a massive repudiation of you. They have been turned into a referendum on the community charge and on you. Perhaps a majority of your party would prefer to go into the next election without you. What then should you do? He concludes that, on balance, your party's chances of winning the next election might be better without you, especially if you could contrive to go with your reputation intact. But this raises the prospect of a messy succession struggle ending, perhaps, in the triumph of your rival.

The Church was criticised last night by Brian Griffiths for placing too much emphasis on the pursuit of equality in public policy (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Mirror says Kenneth Baker's bizarre plan to give three "accident prone" Ministers PR minders looks likely to be strangled at birth because no-one bothered to tell the Ministers involved.

Senior Tories warn Mr Hurd that the party will not support further moves by Britain towards European political, economic and monetary union (Independent).

Helmut Schmidt warns Britain not to drag its feet over Euro unity.

Ian Davidson, in the FT, writes your views on European development are regarded simply as an irrelevant nuisance by other EC heads. In that sense, Dublin marks an important watershed in the marginalisation of Mrs Thatcher and in the development of the Community itself. In part you have lost your power to mesmerise the rest of the Community because you are in political and economic trouble at home but in part your foot-dragging in response to the torrent of changes in the world is seen as irrelevant and absurd.

Telegraph says inflation was close to 10% last month - a level unknown since 1982 but excluding community charge and mortgages it is nearer at 7% to Euro average.

Historic 3 day conference between de Klerk and Mandela aimed at ending apartheid and a political settlement gets off to a good start. Mandela to see you on July 4.

Times reports a mood of cautious hope as the Pretoria and ANC teams gather in Capetown.

Both de Klerk and Mandela make ringing pronouncements full of hope for the future as talks begin in Cape Town (Independent).

Independent editorial says the talks are a cause for great hope though not necessarily optimism. There are fears that the Zulu Inkatha movement might seek to shatter any agreement in which it does not feel adequately represented. The South African Govt could also have difficulty selling drastic changes for the white minority. An unholy alliance between Zulu and white extremists is a real danger. Apartheid has engendered much violence and bitterness and the damage it has wrought may take a generation to undo.

Winnie Mandela whipped black youth until he "dripped blood", murder trial told.

PRESS DIGEST

Soviet Union begins diplomatic campaign to slow down German unification by using delaying tactics which include a demand for a formal peace treaty to mark the end of the Second World War.

Times leader says undue delay holds greater risks for the Soviet Union and its beleaguered garrisons in East Germany than it does for any other country. In the end, Moscow will have to face the fact that a European security system cannot hold up unification.

The Soviet Govt newspaper, Izvestia, was alone among Soviet media yesterday to report the 40,000 strong demonstrations against Gorbachev at the May Day rally and his premature departure from the reviewing stand (times).

East German Govt relents in its campaign to secure more favourable terms in the July currency union with West Germany and agrees to Kohl's terms (Times).

Bernard Levin, writing in the Times, under the heading "Cowardice in the face of Moscow's empty threats" finds a 1930s appeasement parallel to the Western refusal to stand up for Lithuania.

FT leader says Gorbachev has now joined the ranks of those leaders who provoke public fury on the part of some and who do or cannot stop them. Gorbachev has not ensured an underpinning of rights which would survive his passing and his replacement by a tyrant. He has increased his own power rather than that of the people. The weight of the past precludes, in other than a series of crabwise movements, a move to a state in which rights are guaranteed. The West's concern should be to see the crab move more generally forward. If Red Square goes unpunished by more than a presidential sulk, it will continue to do so.

Landsbergis has appealed to Mitterrand and Kohl to intercede with Moscow and help open negotiations (FT).

Latvian parliament poised to pass a declaration "renewing" the independence it lost in 1940, but incorporating a transition period to allow negotiations with Moscow (Independent).

Hungary's two largest political parties agree on sweeping constitutional changes designed to create a stable Govt and powerful opposition (Independent).

The US, bowing to sustained pressure from its NATO allies, proposes an overhaul of COCOM on the sale of advanced western technology to Warsaw Pact nations (Times).

PRESS DIGEST

Top salaries up 33% this year after last year's substantial rises (Guardian).

FDA calls for 12% rise for senior Civil Servants.

London Transport offers 9.3% in line with British Rail. BR considering reduced services and higher fares, by up to 23%, as subsidies are cut and travel dips.

Revised higher offer expected to be put to power workers today.

National Power and PowerGen will have more volatile profits than the 12 area companies (FT).

Govt may have sold Royal Ordnance too cheaply because of out of date valuations (Independent).

Frank Dobson says a Labour Govt would probably return the privatised National Grid to public ownership in its first term of office (Times). Business Comment says this disclosure means the rest of the electricity industry would be left where you intend to put it - in the private sector. The new face of socialism yesterday took on a sudden beauty for the utility sector analysts, and the power sell-off that starts this autumn should now be much easier.

British Midland Airways fighting an increasingly desperate battle with British Airways to increase its Heathrow operations (Times).

EC to seek powers to crack down more swiftly on big airlines using "predatory" practices to squeeze out new and small rivals in the European market (Times).

Leaked documents have revealed departments in the Royal Navy and AEA are concerned over the safety of a hoist for taking Trident missile submarines out of the water for a refit (Independent).

Science Policy Research Unit at Sussex University reports that British scientists receiving £300million less than European counterparts, are being left behind in science race (Independent).

Community Charge

Sun says you are to introduce legislation in July and keep MPs working into August.

Jack Cunningham says sorting out charge will cost 6p in the £ on income tax.

PRESS DIGEST

Dudley Council sends £1.91 bill to elderly widower in respect of last 2 days of his wife's life.

Bryan Gould claims he has a new leaked document from the Dept of the Environment on the maintenance of community charge registers. Department says however that it was written with the approval of local authority associations and had been available to those interested since last October (Times).

Keith Waterhouse in Mail says what is wrong with local govt is that it has got too big for its boots.

John MacGregor urges teaching of economics and enterprise from age of 5.

Mail conducts inquiry into our jails and with supporting picture alleges drugs and drinks parties in Nottingham jail.

Which? inquiry shows that 4 out of 5 satisfied with service from police but complaints to Police Complaints Authority rose 11% last year. Big vote of confidence for police (Express).

Guardian asks if any public service has lost as much support as police in last year. Answer: Police Complaints Authority which needs to be beefed up with more streetwise members.

Times leader in discussing the Police Complaints Authority's report says perhaps public opinion is at fault, by demanding results in the fighting of crime which can be achieved only by short cuts. But here again, the public need to be told the truth.

Independent reporter requested to appear before House Select Affairs Cttee over leaking of report on CPS (Independent).

An overwhelming demand from students seeking to qualify as solicitors has prompted an unprecedented decision by the five colleges of law in England and Wales to start night classes for several hundred extra students (Times).

Law students from ethnic minorities face race bias by big firms, says the Law Society (Times).

Two tons of cannabis worth £5million seized from farm at Chalfont St Giles.

Managing Director of Walter Somers charged with illegal export offences in connection with Iraqi gun.

PRESS DIGEST

You applaud Customs for thwarting Iraqi plans to build "highly sophisticated and devastating weapons" during Guildhall lunch speech (Independent).

Mugger gets briefcase in City holding certificates and Treasury bonds worth £300million but they are extremely difficult to negotiate.

Bank of England injected extra liquidity into money markets yesterday after City messenger was robbed. Bank also agreed to protect the owners of the bonds against any losses (FT).

Lou Macari, former manager; ex-chairman; and former accountant of Swindon Town AFC charged with tax offences.

English fans convicted of World Cup offences in Italy face up to a two year ban on travel to matches.

Express says a crackdown on dangerous dogs is being given top priority by govt after latest attack on children.

Dogs allowed to live after attack on girl which required 200 stitches.

Three countries plan to resume whale hunting - Norway, Japan and possibly Iceland - Britain heading for a major row with them (Today).

Independent says there are two objections to the killing of minke whales: our present state of ignorance on the whale population; and the ethical argument that it would be wrong to hunt these wonderful creatures.

John Gummer puts vegetarians in a stew by saying God is on the side of meat eaters - meat an essential part of the diet.

Anti-poverty campaigners and Friends of the Earth warn environmental taxes on coal, oil and gas would hurt the poor far more than middle and high income earners, and advocate a £16billion investment programme (Independent).

Princess Anne attacks the press for twisting her words and misquoting her - "there comes a point when you do have to say stop" she says "and I am saying it now".

IRA hit man gets sentences totalling more than 500 years, but Express says he could be out in 15 years.

PRESS DIGEST

Former Nazi officer, 78, extradited from Argentina to West Germany accused of murdering 5000 Jews.

Richard Owen, writing in the Times from Jerusalem, says one of the world's most durable bilateral alliances, between the US and Israel, is showing signs of severe strain over the moribund Middle East peace process and Shamir's hard-line stance.

ELECTIONS

Star - Voters set to snub Maggie over poll tax - you are bracing yourself for a hammering.

Mirror digs up a deserting Tory in Tunbridge Wells. Its leader says you have been here too long for the good you have done. Britain has had 11 years with the wrong woman. There's only one way to get rid of the community charge - vote Labour.

Today has you "praying for rain to beat poll disaster". Its leader calls on electorate to vote for women - a vote for progress. [NB - You call for more women MPs in address to WIZO - half column in Telegraph].

Express leader says perhaps many will be tempted to lodge a protest vote against you and Labour is hoping to make this a national referendum on mortgages, the economy and your unpopularity. It is nothing of the sort. A vote today can make sure your community charge is as low as possible and that can only be achieved by electing Conservative councils in every area of Britain.

Telegraph leader says the stakes are unusually high which argues for a sense of proportion about the community charge. Voters who choose to heap coals on the Tories' heads might do well to consider the threat to their own pockets: the bill they now face for the charge or the vastly increased personal taxes which are a certain consequence of a future Labour Party.

Ronald Butt, in the Times, writes that today the voters seem likely to deliver a verdict on the Govt, and on you in particular, for an act of national policy; the replacement of the rates by the community charge. He goes on to discuss possible threats to your leadership saying it is not in your nature to quit; you believe in yourself and see nobody able to do the job better. But who in the present state of politics does make predictions? One thing only is clear: after today, you and your party have to think where you are going with no preconceptions.

PRESS DIGEST

Times leader says today's local elections are not a public opinion poll. They are not meant to be a judgment on you or your Govt, or on the vexed question of the community charge. They are to select the men and women who are to run local administration. It is critical of those of all political persuasions who treat local polls as surrogate general elections. It adds that Tory councillors offer better value for money and they deserve election. They tend to be more committed to careful management, to govt as an impartial regulator and enabler.

HOSTAGES COMMENT

Star - It's about time we used some diplomacy to free John McCarthy. The FCO has been as active as a dodo. Govt must take advantage of the new mood. FCO officials have obviously spent the last 4 years sleeping off the port in their clubs.

Today says the Govt's refusal to negotiate with terrorists is not the main reason our hostages will not be freed. They will continue to be held because of Rushdie. It asks him to show a bit of contrition.

ANNEX

MINISTERS (UK VISITS, SPEECHES ETC)

- DES: Mr Macgregor attends reception, dinner and informal session for those attending the Grant Maintained School Trust annual conference, London
- DH: Mr Clarke addresses Association of British Pharmaceutical Industry annual dinner
- MAFF: Mr Gummer addresses British Poultry Federation annual luncheon, London
- CO: Mr Luce looks in a Imperial War Museum launch of new schools activities programme at Cabinet War Rooms, later receives courtesy call from Vice President (Designate) of Romania (prov)
- DEM: Mr Nicholls visits employment and training centres in Newcastle
- DEN: Mr Baldry tours projects in Tyne and Wear with British Coal Enterprise; later visits Dowdon Colliery, near Newcastle
- DH: Mr Freeman visits Tesco's HQ about food hygiene
- DOE: Mr Chope visits Milton Keynes
- DSS: Mrs Shephard and Mr Freeman (DH) meet MENCAP representatives to discuss benefit and earnings
- DTI: Mr Forth attends DTI/CBI Waste Minimalisation conference, Manchester; later opens British Alcan Alloys plant, Warrington and visits Teacher Placement Service Company, Warrington
- DTI: Lord Trefgarne addresses Southampton Chamber of Commerce on "1992"
- DTI: Mr Forth visits Teacher Placement Service, Warrington
- DTp: Mr Mcloughlin visits Marine Pollution Control Unit, Coventry
- DTp: Mr Atkins addresses Manchester Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- HMT: Mr Ryder addresses Anglo-Japanese economic institute
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MINISTERS (OVERSEAS VISITS)

- FCO: Mr Hurd attends US/NAC Meeting in Brussels
- HO: Mr Waddington visits Portugal (to 4 May)
- DEN: Mr Morrison visits Houston, USA for Offshore Technology Conference (to 12 May)
- MAFF: Mr Curry meets Agriculture Ministers, Innsbruck (to 14 May)
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ANNEX

TV AND RADIO

"A Full Life" Ch 4 (2.00 pm) Lord Chapple in conversation with Jill Cochrane

"Public Affairs" - the William Tyndale School (7.20 pm) a cause celebre of the '70's

"9 II 5" BBC 2 (7.30 pm) Looks at the problems raised by performance pay

"Analysis" BBC Radio 4 (98.00 pm) Looks at French views on European integration

"This Week" ITV (8.30 pm) MI5 - On Trial

"Forty Minutes" BBC 2 (9.30 pm) A View from the Bridge, a young man's suicide

"The Richard Dimbleby Lecture" BBC 1 (10.00 pm) Europe in the 90s. Speaker: Helmut Schmidt

"Question Time" BBC 1 (10.05 pm) Panellists are: Dr John Cunningham MP, Rev June Osborne, Rt Hon Malcolm Rifkind, and Rt Hon Sir David Steel

"Thames News Election Special" ITV (11.05 pm)

"Local Election Special" BBC Radio 4 (11.30 pm)

"Local Elections 90" BBC 1 (11.40 pm)
