

UK jobless figures up fastest in two years

Unemployment in Britain jumped to its highest level since 1994, with young people hit hardest

Public sector jobs are being slashed and private companies are not hiring in a stagnant economy. Deep cuts in state spending will erase more than 300,000 public sector jobs in coming years, while the UK economy is teetering on the brink of recession again as consumers face a combination of soaring prices, higher taxes and slow wage increases. Prime Minister David Cameron was quick to blame the global financial crisis and Eurozone turmoil and refused to ease off on his austerity plans.

Responding to an opposition question in Parliament he said, "If we change course on reducing our deficit, we'd end up with interest rates (for Government borrowing) like Portugal, like Spain, like Italy, like Greece, and we would sent our economy into

a tailspin."

There are 2.57 million Britons out of work; that is 8.1 percent of the workforce. Among 16 to 24-year-olds the jobless rate is 21.3 percent leading to fears of a 'lost generation' of young people without hope of a job. In addition, two million adults live in poverty in the UK along with 2.2 million children. A report by the respected think tank the Institute for Fiscal Studies talks about an 'unprecedented collapse in living standards' in Britain.

That is hitting people like working mother Barbara Allen who said, "I feel like I'm in a sinking boat and things are just going down and down, and there is no life-guard there to save you at the end of the day. And I'm just hoping that my son — who has been unemployed for two years



A man enters a Job Centre Plus in central London

now — will finally get a job." The Institute for Fiscal Studies report predicts the poorest Britons getting poorer, particularly affect-

ing children, but the UK Government insists that reforms it is making to the welfare system will reduce poverty levels.

Mass held for Chilean miners on rescue anniversary

On the first anniversary of the rescue of 33 Chilean miners trapped for 70 days underground, an open-air mass held at the mine entrance

Some of the men wore the same glasses they were given when they first saw daylight 12 months ago. But only just over half of those caught up in the drama were present. A year on, the mine remains closed and the 600-metre rescue shaft specially drilled to bring the men out is covered in concrete.

Chile's First Lady Cecilia Morel, along with the former Mining Minister Laurence Golborne, set the foundation for a monument at the entrance to the gold and copper mine.

Last year's dramatic rescue was broadcast live around the world as the miners were brought out one by one. But despite the initial euphoria the ordeal left deep scars. Although some have made money from their story, half are unemployed, only one has returned to work as a miner, and many suffer from trauma.

Highlights of Frankfurt Book Fair

World's biggest book fair in full swing in Frankfurt, opening to publishers and guests

It is an industry that has weathered the financial crisis better than most and 280,000 people are expected to visit this year. Until recently, Eugen Ruge was little known outside Germany, but his latest work about 40 years

of life in the Communist East won him wider recognition worldwide. *In Times of Fading Light* also scooped the German Book Prize. The book fair heard a warning about illegal distribution of e-books. The association representing Germany's publishers and booksellers said 60 percent of e-book downloads in Germany are pirated

on the Internet. It is still a small overall figure though. Only 0.5 percent of literary works in Germany are consumed in electronic form.

The guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair was Iceland and part of the country's exhibition hall was a reading room as it would have looked in the mid 20th century.

Gene therapy and stem cells unite

Two of the holy grails of medicine — stem cell technology and precision gene therapy — united for the first time in humans, say scientists

It means patients with a genetic disease could, one day, be treated with their own cells. A study in *Nature* corrected a mutation in stem cells made from a patient with a liver disease. Researchers said this was a 'critical step' towards devising treatments, but safety tests were still needed.

At the moment, stem cells created from a patient with a genetic illness cannot be used to cure the disease as those cells would also contain the corrupted genetic code. Scientists, at the Wellcome Trust Sanger Institute and



Anatomy professor works with computer image data

the University of Cambridge, were working on cirrhotic liver disease. It is caused by a change to a single pair of letters, out of the 6bn which make up the genetic code. As a result, a protein which protects the body from damage, antitrypsin, cannot escape from the liver where it is made.

The only solution is a liver transplant, but this requires a lifetime of

drugs to prevent organ rejection. The research group took a skin cell from a patient and converted it to a stem cell. The stem cells were then turned into liver cells. One of the lead researchers, Prof. David Lomas, said, "They functioned beautifully with normal secretion and function". When the cells were placed into mice, they were still working correctly six weeks later.

Apple wins battle to block Samsung tablets

Australian court temporarily banned sale of Samsung Electronics' tablet computer in Australia

Apple has accused Samsung of copying its touch-screen technology for its Galaxy Tab 10.1. The two companies are embroiled in legal battles in nine countries. Samsung is one of Apple's biggest challengers in the smartphone and tablet industry. The decision by the federal court threatens to hurt Samsung's position in the Australian market, as it could miss the lucrative Christmas season.

The two companies have been locked in patent disputes since April, with each accusing the other of infringing patents.

S&P downgrades Spain by one notch

Another drop in a European country's credit rating

Standard&Poor's has done the downgrading, with Spain on the receiving end. Madrid's long-term rating has been cut by one notch. The move mirrors recent lowering of Spain's level by fellow agency Fitch. S&P cited Spain's tightening credit, high level of private-sector debt and high jobless rate among the reasons for downgrading it to AA-

And it signalled the rating could drop even further, saying there was still a risk the Eurozone's fourth-largest economy could slip into recession next year. It all underlines the challenges European finance ministers faced, as they met G20 counterparts in Paris to discuss the deepening debt crisis.

Analogue TV signals to end in October 2012

Analogue TV signals to end on October 24th, 2012, Digital UK says

The last place to enjoy the 80 year old transmission technology in the UK will be Northern Ireland. Afterwards, people who do not subscribe to satellite or cable services will have to buy digital televisions or set-top boxes to continue viewing. It will also mean the end for teletext-based services, such as BBC Ceefax, as the spectrum is freed up for high-speed wireless and smartphone networks.

Digital TV offers a wider range of channels than analogue TV and much of the content available on teletext-based services can be accessed on digital sets.

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