

TODAY'S EDITION

Humphrys jokes about pay row

John Humphrys, the *Today* presenter, made light of the gender pay row and said that his £600,000 salary was "entirely just" in a leaked tape recording with his BBC colleague Jon Sopel. **Page 5**

Farage retreats on second vote

Nigel Farage backtracked last night after claiming that a second EU referendum would stop the "whingeing and whining" of Remainers. He said he did not support a further vote. **Page 6**

New havens for rare wildlife

Endangered species will benefit from 1.2 million acres of new habitat under the government's 25-year environmental plan. Other measures will help to reduce the use of plastic. **Page 14**

COMMENT

Britain can't afford to rule the waves. Let's concentrate on defending ourselves

EDWARD LUCAS, PAGE 31

Warning over attack on Kim

Invading North Korea to overthrow Kim Jong-un would be "like trying to get rid of Allah" in Iraq, such is the fervour with which his people would defend him, a retired South Korean general has said. **Page 34**

Investors shrug off bond fears

Private investors are ploughing record amounts into bonds despite fears that the 30-year bull market could be drawing to a close. Small investors bought a net £2 billion of fixed income funds in November. **Page 41**

Deal for rugby's richest teenager

Marcus Smith, the 18-year-old fly half, is to become the best-paid teenager in world rugby after signing his first professional deal with Harlequins, expected to be worth well over £200,000 a year. **Page 76**

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DINNER TONIGHT**Crab on toast with shaved fennel**

I'm a huge fan of those little cartons of freshly picked Cornish crab with an equal share of brown and white meat, perfect for this end-of-week treat. Piled over toasted sourdough and dusted with grated parmesan or gruyère, try it flashed under the grill to form a salty carapace. Great on its own, it goes extremely well with crisp, aniseedy shaved fennel tossed with lemon juice and olive



oil. Yum.

Serves 2 Prep 20 min

Cook 10 min

Ingredients: 2 small

fennel bulbs; 1 lemon;

4 tbsp best olive oil; 2

large, thick slices

sourdough; 50g carton

Cornish crab meat;

2 tbsp freshly grated

parmesan or gruyère.

Using a mandoline, a

food processor

attachment or sharp

knife, shave the fennel

lengthways, to make super thin slices as if making crisps.

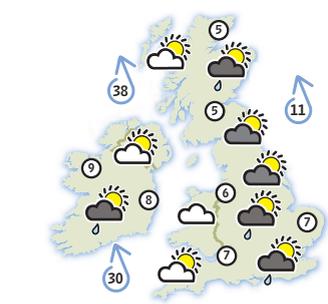
Squeeze 2 tsp lemon juice into a mixing bowl, whisk in the olive oil then use your hands to mix the fennel through the vinaigrette. Season with salt and pepper. Toast the bread, spread with butter (or not) and lavishly with crab meat. Dust the crab with cheese and cook under an overhead grill for a couple of minutes to make a thin, golden crust. Serve with a generous mound of fennel.

Lindsey Bareham**Why pay more? Save money on your daily papers with a subscription to The Times**

SEE PAGES 26-27 FOR DETAILS

OFFER

THE WEATHER



Mostly dry with some bright or sunny spells, but breezy and wet in the west. **Full forecast, page 64**

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May vows to defend free press after Lords push for inquiry

Matthew Moore Media Correspondent
Patrick Maguire

Theresa May has criticised peers for voting to restrict media freedom, saying the plans would "undermine high-quality journalism and a free press". Ministers have pledged to overturn amendments passed in the Lords on Wednesday night that seek to compel the government to launch the second phase of the Leveson inquiry into press standards.

The Lords also voted in favour of a separate set of amendments that would effectively force all newspapers to pay legal costs in data protection court cases, even if they win. Publishers would only be able to escape the penalties if they signed up with the state-recognised regulator Impress, which most refuse to do.

Local newspapers would be particularly severely affected as many do not have the financial resources to defend challenges to their reporting.

Yesterday the prime minister said that the government would seek to remove the amendments when the Data Protection Bill reaches the Commons.

"I think that the impact of this vote

would undermine high-quality journalism and a free press," she said.

"I think it would particularly have a negative impact on local newspapers, which are an important underpinning of our democracy.

"I believe passionately in a free press. We want to have a free press that is able to hold politicians and others to account and we will certainly be looking to overturn this vote."

The controversial amendments were narrowly approved by the upper chamber after securing the support of Labour and Liberal Democrat peers. However, the Conservatives and the DUP have a majority in the Commons and the government should be able to defeat the proposals next month.

Critics of the amendments claim that they would be used by politicians and criminals to discredit the press and block investigations.

Yesterday there was evidence that the prospect of a second Leveson inquiry is already being used to discourage critical reporting. One former Labour parliamentary candidate, who had been the subject of negative coverage in his local newspaper, tweeted the reporter, accusing him of

"shit, ill-informed journalism" with the hashtag "#Leveson2".

The first phase of the Leveson inquiry into the culture, practices and ethics of the press concluded in 2012 with the publication of the Leveson report. The newspaper industry argues that the planned second phase, into the relationship between the press, police and politicians, is now unnecessary given improved media standards and the financial pressures facing publishers. The government announced a consultation on the issue last year, with a decision expected shortly.

The amendment tabled in the Lords by Baroness Hollins would force the government to establish a similar inquiry that would exclude police and politicians, letting them off the hook.

Matt Hancock, the new culture secretary, said that the proposals would deal a "hammer blow" to local newspapers.

The News Media Association, which represents newspapers, said: "Legislation intended to make our data protection laws fit for the digital age is being used as a backdoor route by peers to enforce state-backed press regulation and obstruct investigative journalism." **Leading article, page 33**

Teenager wins payout from Facebook over naked posts

Fariha Karim

Facebook will pay compensation to a 14-year-old girl in a landmark legal action after naked pictures of her were allegedly posted on the publishing site.

The legal team for the girl, from Northern Ireland, opened High Court proceedings after she said that her photograph had been posted on a so-called shame page on Facebook several times between November 2014 and January 2016.

She sought damages for misuse of private information, negligence and breach of the Data Protection Act, claiming that the image was obtained after she was blackmailed and published as revenge.

In a move that could prompt similar claims, Facebook settled a confidential sum out-of-court on Tuesday.

Pearse MacDermott, from McCann and McCann Solicitors, said that police delays in handling the case had meant that officers were unable to prosecute the person who posted the images, which caused a "detrimental effect" to the girl's mental health.

"That is why her family decided to seek legal redress," Mr MacDermott said, adding that the settlement had

raised the issue of social media providers being treated as publishers or other types of media.

"Had these images been put in a newspaper or on the TV there would be serious repercussions and those same repercussions should also apply to whatever platform is used in the social media world," Mr MacDermott said.

"The case moves the goal posts in the sense that Facebook always said it was up to the individual user to be responsible, not them. It now puts the onus on the provider to look at how they respond to indecent, abusive and other such images put on their platform.

"Whenever an image is put up that is clearly objectionable they should be able to stop that ever going up again. They should use the technology they have to be a responsible provider and remove the offensive post."

He added that he hoped the Police Service of Northern Ireland had learnt from the case and would in future "act with more haste" when dealing with similar cases.

Five days had been set aside for the civil trial but Edward Fitzgerald, QC, for the girl, told the court on Tuesday that the case had been settled. Facebook will also pay her legal costs.

1,770 children a day referred for urgent help

Hundreds of thousands of youngsters were referred to children's services last year, putting pressure on a service hit by funding cuts.

The Local Government Association (LGA) said there were 646,120 referrals to children's services last year, equivalent to 1,770 referrals a day.

The LGA urged central government to use a forthcoming funding settlement for local authorities to plug the £2 billion shortfall it expects in 2020.

Richard Watts, chairman of the LGA's children and young people board, said: "[These figures] highlight the staggering scale of the pressures that have been building on children's services for a number of years. The government has been warned repeatedly that ongoing funding cuts have left them struggling to provide the support that vulnerable children and families need."

Eleanor Briggs, the head of policy at Action for Children, said: "Central government cuts to children's services budgets have been nothing short of devastating, and services that could intervene early to stop problems escalating have been among the hardest hit."

Lorry companies cheating emission rules

Graeme Paton Transport Correspondent

Lorry operators are routinely fitting HGVs with cheat devices to allow vehicles to produce high levels of pollution, a government investigation has found.

Figures published today show that one in 13 lorries checked by official vehicle examiners contained illegal emissions systems.

The most common device was an "emulator" that bypasses the vehicle's emissions system. Lorries are fitted with engine management devices that detect when it produces high emissions and forces it off the road for repair. However, unscrupulous operators are

believed to have fitted crude gadgets to bypass the management system, allowing them to keep vehicles in use for longer.

The Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) began checks in August to detect lorries with high emissions and improve air quality. It inspected 3,735 lorries on strategic routes in four months and found that 293 of them, 7.8 per cent, had some form of emissions fraud device fitted.

Cheating was more prevalent among British hauliers. About 8.5 per cent of UK-based vehicles checked had the devices, compared with 4.9 per cent of foreign HGVs. Drivers or operators of

these vehicles have to remove the devices within ten days. Those that continue to operate vehicles that have not been fixed face a £300 fine and will have their vehicle taken off the road.

HGV operators can also be subject to an investigation to check whether vehicles in the rest of their fleet are fitted with cheat devices. More than 100 investigations are continuing.

Gareth Llewellyn, the DVSA chief executive, said: "We are committed to taking dangerous lorries off Britain's roads. Stopping emissions fraud is a vital part of that. Anyone who flouts the law is putting the quality of our air and the health of vulnerable people at risk."