

## [The Government's botched business rate revaluation has created a huge and destabilising burden for many businesses – Long-Bailey](#)

“Today

many businesses across the country will see their business rates increase substantially. For some firms, it will seriously threaten their viability and continued existence. However, today it also transpires that the Government's inadequate measures to mitigate these effects are not even in place to help businesses. The support fund the Government promised is reportedly not even up and running and nor is the Government clear on how it will work.

“The

Government's botched business rate revaluation has created a huge and destabilising burden for many businesses. Prior to the budget Labour announced its Five Point Plan for business rates, which promised to set up an Emergency Relief Fund, undo Tory restrictions on the appeals process, bring forward the shift from RPI to CPI indexation, and remove most categories of new plant and machinery from valuations, as well as a fundamental rethink of business rates in the longer term. Today the Government must rise to Labour's challenge by taking action to defuse the ticking time bomb of business rates and bringing forward additional transitional relief for small and medium sized firms.”

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## [China to set up Xiongan New Area in Hebei](#)

China announced Saturday it would establish the Xiongan New Area in Hebei Province, as part of measures to advance the coordinated development of the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei (BTH) region.

This is another new area with national significance after the Shenzhen Special Economic Zone and the Shanghai Pudong New Area, according to a circular issued by the Communist Party of China (CPC) Central Committee and the State Council.

The move is a “major historic and strategic choice made by the CPC Central Committee with Comrade Xi Jinping as the core,” said the circular.

The New Area, about 100 km southwest of downtown Beijing, will span three counties that sit at the center of the triangular area formed by Beijing, Tianjin and Hebei's provincial capital Shijiazhuang.

The move will help phase out non-capital functions from Beijing, explore a new model of optimized development in densely-populated areas, and restructure the urban layout in the BTH region, according to the circular.

The New Area will cover around 100 square km initially and will be expanded to 200 square km in mid-term and about 2,000 square km in the long-term.

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## **It appears the Justice Secretary is more concerned with grabbing headlines than sorting out the crisis in prisons her government created – Burgon**

“It appears the Justice Secretary is more concerned with grabbing headlines than sorting out the crisis in prisons her government created.

“It's no wonder ministers refused to answer questions from Labour about exactly how many officers at each prison would benefit and by how much. They should do so now.

“The Conservatives are playing politics with prison officers' livelihoods. They deserve a decent wage and a fair deal. The Justice Secretary must apologise immediately.”

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## **France overreacts in warnings to its citizens in China**

The French Embassy in China cited an isolated minor attack on a Frenchman in Shanghai on Friday to warn its citizens in China to be vigilant, considering the fact that a Chinese national was killed by a Paris policeman a few days ago.

Chinese police released a photo showing a Frenchman with a bandaged neck talking to officers. He suffered a slight injury when attacked by a mentally-ill Chinese man in Shanghai on March 29, 2017, leading the French embassy to worry about the safety of its citizens in China in the context of a Chinese man killed by police in Paris a few days ago. [Photo/ Weibo.com]

The news section of the embassy's website on Thursday carried a report that a French national was "violently assaulted" with a knife the previous day in Shanghai. The embassy then posted another news report on Friday that the attacker had been arrested by Chinese police and the Embassy and Consulate General of France in Shanghai were closely following developments in the investigation.

In both news releases, the embassy called on the French community to show the "utmost vigilance and [awareness of] security" in the "current context."

However, it soon turned out that the attack was not that serious. According to Shanghai police, the unnamed Frenchman was attacked with a razor and suffered a superficial neck wound. The Frenchman then sought treatment at a hospital by himself. There was also a photo released by the police showing the man with bandaged neck talking to officers.

Shanghai police also identified the attacker as a 27-year-old local man surnamed Mao, who suffered mental problems. He is now in custody.

"It is understood that Shanghai police have arrested the suspect and the case is still under investigation," Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lu Kang said during a press briefing on Friday. "I suggest nobody should rush to make any assumptions."

The French Embassy had been fearing members of the French community in China might suffer some retaliation from Chinese people due to the incident involving Liu Shaoyao, a 56-year-old Chinese man who was shot dead by a Paris policeman on March 26, triggering protest on the streets of the French capital, and in China, too.

Liu's family is now refusing to say anything more to the press and the public until the case reaches the courts. Paris prosecutors and the police are still investigating the case to establish the full facts. Two versions are circulating, with the police insisting they were forced to shoot in self-defense, while Liu's family insist he posed no danger to any policeman.

The Qianjiang Evening News, a local newspaper in Zhejiang Province from where Liu originated, reported the local government of Qingtian County, Zhejiang felt the family's pain and was closely following the case.

Also, according to a friend of Liu, the Chinese man went to France to work two decades ago and the family was not rich. "The place where they resided in Paris is an average ghetto community of various races with bad security," he said.

According to Nouvelles D'Europe, many Chinese and Asians told it they felt

they suffered from clear racial discrimination from neighbors and police officers in the area. "Fraud and robberies against Chinese are so frequent in Paris, I feel no sense of safety," said one Asian woman who insisted on remaining anonymous.

The newspaper also reported that, in April 2016, the police brutally raided the apartment of two Chinese female students residing in the 13th arrondissement without finding anything there.

An anonymous hand had written on the wall of their building "Chinese whores, first floor"; When they went to testify, a police officer even told them that, "many Chinese students are prostitutes."

Last August, Zhang Chaolin, a 49-year-old couturier and father of two who lived in Aubervilliers, was fatally assaulted in the street, due to his origin, by three young people living in the community.

These problems had a negative impact on French-Chinese relations. For example, the number of Chinese tourists in France dropped by 27 percent in 2016 to 1.6 million, compared to 2.2 million in 2015, as travelers sought more secure countries to visit.

France has set a goal of attracting five million Chinese tourists by 2020, but persistent security concerns may prevent the target being achieved.

A memorial event for Liu Shaoyao was approved by Paris police to be held at The Place de la République in central Paris on the afternoon of April 2. Emmanuel Macron, youngest candidate in the race for the French presidency and a former economics minister, met with Liu's family on Friday and promised to help them.

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## [Newslinks for Saturday 1st April 2017](#)

**Government accuses EU of trying to inflame Gibraltar dispute...**





“The centuries-old dispute over Gibraltar is threatening to halt Brexit negotiations after the EU yesterday backed Spain’s claim to the British territory. Brussels chiefs sparked a diplomatic feud yesterday after including a veto for Madrid over the Rock’s future in their list of Brexit negotiating demands. UK politicians accused the EU of orchestrating a ‘shameful’ attempt to inflame the historic territorial wrangle. Despite Theresa May’s insistence that Gibraltar would not be used as a political pawn, the EU said Spain should be given a say over any future decisions relating to the territory.” – [Daily Mail](#)

- Spain charged with making a grab for ‘the Rock’ – [The Times \(£\)](#)
- What Gibraltar means for the UK and Scotland – [The Scotsman](#)

Scotland:

- Sturgeon threatens ‘campaign of disruption’ – [The Times \(£\)](#)
- First Minister sends letter seeking referendum – [FT](#)

Comment:

- The First Minister’s guerilla strategy undermines May in Brussels – Alan Cochrane, [Daily Telegraph](#)

### **...as Johnson backpedals on security cooperation**

“Boris Johnson insisted yesterday that Britain’s commitment to European security was “unconditional” amid a mounting backlash over Theresa May’s link between continued co-operation and a favourable Brexit deal. European leaders have widely condemned the prime minister for connecting security co-operation and trade in her letter to the European Union triggering Article 50. Mrs May made the connection 11 times in the letter and repeated it in articles in seven European newspapers, noting that the victims of last week’s Westminster attack included nationals of other EU countries. European leaders accused Mrs May of threatening to withdraw co-operation crucial for the safety of the Continent if they did not bow to her trade demands.” – [The Times \(£\)](#)

- Exports boom as Britain becomes fastest-growing developed economy – [Daily Mail](#)
- What has the EU done for the UK? – [FT](#)
- Neil skewers Smith over gloomy Brexit forecast – [Daily Express](#)

Comment:

- Why is it fine for Brussels to threaten Britain, but not for May to state mere facts? – Asa Bennett, [Daily Telegraph](#)

### **David Davis, Britain's Brexit street fighter**



“This time David Davis cannot afford to mess it up. The man who blew his chance to lead the Conservative party and then threw away a prospective cabinet career finds himself entrusted with the most sensitive political task in a generation: delivering Brexit. The cliff edge that has always seemed to fascinate him lies ahead. Mr Davis has waited a long time for this chance. At the age of 68, a politician whose time appeared to have passed now holds Britain's economic and political future in his hands. But this time, to the surprise of some, the Brexit secretary seems determined not to squander his shot at history.” – [FT](#)

- ‘Great Repeal Bill’ will create sweeping powers to change laws – [The Guardian](#)
- Trade talks in October if you sort out money and migrants, May told – [The Times \(£\)](#)
- EU officials set sights on ‘orderly withdrawal’ – [FT](#)
- Tusk's sets out his ten red lines for a deal – [The Times \(£\)](#)
- Europe moves to bar Britain from axing red tape – [Daily Telegraph](#)
- Confidence in delivery of new customs system ‘collapses’ – [The Independent](#)
- Irish MEP says UK shouldn't be punished but must show respect – [Daily Express](#)

Immigration:

- Government's migration target ‘all but dead’, say senior Tories – [The Sun](#)
- EU nationals won't have same access to work or NHS, says Gove – [The Sun](#)

Comment:

- The Article 50 letter should have been only one or two paragraphs long – David Allen Green, [FT](#)

### **David Laws: Britain has a steely negotiator in May, as the Liberal Democrats discovered**

“Mrs May is also a person who is direct and straightforward to deal with. She

generally avoids the silly political games which are designed to look clever, but which can often only irritate opponents. And she is rarely attracted to political and policy gimmicks, which win one day's favourable media coverage, but unravel shortly after. Finally, this piece of advice: Mrs May is not one of the world's great delegators. In government, she probably shared information and responsibility less with her Liberal Democrat and Conservative colleagues than in any other part of government. So forget Boris Johnson. Forget David Davis. Forget Liam Fox. This will be Mrs May's negotiation and she – and only she – will speak for Britain.” – [Daily Telegraph](#)

- If May does go for a soft Brexit it could yet tear the Tories in two – Peter Osborne, [Daily Mail](#)
- Brexit doom-mongers are holding us all back – Janice Turner, [The Times \(£\)](#)
- Enough Remainers remain to put a spanner in the works – Charles Moore, [Daily Telegraph](#)
- Stop the chest thumping: successful negotiators build trust – Jonathan Powell, [FT](#)
- Repeal Bill will give the Tories a free hand, and we can only watch – Sam Fowles, [The Guardian](#)

Editorial:

>Today: ToryDiary: [If Britain needs a new party, we'll only find out after Brexit](#)

>Yesterday:

**Kremlin critic praises May for standing up to Putin**



“A multimillionaire who campaigns against Russian corruption has praised Theresa May for her tough stance against Vladimir Putin. Bill Browder, 52, said that previous prime ministers were naive “fancy public schoolboys” seduced by the luxurious lifestyle of the Russian president and his associates, but that Mrs May was “a vicar's daughter who is not taking any shit from the Russians”. Mr Browder has accused Mr Putin of the assassination of political rivals to cover up state-sponsored corruption.” – [The Times \(£\)](#)

- Fallon claims Russia's worldwide meddling is a threat to Britain – [The](#)

[Sun](#)

Comment:

- Be thankful for a Prime Minister who tells it straight – Clare Foges, [The Times \(£\)](#)

>Yesterday: Gagik Tsarukyan in Comment: [Britain shows Armenia the path to prosperity](#)

### **Fallon won't rule out cuts to Royal Marines**

“Defence Secretary Sir Michael Fallon yesterday refused to rule out axing Royal Marine numbers – amid claims 200 could go. Insiders confirmed reports that plans had been drawn up to reduce the size of 42 Commando, cut overseas training, and re-role it from a frontline Commando unit to a training outfit... Under plans – that are yet to be enforced – Plymouth based 42 Commando will stop being one of three high readiness infantry outfits along sister units 40 and 45 Commando. Instead they will be re-roled to provide training exercises – including playing the enemy during war games.” – [The Sun](#)

- Cutting Marines a threat to Special Forces, ex-officers warn – [The Times \(£\)](#)

More defence:

- Defence Secretary announces £90 million support for new F-35 fighter – [The Sun](#)
- UK defence role lies with the US, insists Fallon – [The Guardian](#)

### **Hunt to ban ‘ambulance-chasing’ law firms from advertising in hospitals**



“Hospitals are set to be banned from letting ambulance-chasing lawyers advertise on wards and in waiting rooms. The Health Secretary will introduce fines for trusts that continue to allow law companies to distribute flyers on their premises. Jeremy Hunt said he was becoming ‘increasingly concerned’ at how lawyers are ‘intimidating’ patients and families. He also paid tribute to the Mail for exposing the ‘aggressive and opportunistic tactics’ used by these firms to win new business.” – [Daily Mail](#)

- Ban on nurses working agency shifts is dropped after protests – [The Times \(£\)](#)
- NHS chief abandons waiting time targets for non-emergency surgery – [The](#)



## [Independent](#)

Comment:

- Four radical ideas that really would save the NHS – Kate Andrews, [Daily Telegraph](#)

### **Javid condemns developers using Help to Buy to trap people in punishing leaseholds**

“Developers are abusing the Government’s flagship Help to Buy scheme by selling new-build homes with punishing leases. By the end of last year, leasehold houses made up 15 per cent of properties in the taxpayer-funded project. But the arrangement means buyers do not own their home outright and are forced to pay yearly ground rent to the freeholder – with some fees doubling every decade... Communities Secretary Sajid Javid this week criticised the ‘practically feudal practices’ of developers who build new houses and sell them as leasehold and is planning a clampdown.” – [Daily Mail](#)

### **Hilton joins campaign for Osborne to resign from the Commons**



“Steve Hilton, the former No 10 strategist, backed a crowdfunding campaign yesterday to force George Osborne out of the Commons. The former Downing Street guru, known for his blue-sky thinking, had a fraught relationship with Mr Osborne when the pair worked alongside David Cameron. Mr Hilton left his role as strategy director in 2012 as tensions escalated. Despite a close friendship with Mr Cameron that went back to the 1990s, Mr Hilton proceeded to criticise his former boss’s policies and manner of governing. Now he appears to have turned on Mr Osborne. He linked on social media to the fundraising campaign, which is calling on the Tatton MP to give up his seat now that he has accepted the editorship of the *Evening Standard*.” – [The Times \(£\)](#)

- Cameron starts to ‘put some hay in the barn’ on £120,000-a-time speaking circuit – [Daily Mail](#)

### **Warsi wants Britons who fight for Israel prosecuted**

“British citizens who volunteer for the Israeli army should be prosecuted

like others who fight for foreign forces, according to Baroness Warsi. The former Senior Minister of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs said people should only be legally allowed to fight for the state they are a citizen of. It is currently possible for anyone to join the Israel Defence Force (IDF) through the "Mahal" program if they meet specific background and age requirements. But while people fighting for various foreign forces have faced prosecution upon their return to the UK – including some who claim to have been opposing the Assad regime in Syria – those who temporarily join up with the IDF have not. Baroness Warsi said the UK government's current policy on the issue was not "brave enough." – [The Independent](#)

### **Fresh poll blow for Corbyn**



"Jeremy Corbyn is less popular in London than the leader of Ukip despite the capital having voted strongly for Remain in the referendum. The Tories, meanwhile, have closed the gap with Labour under his leadership in the capital. A poll of London voters by YouGov found that Mr Corbyn is the least popular of all the national party leaders. The overwhelming majority of 2015 Labour voters in the city believed that he was doing a poor job, with 60 per cent saying he was doing badly and 25 per cent saying he was doing well." – [The Times \(f\)](#)

### **News in Brief:**

- Fifty grammar schools change admissions to favour poorer pupils – [Daily Mail](#)
- Taxpayers' £31 million debt to Google – [The Times \(f\)](#)
- Venezuela's Supreme Court shuts down parliament – [Daily Telegraph](#)
- Trump demands solution to US trade deficit with China – [FT](#)
- Le Pen's request for a £2.6 million loan from Russia – [The Sun](#)
- Biggest rail spending cuts since the crash 'could endanger lives' – [The Independent](#)
- Expenses watchdog accidentally leaks salaries of MPs' aides – [Daily Mail](#)
- Congress set ablaze as riots sweep Paraguayan capital – [The Guardian](#)
- Spending on Scottish pupils falls by £1bn in seven years – [The Scotsman](#)
- Northern Irish parties invited to 'intensive' talks to restore

devolution – [Belfast Telegraph](#)

[Newslinks April 2017](#)