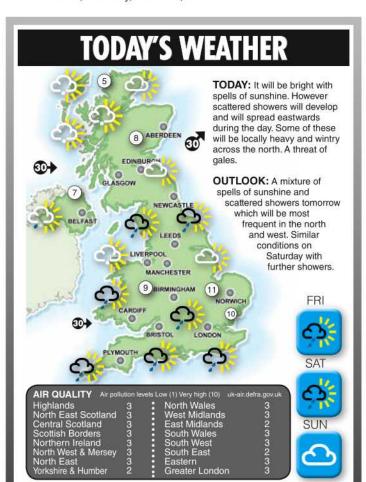
2 DAILY STAR, Thursday, March 11, 2021



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Crossing is target of gangs

FOREIGN crime gangs have switched to cross-Channel people smuggling because it is so profitable.

Miles Bonfield, of the National Crime Agency, said Kurdish Western Balkans gangs were trafficking r grants in small boats.

For the £3,000 price of a boat an Afghan gang, based in Paris, made £37,500 per trip by charging each of the 15 migrants up to £2,500 to cross the Channel.

Mr Bonfield said: "It does make it a very, very profitable route.

The Home Office said a record 8,438 migrants crossed the Channel in 635 boats in 2020.

Yoghurt ranges recalled

YOGHURTS are being recalled over fears they contain bits of metal.

Danone has stopped selling three of its ranges at Tesco, Morrisons, Asda, Sainsbury's, Ocado and Waitrose.

The firm's 115g peach passion fruit tubs with a use by date of March 31, 120g Activia 0% Fat pots and 110g Intensely Cream four-pack product, both of which expire on April 2, have reportedly been affected.

The issue is being blamed on a problem with a third-party supplier.

Anyone affected batch should return them to their shop for a refund.

Sugar's cut but pop top

THE sugar tax has hit a sweet spot by cutting soft drink sugar con-sumption without affecting sales revenue.

A new study showed the volume of drinks purchased did not change, but the sugar content in these drinks decreased by around 30g per household per week or almost 10%

That is equivalent to three fewer teaspoons of sugar per person per week

Dr Jean Adams from University Cambridge said the tax avoided had "any commensurate harm to the soft drinks industry' all the while benefiting



Council bills up as services cut



BRITS face rocketing council tax bills and poorer services due to Covid.

Town hall chiefs have taken a £9.7billion hit during the pandemic - £6.9bn in additional costs and £2.8bn through lost income. Families could now be clob-

bered with 5% council tax rises.

The National Audit Office said councils' coffers remain a "cause for concern". NAO head Gareth Davies said: "Authorities' finances have been scarred and won't simply bounce back quickly.

Government needs to address the long-standing need for finan**■ by NADEEM BADSHAH**

cial reform." The Government has announced a £9.1bn cash injection for town halls, but that still leaves a gap of £605million with

30% reporting a cash crisis.

Meg Hillier MP said: "Central government support has provided an important lifeline to keep local authorities' heads above water.

"Local authorities were already overstretched and now, with reserves depleted, many will have to slash service budgets to balance their books

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