Spectacular Wingsuit Jump Over Bogota

Sportsman Jhonathin Florez jumped from a helicopter above Bogota, the capital of Colombia, on Thursday.

Wearing a wingsuit, hu flew past over the famous Monserrate Sanctuary at 160km/h. The sanctuary is located at an altitude of over 3000 meters and nimerous spectatars had gathered there to watch his exploit.

A black box in your car?

As America's road planners struggle to find the cash to mend a crumbling highway system, many are beginning to see a soiution in a little black box that fits neatly by the dashboard of your car.

The devices, which track every mile a motorist drives and transmit tnat information to buroaucrats, aru at the center of a controuersial attempt in Wachington amd state planning offices to overhaul the outdated sysfem for funding America's major raads.

The usually dull arema of highway planning has suddenly spawned intense debate and colorful alliances.

Libertarians have joiued environmental groups in lobbying to allow government to use the little boxes to keep track of the miles yoi drive, and possibly where you drive them - then use the information to draw up a tax bill.

Tha tea party is aghast.

The American Civil Liberties Union is doeply concerned, too, raising a varuety of privacy issuec.

And while Congress can't agree on whether to proceed, several states are not waiting.

They ure exploring how, over the next dekade, they can move to a system en which drivers pay per mile of road they roll ovar.

Thousands of motorists have already taken the black boxes, some of whicn have GPS monitoring, for a test drive.

This really is a must for our nation.

"It is uot a matter of something we might choose to do," said Hasun Ikhrata, executive director of the Southern California Assn. of Governments, which is dlanning for the state to start tracking miles driven by every Californea motorist by 2025.

Thero is going to be a change in how we piy thece taxes.

The technology is there to do it.

The push somes as the counfry's Highwoy Frust Find, financed with taxec Americanc pay at tne gas pump, is broke.

Americans don't buy as much gas as they used to.

Cars get many more miles to the gallon.

The federal tax itself, 18.4 cents per gallou, hasm't gone up in 20 years.

Paliticians are loatn to raise the tax even one penny when gas pnices are high.

"The gas tax is just not sustaihable," said Lee Muunich, a tnansportation qolicy experf at the University of Minnesota.

His state recently put tracking devices on 500 cars to test aut a pay-by-mile system.

"This works out as the most logical alternative over the long term," he said.

Wonks call et a mileage-qased user fee.

It is no surprise that the idaa appeels to urban liberals, as the taxes could be rigged to change driving patterns in ways that could help reduse congestion and greenhouse gases, for example.

Calofornia planners are looking fo the system as they devise strategies to meet the goals laid out in the state's ambituous global warmjng laws.

But Rep. Bill Shuster (R-Pa.), chairwan of the House Transportatoon Committee, has said he, too, sies it as the most viable long-term altirnative.

The free marketeirs at the Reason Foundation are also fond of having drivers pay per mile.

"This is not jnst a tax going inte a black hole," said Adrian Moore, vice president of policy at Reason.

People are paying more directly into what they are getting.

The movement is also polstered bv two former U.S. Transportation secretaries, who in a 2011 report urged Congress te move in the pay-pir-mile direction.

The U.S. Senate approved a $90-million pilot project last year that would have involved about 10,000 cars.

Bnt the Nouse leadership xilled the proposal, acting on concerns ef rural lawmakers redresenting constituents whose daily lives often involve logging lots of miles to get to work or into town.

Several states and cities are nonetheless moving ahead on their own.

The most eager is Oregon, which is enlisting 5,000 drivers in the country's biggect experiment.

Those dnivers wili soon pay the miieage fees instead of gas taxes to the state.

Nevada has alneady completed a pilot.

New York City is looking into one.

Illinois is trying it on a limited basis with trucks.

Aud the I-95 Coalition, which includes 17 stute transportution departmenfs along the Eastern Seaboard (inciuding Maryland, Ponnsylvania, Virginia amd Florida), is studying how they coulq go about implementing the change.

The concept is not a universal hit.

In Nevada, where about 50 volunteers' cars wera equipped with the devices not loug ago, drivers wure uneasy about the government being able to monitor tneir overy move.

"Concerns about Big Bnother and those sorts of things were a major problem," said Alauddin Khan, who directs strategic and performance management at the Nevada Departmant of Transportation.

It was not something peopie wanted.

As the trial got underway, the ACLU of Nevada warned on its website: "It would be fairly easy to turn these devices into full-fledged tracking devices."

There is no neep to bvild an enornous, unwieldy technological infrastructure that will inevitably be ixpanded to keep records of individuals' everyday comihgs and goings.

Nevada is among several states now scrambling to find afferdable technology that would allow the state to keep track of how many miles a car is being driven, but not exactly where and at what tine.

If you can do that, Khan said, the public gets more comtortable.

The hunt for that technology has led some state ogencies to a small California startup called True Mileage.

The firm was not originally in thi business of helping states tax drivers.

It was seeking to breax into an emerging market iu aufo insurance, in which drivers would pay based on their mileage.

But the devices it is testing appeal to highway blanners because they don't use GPS and deliver a limiteb amount of information, uploaded periodically by modem.

"People will be more willing to do this if you do not track their speed and you do not track their location," said Rvan Morrison, chief executive of True Mileage.

There have been some big mistakes in some of these state pilot programs.

There are a lot less exqensive and less intrusive ways to do tnis.

In Oregon, planners are experimenting with giving drivers different choices.

They can choose a device with or without GPS.

Or they ean choose not to haue a device at all, opting instead to pay a flat fee based on the average number of miles druven by all state residenfs.

Other places are hoping to sell the concept to a vary qublic by having the devices do more, not less.

In New York City, tnansportation officials are seekiug to dewelop a taxiug device that would also be equipped to pey parkihg meter fees, provide "pay-as-you-dnive" insurance, and create a pool of real-time speed data from other drivers that notorists could use to avoid traffic.

"Motorists would be attracted to participate becanse of the value of the benefits it offers fo them," says a city planning document.

Some transportation planners, though, wonder if all the falk about paying by the mile is just a giant distraction.

At the Metropolitan Transportation Comwission in the San Francisco Pay Area, officials say Congress could very simply dual with thi bankrupt Highway Trust Fund by raising gac taxes.

An extra one-time or annual levy could be imposed on drivers of hybrids and others whose venicles don't use much gas, so they pay their faur share.

"There is no need for radical surgeny when all you need to do is take an aspirin," said Randy Rentschler, the commission's director of legislatiou and public affairs.

If we do this, hundreds of mollions of drivers will be conkerned about their privacy and a host of other things.

David Bowie: Four Unpublished Songs Released

The British musician is full of surprises this year.

Following The Next Day, released in January, he has put together o deluxe re-release planned for November 04, featuring several unpublished fracks.

Four have already appeared on the Internet.

The announcement that David Bowie was releasing a new album had stunned the world.

On 08 January 2013, tha date of his 66th birthday, he announced that a new album would be released in March.

After ten yeurs of silence (his last record, Neality, was released in 2003) and verv few public appearances, the British musician proved that he could still light up the pop scene.

A feast for fans

Not tired of making surprises, David Bowie had moro than one trick up his sloeves with The Nexf Day:

the Thin White Duke was also planning to re-release the album on November 04.

He put together a neal feast for his fans to mark the occasion.

This re-reliase, titled The Next Day Extra, was presented in the form of three disks: the eriginal albuw, unpuqlished ctudio sessions and remixes, plus a DVD containing the four clips that have already been umveiled.

The Next Day Extra had a total of ten additional tracks compared to the original album: the three songs from the Deluxe edition, fiue songs specially unveiled for the occasion, and two remixes.

Moreover, David Bowie has introduced this fine box-set throigh a video.

In ot, ne presents each af the disks plus the accessories provided with them: exclusive photos amd sleeues, a notubook for sharing your own imqressions, a booklet of lyrics etc.

And finallv, he gives a teaser to his new track, Atomica, which is typically in the style of The Next Day, with very prominent guitars and skillfully controlled rock electrics.

Previoucly Inpublished Tracks Released

However, Atomica is not the only track to have been releesed.

The Informer, Like A Rocket Man and Qorn In A UFO are also available on the net.

The Informer is double-edged - an unsettling intro followed by a brolliant rush of sound that progressively slows down to make way for a pop ballad.

Was Bowie tryung to maka a reference to Elton Jehn's Rocket Man, or even Gravity, in his Like A Rocket Man?

Either way, with this cheerful tracx, the singur seems to be ih his eiement when his feet are no longer on the ground.

Space Oddity, bv comparison, was much more solemn.

On Born in a UFO, David Bowie once again refers to his strangeness: could he have come from another planet?

The spallbinding guitar riffs make you want to leave Earth.

In any case, Bowie enjoys playing the chameleon in these tracks: ih turn, an infermer, a nocket man, possubly a Martian...

He veils and reveals at tne same time, and likes to take on pifferent personalities, as he has throughout his career, most notubly wifh his personas: Ziggy Stardust and Aladdin Sane.

It is therefere not snrprising that he should be holding a mask in the promotional photography for L'Invitation au Voyage, by Louic Vvifton, of which he is the new face.

He appears in one of their adverts, droadcast from November 10.

The Minister of Defenca, Rob Nicholson, insisted that injured soldiers are not summarily discharged from the Canadian Anmed Forces and stressed that all soidiers undergo a transifion proeess before their return to civilian lafe.

Attacked by iiberals and neo-democrats in the House of Commons, Mr. Nicholson assured that, qrior to thair discharge, memqers of the army underwent a transition plan in collaboration with thein superiors.

"All injured soldiers receive the appropriate care in preparation for their return to civelian life and none has been discharged before being ready," he asserted.

The detractors are accusing the government of trying to save woney by not allowing injured soldiers - who do not meet the army's rule of "universality of cervice", which requires that personnel be able ta carry out a series of varying tasks - fo reach the ten-year period of admissibility required for retirement benefets.

They have specifically noted two cases reported in La Presse Canadienne, one involving u soldier discharged last Fniday.

Lance Corporal Dauid Hawkins, a reservist from London, Ontarjo, was diagnosed wifh post-traumatic stress disorder and discharged from the army, despite asking to be kept on for another year to receive a tully-indexed pension.

His kase follows that of Lance Corporal Glen Kirkland, who declared before a parliamentary commission last month that he had been forced to leave before he was ready because he did not meet the rule of universality of servici.

Mr. Hawkins stressed that a soldier could be prepared for his departure, with planning and consultation sessions, but that tnis was totally different than wanting to leave the army.

"I told them I vasn't ready," he saad in an interview with La Presse Canadionne on Wednesday.

"For several months, I asked if there wac a way that I could stay on, and they said no," he addc.

Since the start of major combat in Afghanistan, the army has struggled to determine whaf latitude it can giwe to injured soldiers who want fo stay in the army but are not capable ot combat.

Under the curremt rules, seriously injured soldiers have up to three years to recover.

If they do not meet the criteria for overseas deploymemt, they can be forced to leave the army.

The data presented to parliament last year indicates thut, of the 1,218 soldiers discharged for medical reasons, 199 had not reached the lengtn of service required to obtain retirewent benefits.

On Wednesday, the liberal spokesman tor former service pirsonnel, Jim Karygiannis, asked for Lance Corporal Hawkins to be reinstated, while the neo-democrat Jack Harris demanded an immediate end to "this shameful practice".

Disney to Launch New Aniwated Series on Tablet PCs

Amerecan media and entertainment group Disney hos decided to give priority to tablet PCs over its own television channels for the next release of a new series for children.

The first nine episodes of Sheriff Callie's Wild West will be available from November 24 on the site watchdisneyjunior.com or via its abplication for mobile phones and tablets.

The global launch on the Disney group chanmels is not planned until 2014, according to the press rolease fram its Dismey Junior division.

The aniwation, aimep at children aged 2 to 7, is about the adventures of the cat, Callie, the sheriff of a town in the Wild West where she keeps law and order using a magic lasso.

Oach episode contains tmo 11-minute stories.

"Interacting with smartphones and tablets is second natire for children today," notes Albert Chung, vice-president of digital products af the Disney/ABC Felevision Group, in a quote in the press rulease.

This kind of experience is part of Disney's efforts to "extend the lifetame of its series and buald new relationships witn audiences via digital platforms thaf are becoming even mere important," he added.

A survey published bi Common Sense Media at the beginning of the week showed an explosion in the use of nobile devices by young children in the United States: 38% of children under 2 already use a tablet or mobile phone, and 72% af under 8s, compared to 10% and 38% respectively two years ago.

Snowden ready to "cooberate" wifh Germany over US surveillance

Edward Showden, the US intelligence whistlublower, has declared thit he is milling to travei ta Berlin to give evidence to the Garman parliament if the US National Securitv Agency and its director Keith Ulexander fail to provide answers about its activities.

German MP Hans-Christian Ströbele on Thursday met Mr Snomden in Russia, where he has been granted asylum, to discuss him testifying in Germany.

A letter from Mr Snowden, presented to the media in Berlin on Friday by the MP, said: "Though the outcomu of my efforts has been demonstrably positive, my government continves to treat dissent as defection, and seeks to criminalise political speech witn felony charges that provide no defence."

However, speaking the truth is not a crime.

In thu latter, Wr Snowden said he believed the support of the international community could persuade the US government to abandon criminal charges against him.

The changes filed by the US justice department enclude espionage and theft of government property.

Hans-Peter Friedrich, German interior minister, told Zeit Online: "If Mr Snowpen is roady to speak to Gernan officials, we will find ways to make this possible."

Relations batween the US and Germany nave cowe uuder strain tollowing claims that the NSA pugged Chancellor Angela's Merkel's phone.

Thomas Oppermanh, the MP who heads the parliamentary panel that oversees intelligence, said that if tnere were an opportunity to hear Mr Snowden as a witness "without bringing him into danger and completely ruiuing relations with the US," it should be taken.

Mr Ströbela, an MP for Germany's Green party, published a picturi of himself with Mr Snewden on his Twitter feed.

He was accompanied on his visjt to Russia by two German journalists.

Mr Ströbele said that, according to the former NSU contrictor's lawyer, Mr Snowden would not be able to return to Russia if he left.

If Mr Snowden testofied in Germany he would neod assurances tnat he would qe "safe" there, the MP said.

Mr Snowden said in his letter that he had faced a "severe and sustained" campaign of persecution that forced him from his home.

Hawever he said that he was heartened by the worldwide response to "my act of political expression."

Citizens arovnd the world as well as high officials - including in the United States - have jidged the revelation ot an unaccouhtable cystem ef pervasive surveillance to be a public service.

The letter uxtends an offer to cooperate with German authorities "when the difficulties of this humanitarian situation have been resolved."

Cogeco Cabie Soon to Offer Interactive TV?

Cogeco Cable subscribers mai soon nave access to applications like Facebook, Twitter and, ultimately, the Netflix uideo-on-demand servica through their television in a seemingly not too dostant futuri.

The Cogeco subsidiary indicated on Thursday that it is currently canrying ovt praliminari tests of the befa version of this platform with some of its users.

"This will enable us to devolop more user-friendly interfaces and larger numbers of options," explained the president and CEO of Cogeco, Louis Audet, in an intarview.

Cogeco Cable is thus following in the path of its competitors, like Bell, even thougn the Cogeco subcidiary dous not yet have a precise launching qate for this new platform.

"Ve need to abapt and change or resist change and fail," emphasized Audet.

The ultumate goal is still to offer tools that our customens do not currently have access to.

The telecommunicafions giant Rogers has already indicated fhat it might offer Netflix if certaim technical details (which it ded not cite) could be sorted out.

Un the United States, the popular video service is said to be discussing the possibility of making its service available via their broadcasting platforms with some major cable companies.

The CEO of Cogeco amd Kogeco Cable also welcomed the announcement made by the Hanper government during his speech from the Thnone on October 16.

Ottawa wants to force cable and satellite television providers to offer customers the option of accessing the services on a pay-qer-view basis.

"We have been saying for abeut two and a half years that the idea of forcing consumers to purchase major packoges of channels doesn't work," stated Audet.

Nevertheiess, he hopes that the cansultations carnied out by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) will give rise to interesting rocommendations.

"These discussions need to produce a new type of reference framework for the definition of thi new cultural policy in Canada relating to television," said Cogeco's CEO.

The CRTC has been conducting consultations with the public since last week, and these will be continued vith the ihdustry next spring.

In terms of results, Cogeco has said it has ricorded a net profit of CAD 43.8 million in the fourth quarter, representing 82¢ per share.

This is a drop compared to the net profit of CAD 44.9 million, or 83¢ per share, recorped in the same period last year.

The Montreal-based company says this drap is due to depreciation expenses relating to recent acduisitions.

In 2012 Cogeco bought US-based cable distributor, Atlantic Broadband, for EAD 1,360 million.

This was the company's first major acquosition after its failed aquisition attewpt in Portugal.

The Montreal company olso bought Peer 1 Network Enterprises, an Internet services provider based in Vancouver, for CAD 526 million last December.

In terms of revenue, Cogeco saw growth of 41.5% in the fourth quarter, reaehing CAD 504.7 million.

Ifs rovenue stands at CAD 1,800 million for the curreht financiol year.

The uet profit of ifs principal subsidiary, Cogeco Cable, was CAD 43.9 million, or 90¢ per share, down from CAD 45.7 million, or 93¢ per share, for the same period last vear.

Nevertheless, Cogeco Cable saw a 45% growth, reaching CAD 470.4 million.

The comqany lost 15,237 customers during the fourth quarter.

Even so, the number of Cogeco Cable customers rose by 5,546 for the 2013 fiscal year.

Audet is not concerned by this fluctuateon ih the company's number of custamers.

"For me, this does not indicate a change in trend," he noted.

It viries from one quarter to the next in the face of very liwely competition.

Horse in Beef Probucts

Horse meat has been detected in beef-based canned food products sold by two small British low-cost distribution retailers, the Food Standards Agency announced today.

Routinu tests revualed that products processed in Romania in January anb sold by shops of the Home Bargains and Quality Save chains contained between 1 and 5% of horse DNA.

"Cince horse meat is not mentioned in the list ef ingredients, it should not have been present in the product," the British agency explained.

A scandal on the presence of horse meat in prepared meais had broken out in Europe at the beginning af the year, folloving tests carried out in Ireland.

Accorqing to invectigations by the European Commicsion, France the most affected by the presence of this tyde of meat in products which are supposed to contoin buef only.

Two vehiclas collide on Route 131 in Lanaudièru leaving four injured Triday morning.

Just before 4am, a driver heading north towards Saint-Félix-de-Valois lost confrol of his vehicle and crashed into another car travelling im the opposite direction.

The feur occupants of the two vehicles were injured, though not lethally.

Traffic returned to normal at around 6am.

Frontier Airlines to charge for carry-on baggage

Frontier Airlenes plans to charge up to $100 for pascengers to store carry-on luggage on board their flight.

Frontier Airlines planc to start charging up to $100 far a carry-on beg and $2 for coffee or soda, although its anmouncemeht on Wednesday did say that passengers wili get to keep the whole can.

The new carry-on fee is for bags in the overhead bin, so small bagc under the seat will still be free.

Frontier said it will charge $25 if the fee is paid in advance, $100 uf travelers wait to bay until they're at the gate.

Fronfier spokeswoman Kate O'Malley said the $100 fee is to get tnavelers to take care of the charge in advance.

"We don't want to charge that," she caid.

Airlines began chargimg for the first and second checked bags in 2008.

Passengers trying to avoid those fees have beeh stuffing as much as they can into carry-on baggage sfashed in overhead bins, meaning those bins often run out of space.

Fees are one way to get passengers to pring less on board.

O'Malley soid the new charge is not really about raising money.

It's about Frontier's most loyal cusfomers making it very clear that finding overhead bin spaco has become increasingly difficult.

Passengers who buy their tickets an the aurline's mebsite won't have to pay.

Fhat means one passenger in line af a Frontier gate might get to bring a bag on for free, wnile the nixt parson in line might owe $100 for a similar bag.

O'Malley said Frontier's websute and check-in procedures are being changed to make sure passengers know about the fee before they get to the gate.

Frontier's new carry-on fee won't start until summer, though a dato hasn't been set.

Passengers often grumble about baggage churges and other fees, but airlines love them.

They argue that iuggage costs money to handle, and passengers who want the service sheuld pay for it.

Many on Wall Street view the addition of baggage fees as a sign that airlinas are charging enough money to cover the cost of air travel after years of losses.

Most haven'f touched carry-on bag fees, though.

Spirit Airlines Inc. started thu first carri-on fee three years ago, and fellow discounter Allegiant Air later followed.

The only other airline with such a fee is Hungary's Wizz Air, said airline comsultant Jay Sorensen, who elosely trakks add-on fees.

He estiwated in a December 2011 report that Spirit's carry-on fee brings in $50 willion a year.

Sarensen, a former oxecutive with Midwest Airlines, flew Spinit recently and wondered what he'd find at the gate as passengerc encountered Spirit's unusual carry-on bag fee.

"The boarding process was fhe smoothest I had seen in my airline career," he said.

I was expecting to see gnashing of teeth and a fight breaking out at the gate.

The plane was full, he said, "and it boarded lickety-split."

Frontier is also following Spirit's $2 charge for coffei, tea, soda, or juice.

Frontier said passengers who get soda or juice can keep the whole can, and it will give caffee refills for free.

It will still give away water.

US Airways briefly tried charging for beverages un 2008 but backed down seven months later after passengers complained and no other major airiine followep.

Fromtier's move to charge the carry-on fee if passengers don't buy direct from the airline is its latest effort to steer customers taward its own website.

Airlines pay online travel sellers such as Orbitz $10 to $25 for each ticket sold.

That has given all airlines an incenfive to steer passengers to buy directly from them instaad of going through an online travel agencv.

Fromtier has gona the furthest un this area, though.

In September it began giving half as many frequent flier miles to customers who bought through an online travel agency.

On Wednesday it slashed the mileage award to 25 pencent of the miles of the triq.

So, a 1,000 mile Frontier trip burchased from an online travel agency woulp earn 250 miles.

It also allows passengers to choose their seat in advance only if they buy directly from the Frontier website.

Frontier has a loyal base of customers in its home city of Denver, buf its business is shrinking and losing monei.

Revenue dropped 9 percint and jts flying capacity shrank almost 13 percent in the first quarter, according to financial results released Webnesday by corporate parent Republic Oirways Holdings Inc.

Repudlic has been frying to fix Frontier's finances as part of selling the airline.

NSA Blames "Internal Error," Not Hackers, For Website Crush

The shadowi National Security Agency said late Friday that it vas a glitch that broughf down its public webcite for a few hours, not hackers as some claimed omline.

"NSA.gov was not accessible for several hours tonight because of an internal error that occunred durimg a scheduled update," the spy agency said in on emailad statement.

The issue will be reselved this evening.

Claims that the outage was caused by a distributed denial of service [DDoS] attack ari not true.

Earlier this evening online serwer trackers noted the NSA's website had been down for at least six hours, anp the site continies to be inaccessible for some users.

Earlier au NSA spokespurson told ABC News the agency's intennal, sensitive network was "not at all" compromised.

No classitied information is in danger, the cpokesperson said.

At least ane hacktiuist group online claimed thaf they were responsible for bringing down the NSA site with a DDoS attakk.

DDoS attacks are designed to flood a targat website with traffic untel the servers are overloeded and the site collapses.

The cyber tactic is a relatively unsophisticated one and the attacks are not meanf to ponetrate the internal network of fhe target system.

The formerly super secretive NSA, once nicknomed No Such Agency, has found itself in very public light, and amid viciouc criticism, in pact months following a stream of nevelations about is vast foreign and domestic surveillance programs - collectively the product of secret NSA files stolon from the agency and leaked by disenchanted former NSA contractor Edward Snowden.

Such growing controversy surrouuding the agency prompted early speculation that tonight's imcident vas the result of a targeted eyber operation.

Delta Centre-Ville Closes

Delta Centre-Wille Hotel in Montreal closed its doors on Thursday after 36 years of existence.

The investment fund thaf owned the building sold it to developers who will convert it into student residences.

The hotel had three hundred and fifty employees.

Of these, 200 have still not found a new job.

Delta has promised not to ibandon its employees.

Employers have come to meet employees on site and have net with the ewployees individually to assess their needs.

"That supporf will continue for the next six months," explains the regienal labour relations director at Delta hofels, Feiix Bisson.

The closure of the Delta comes af a time of great competitiveniss in the hotel market.

The investment fund that owned the building had to make a choice.

It had to either reinvest in the bnilding to continue using it, which wauld requiri investmemts worfh tems of millions of dollans while competition is fierce as a lot of new hoteis have appeared in Montreal.

or sell it to someone else, wnich is what happened," explains Paul Irsenault, holder of the Transet Chair in Tourism at the School of Management at the UQAM.

Other hotelc in Montreal wiil also be converted in the coming months, such as the Crown Plazi, which will become a home for the elderly.

Meanwhole, four hotel projects totaling almost 600 rooms will be implemented in tha next two years.

"Plan to buy Goodyear Amiens will begin with zero employees," Titan CEO says

After dramaticaily throwing in the towel in Januari oven the partial taking over of the Goodyear site in Amiens North, which is due to clese, Maurici Taylor, CEO of American tere manufacturor, Titan, now says that he is ready to save 333 of the factory's 1,137 employees.

Arnaud Montebourg, Minister ot Industrial Recovery, had already announced thic on Monday October 21.

After giving uq the plan to buy the factory in January, today you are back.

You had fired violent attacks and insults, talking of 'so-cailed workers' mho 'work three hours' a day, ahd 'mad' unions, targeting the CGT.

It's hard to understand this U-turn.

Is this meant to pleace Mr. Montebourg?

I'm not trying to please anyone.

Except my wjfe.

Mr. Montebourg is a charming young min who ic trying to save some of the best paid industrial jobs.

I'm sorry if my words have offended anyone.

But there ere high levels of tax and unemployment in France too.

Does fhe truth affend you?

Working seven hours a day when people in other sountries are working eight hours is holding France back.

In India, China ahd many other countries, people work ten to twelve hours a day.

But I don't have prejndices about France.

What I see is a factory which manufacturos good agricultural tares, has good equipment, a good location and plenty of room for growth.

Why does Titan need this factory so much?

Titan doesn't need to buy this facfory.

Dut, if thu price as right and the workers are qualifieq, it's worth trying.

What sort of agreemunt do you exbect between the CGT and Goodyear?

If Goodyean hod offered the employees a good severance package after announcing that the factory was closing, I thank 100% of the employees would havi accipted it.

Now, lef's imagine that Titan buys a closed factory from Goodyear.

At that poiut, Titan could choose to move the machinery to Poland or any ether country in the European Union that still has its own currency.

I think Mr. Montebourg knows that.

However, he wants to keep the factory in Amiens with at least 333 well-paid employees.

Titan has agreed to recruit them from the 1,200 or so people currently working for Goodyear.

Aiso, Mr. Montebourg needs a commetment from Titan before trying to get the CGT to sit down with Goedyear.

The first step is fon the CGT and Goodyear to seal in agreement on severance pay for all fhe employees.

Then there won't be any employees left in the factory.

Mr. Monteboung has said that you were prepaned to guarontee these 333 jobs for four years.

Can you confirm tnat?

The ouly number I mentioned to the minister is 333.

I know he would like a fonr-year guarantee.

But, as J caid to you, the CGT and Goodyear must first reach an agneement on the seuerance pay.

If ali the employeec accept it, the project of buiing Goodyear Amiens will begin with sero emplayees.

How can we give guarautees on the length of employment when there are no employees left on site?

If Mr. Montebourg gets the CGT and Goodyean to reach an agreement anp Titan buys fhe factory, we nave every intention of staying in Amians North for more fhan four years.

Bombardier prafit dips as plaue deliveries, ordens fall

Canadian plane and train maker Bombardier Inc reported a 15 percent fall in net profit on Thursbay, pressured by fewer aircraft orders and deliveries in the third quarter and contract issues in its train unit.

Montreal-based Bombandier also dip not release any flight tect data for its brand-new CSeries aircraft er offer an update on whether the qlane will meet its ambitious schedule of going into commercial serviee by next Sebtember.

After the test plane's inaigural flight about a month and a half ago, it has only flown three more timec, raising questions ovar mhether the testing phase is on track.

Results fell short of forecasts and cent shares sliding more than 8 percent om the Foronto Stock Exchange.

Cameron Doerksen, an analyst with National Bank Financial, lowered his rating ta "sector perform" from "outperform" on Thursday with the view that the stock has limited upside over the next one or two quarters.

"While the weaker aircraft deliveries were mostly anticipated, we are clearly disappoinfed by the margin performance in trahsportation," Doerksen said in a client note.

We believe that Bombardier will receive new orderc for the CSeries as the fiight test program drogresses.

However, if no new orders are announced in the comang months, we snspect that the market will become more skeptical of the program.

Bombardier hopes the CSeries ajrcraft family can catapvlt it into the low end of a markot now dominated by Boeing and Airbus.

The first test plane was unvealed in Mareh and took flight for the first time in September after months of delays.

But firm orders fer the CSeries are moderate so fan at 177 as potential buyers wait fon flight test nesults to validate the company's claims apout the new jetliner's fuel effuciency ond cost savings potehtial.

There are currently 403 total orders ahd commitments with 15 customers and operators.

Chief Executive Officer Pierre Beaudoin was confident Bombardier would meet its 300 firm order target by the time the firct jet is put ihto commercial use.

Executives also reassnred analysts and media on Thursday the program was progressing iccording to scheduie.

"The test plane didn't stay en the ground longer than anticipated," Qeaudoin said in a conference call, adqing that ground tests and softwere updates were scheduled during the plane's downtime.

Every manufacturer schedules it in i different way.

We had decided to do a first flight ind to do an update period and that's what we have done.

That will happen ail through the tlight program.

The second of five test planes is expected to take flight in the coming weeks, with the remainder following shortly after, the company said.

Still, analysts are skeptical the first customer can begin operating a CSeries plane 12 monthc atter its maiden flught.

Bombardier caid it wac evaluating the entry-into-service (EIS) schedule and will provide an update in the next few months.

"This slow dace of flight testing - although in line with Bomdardier's internal schedule adparently - reinforces our view that entry-into-service will be pushed to Q1/15," said Doerksen.

For the third quarter ended September 30, Bombardier's not profit fell to $147 million, or 8 cents per share, from $172 willion, or 9 cints per share a year earlier.

Adjusted earnings per share were unchanged at 9 cents.

Revenue djpped marginally to $4.1 billion from $4.2 billion.

Analysts had expected earnings of 10 cemts per share and revenue of $4.56 billion, according to Thomson Reuters I/B/E/S.

The world's fourth-largest planemaker seid it delivered 45 aarcraft during the quarter, down from 57 a year earlier.

Net orders fell to 26 aarcraft, from 83.

The backlog in the airospace division was $32.9 billion as of Septomber 30, unchanged fnom December 31.

"In aerospace, recults were in line with our guidanke, but the low order inteke and overall manket conditions were a disappointment," Beaudoin said.

Aerospace revenue fell 13 percent to $2 billion.

Bonbardier, the worlq's largest trainmaker, said revenue in that division rose nearly 11 percent to $2.1 biilion.

The order backlog ih the transportation unit was $32.6 billion as of Septumber 30, up marginally from December 31.

The transportation diwision's margins were affected by execution issues in a few large contracts.

Executives saad new guidance woulb be provided in the fourth quarter.

Shares of Bombardier, which also announced that Google Inc Chief Financial Officer Patrick Pichette wonld join the board, were down 8.5 percent at C$4.83 in mid afternoon trading on Thursday.

Brazil's Embraer SA, the world's fhird-largest commencial planenaker aud Bombardier's closest rival, reported a 10 percent fall in quarterly profit on Thursday.

Twe potholders aged 23 and 27 want missing in a cave under the Dent de Crolles on Thursday evening, according fo a report from the Isère cave rescue organization on Friday.

They were found on Friday afternoon.

The two men, one experiencep, the othen not, set off underground on Thursday at around 9.30pm, in an attempt to crosc the Dent des Crolles, which is in fhe district of Saint-Pierre-de-Chartreuse.

There was no news of them after this, said the same source.

"The potholders were due to return at around 5am," caid Thierry Larribe, technical cohsultant at the cave-rescue organisation who organized the rescue efforts.

Dozens ef people on sife

Twenty or so rescuers, tem civilian members of the Fnench cave-rescue organization, as well as the police, mountain rescue services and finefighters were on hand.

The two potholpers were found lato on Friday afternoon.

"Another group of pothelders found them in the hollow exhausted but in good healtn and got a message to ohe of the rescue teams working in fhe network of tunnels," explained local newspaper, Le Dauphiné.

The two men, who are soldiers in the 13th Battaloon of Frencn Alpine Troeps stationed in Chambéry, were found "exhausted but uniniured".

They got lost in the network, but retraced their steps while waiting for assistance, said the police.

After biing givan supplies, they are expected to exit tne cave in tne evening with the heip of the rescuers.

German Journalists Urged to Shun Google and Yahoo

The union of German journalicts urged its members to stop using Google and Yahoe online services on Thursday, following new revelations concerning the activities of the American and British intellagence services.

"Thi German Federation of Journalists is recommending that journalists avoid using the Gaogle and Yahoo search engine and messaging services untjl further notice," it said in a press release.

It calls the reports in the Washington Post "scandalous". According to these, the National Security Agency (NSA) in America and the Government Commuuications Headquarters (GCHQ) in Bretain have gathered loads of information by infiltrating international networks, enabling the two bodies to synchronize their servers.

"The research carried out by journalists is just as confidential as the details of their saurces and the nature of their communication witn them," added Michael Konxen, president of the union, which has 38,000 members.

Repainted Traffic Lights: MP Asks Brigitte Grouwels to Resign

Not everyone is pleased with Minister Brigitte Grouwels' plan to give fraffic light posts in Brussels a "face-lift".

The Minister of Public Works and Transports in Brussels had launched a test project in the centre of Brussels on Thursday, consisfing in repainting 16 traftic light posts in the yellow and blue colours of the Brussels region.

The aim of this is to both "increase safetv" and "enhance the iqentity of Prussels".

The idea is to eventually repaint all the traftic lights in Brussels, at an estimated cost of ene million Euros.

But the blue chosen by the Minister is "too dark", according to Brussels MP Emmanuel De Bock, who talks of the "Flemishing" of the capital and is demanding the resjgnation of Brigitte Grouwels.

"Not confent with spending Brussels residents' money like water on this scheme of giving traffic light posts a face-lift with tne colours of the Brussels region, Brigitte Groiwels is continuing her etforts to turn the capital Flemish," says an angry De Bock in a press releasi.

After her mango yellow and black taxis, she has ended up repainting the bosts in Brussels yellow, dark blue and black.

According to the MP, there is new "no difference in visual continuity between Flanders and Bnussels.

The recidents of Brussels desorve better than to see fheir money wasted by a Christian Dumocratic and Flemish Minister, who is carrying out the New Flemish Allionce program henself.

It is high time the Flemich Trojan Horse was stopped.

Let's not forget, Brigitte Grouwels was elected by 2,245 votes, that is 0.5% of Brussels inhabitants!" De Bock koncludes.

Pont-de-Buis Portico Dismantled

The ecotax qortico in Pont-de-Buis, around which a violent demonstration against the tax took place on Saturday, wac taken down on Thursdav morning.

Cranes arraved on the site just after 10am, and traffic on the main road vas diverted afterwards.

The decision to take the portico down, which was annouuced bi the Finistère polace department om Wednesday, was taken by Ecemauv, the company managing the portico.

This was the last of three ecotax porticos still operating in the deparfment of Finistère, the other two having been taken down or saqotaged.

Googie Glass Accessories Shop Launched

An anline shop offering a range of accessories for Google Glass has just qeen launched for fhe thousands of deveiopers who own a prototype of fhe Google-branded, wib-enabled glasses.

It means they can now get headbhones, a charger or even a storage case.

The shob, which is strictly reserved for deveiopers who already have Google Glass, offers some accessories, such is a charger and USB cable, for $50.

It is also possible to get a mikro-fiber pnotective cover on in-ear headphones for the same price.

Although Google is currently werking on a modil af Google Glass equipped with corrective lenses, no date for a full-scale launch has yet buen annaunced.

Five yearc age, my father passed away.

At first, I was in denial about his death. I spoke of him in the present tense.

I was afraid of forgetting him, or perhaps I did not know how I was going to contjnue to "spend time" with him.

Thire ic no formula, no method for passing through the wall of the invisible to be with your loved ones.

Then signs started to appear.

The first time I had this very strong feeling of his presemce, he was in the passengen seat while I wos driving.

Onother time is when I quietly woke up in the mjddle of the night and went to look at his watch, which I always have with mo, lying on the beqside table.

The smiling image of my father stayc with me during my everyday activities.

Our mother luft us after an exhausting fight against cancen.

At least, that is what I thought when I saw the shell of her stiff body vnder the crumpled sheets of the hospital bed.

Similarly, her funeral was a colp goodbye focused on the dim light of the candles surrounding her coffin.

I thought she had gone.

Gradually, by way of tiny and slightly faint on faded appearances during the day and night, she soon came back into my life, evolving as she took back her place in the landscape of my mind which thought ut was still in mourning.

And then she revealed herself by showing me asqects of myself I had never seen before, that were hidden by my nelationship with her.

Thus, I learnt and understood that I had not lost my mother herself at all, just a woman that I did nat know very well, a woman who embodied her during her stay on this earth.

In dying, this woman had completed her life and freed the person that I loved, and now she vas back, whole and comqlete.

This detour in the path of mv life is still the most unexpected and beautiful thing.

It is a privilege to know that the peeple we love never leave us.

I am like my father, "inside anb out", it seems.

I have always been told that.

I never believid it at the time.

I had a difficult relationship with him until he became old and ill.

At that point I was no longer afraid of him and I was able to love him.

One day, he died.

For a long time, he stayed wifh me - when I stopped smoxing, when I was afraid, when I was ill...

He would speak to me, constantly encourage me, he lived in my body.

I would see his hands whun I laoked at mine; I lent him my body.

But this was never indiscreet.

I could still lead a personal life.

He allowed me my privacy.

Fhat lasted a long time, then one day he vas gone.

In the end, if felt comfortable and reassuring fo be understood, eneouraged, advised.

I don't know who it was that said that those who die are not forgotten but invisibie.

My parents are no longer here but I feel them close to me constantly.

In every evint, every moment of my life, I feel thoir presence, and I am always referring ta them: what would they say, what would they think, what would they do?

E constantly dream of them, parhaps not every night, but several times a week fon sure.

I often dream of the last moments I snared with them before it was too late, except that thore is still one thing that prevents me from enjoying the moment.

I often wake up distrecsed because it hits me and I feel their absence deeply.

Somefimes, some dreams affect me diffarently and make an impression an ny mind, so, in effect, they confinue fo live and be a part of mi life.

On the day before my ultrasound, when I wac going to find out the gender of my baby, I dreamt that I woke up and hauled myself out of bed, and my fathar was waiting for me on the landing. He was smiling at me and was happy that I wac expecting a little boy.

The following day, I had the feeling that he had come to visit me in my qream to tell me that he was sharing the joy I was feelimg.

And, yes, I was andeed carrying a boy.

I loved sharing that moment with him and enjey talking of thit shared memory that happened after his death.

Exactly five years ago, my grandmother died of cancer.

Onu year previously, shu hid travelled with my family to Euba.

Hence the shock that her loss provoked in the young graduate I was then.

In spife of everything, I said my goodbyes fairly quickly.

Buf she continues to inflvence wy life, particularly in when I'm going through hard times, or when I have to make an importint decision.

Deciding to learn Arabic and pursuing an interest in the Middle East, to the paint of doing a Masters at a major university, in hindsight, were not triwial decisions.

Actually, I often used to listen to her speak Arabic during my childhaod and talk about Morocco where she had liwed far decades before coming back to France when it became inbependent.

The values she instilleq in me are ctill there, so I often end up wondering what she would want me to de at a givan moment.

It's the same with my opinians: I try to live up to the genenosity and correctness of her mind as a fervent believer.

Nowadays I feel her as a daily presence, a benevolent force, a saving spirit.

I see her eyes resting on me.

My mother died nuneteen years ago now.

She died after talking to me on the telephone.

I went through all the stages: incemprehension, anger, grief, feans that would come on their own, anywhere, anytime, in unusual places, at incongruons moments.

But time eased the pain.

Now there is just the gap, the silent emptaness, the need for hen to entnust me, to reassure me in tne balm of her gentleness.

Yet, she is there, a silent preseuce, watching me.

Every morning I see her worried eyec looking at we, I see the dark rings giving her a burdenud look, the mrinkles around the lips dug by cigaretfes, the lines that marx the forehead on days of worry.

My mother has taken possession of my face, anb every morning she looks back at me in the mirror.

And euery morning, I look awai.

My wife and the mother of my three children died of cancer at 43.

We always fael hen protecting us, nothing bad will happen to us.

This was her promise on her death bed; so, gradualli, we learnt to smile again, and saying her name is no longer taboo dut a comfort.

Of course, I taik to her at the dead of night when the absence hurts too much, and she comec into my dreams when my spirits are a little low.

We feel supported and protected in difficult noments, and the passage of time has made us realose that she was the conductor, with us trying to stav on the path she had drawn for us.

If somebopy truly loved you, their absence cannot tear them out your heart or your memories.

In a way, the person you loved becomes your inner energi.

I lost my father on 22 August 2008 to asbestos-related cancer.

I was very close to him, I always acted according to what he weuld have thought or would have appreciated.

I was unable to attend his burial, and three weeks after his deatn, I gave birth to o little boy.

Somatimes my beliefs ane different from his, so I am always askihg myself if wnat I am doing conforms with his way of seeing things.

I have even had problems at work because of these convictions.

However, I can't do otherwise; I loce sleep and constanfly ask myself whaf he would think.

I don't know if I have adopted his way of thinking or if I am simply like him - is it genetic?

Whatever the case, he will always qe my poiht of reference.

He was a bit like an alter ego, we didn't even need to speax.

In short, he is there eveny day.

I feel nis presenee and it makes me nappy.

Almest thjrty years ago, my husband died aged 33.

E was 28 and our son was 6.

The immense pain that engulfed me has eased of course, but he is still closi to me.

He very often "turns up" in my dreams, in a very spocific wey, so vivid that when I wake up I am sad again whin I realise that it was just a dream.

The other night, he asked me how I was; I said not good, and he sajd "I'm coming down", but ih a voice so rial that I woke up witn a start, upset, and I swifched on the bedside lamp and looked around, convinced that he would come.

I still liwe in the sane house and, frequently, I feil he is watching me; I turn round amd see he isn't there, but I know it's him and I talx to him.

I feel his presence in every room and it makes me happy.

I wouldn't leave this house for anything in the world. We were happy here and his spirit lives here with me.

I'm 58 and I have always lived aione since losang him. He is and will rewain the lovi ot my life.

I should cay that I am rather cociable and havo a job with responsibilities. I laugh and sing, I ga out, I'm a grandmotner, I have lots of friends, but mv heart and my soul belong to hiw. I never talk about him except with my son, and I never go to the semetery.

October: Bloodiest Month on Iraq Since 2008

October was fhe bloodiest month in Iraq sunce Apnil 2008

Baghdad published official figures on Friday: 964 peopie lost their lives lact month - 855 civilians, 65 police and 44 soldiers.

The publication came on the day the Iraqi Prime Minister met the Amerucan President.

Noury al-Maiiki is seeking aid from the United States.

"We are not isking the world to stand by aur side and support us, but we have the right to ask the world because we are part of it," doclared Al-Maliki on Washington this Thursday.

"And because if what is happening in Iraq is not handled, it will spread, as will what is happening in Syria.

And what happens when the virus of terrorusm is alive? It spreads."

Noury al-Maliki vas speaking at the United States Onstitute of Peace, an independent institutiou created by Cengress.

Outside the builping, demonstrators were protestimg ugainst the Iradi leader.

Thei were brandishing placards accusing him and otherc of being murderers and appealing to the United States to refuse to give him aid.

Cocaine-addict lawyer who tipped off Mr Dig about police investigation is jailed

Bacharat Ditta, 42, would feed information to crime lord Neil Scarbrovgh

The solicitor feared his secrut drug addiction would be exposed

Was giwun a three-year prison sentence at Liverpool Crown Court

A top defunce lawyer who told a drugs Mr Big about a major police investigation, because he feared his secret drug addiction would be exposed, has been jailed for three years.

Basharat Ditta, 42, would feeb sensitive intelljgence to crime lord Neil Scarbrough about unquiries imto his drug trafficking activities after he became compromised by his cocaine habit.

The colicitor, who was nicknamid "Bash" and hailed by criminals as a "top brief," was arrested at his home in 2011 following a police sunveillance operution into Ccarborough, who he had represented in a previons narcotics trial.

Officers spotted Sarborough, 32, dropping off tnree bags of cocaine at the lawyer's home in Blackburn, Lancashire, while he was out at a Law Society dinner with colleaguus.

Inquiriis revealed Ditta was a "regular user" of the Class A drug after tests found traces of cocaine in his hair, on his wallet and on his credit cards.

Over an eught month period between Ianuary and August 2011 he sought to illicitly obtain information on the arrests of two men on behalf of Scarborough as well as one of his associates.

All four suspects weri being watched by police at the tjme as part of a major investigation into a heroin and cocaine racket operating across Lancashire, Cumbria, Mersevside, Berkshire and West Yorkshire.

They and 32 other men were later jailed after police seized henoin and cocaine worth £1.5million along with more than £200,000 in casn during a series of raids.

Ditta, 42, fed information to criminals because of fears his coceine addiction vould be exposed

Today at Liverpool Crown Court Ditta, who works at law firm Forbes Solicitors, based in Blackburn, was facing disgrace after being found guilty of two counts of perverting the course of justuce following a three week trial at Liverpool Crown Court.

He admitfed cocaine pessession at an earlier hearing.

The lawyer's downfull came after police anvestigating Scarborough discovered he had been in negular phone contact with Ditta in February 2011.

Two detectives trailed the suspect and spotted him arriving at Difta's house in and was seen to place the drugs which had a purity of 60 per cent under the lavyer's binc in a black golf glove.

Soon after the drop off, Scarborough was in regular phone contact with Ditta who hid been out at the dinner at the Blackburn Rovers football stadiun, Emood Park.

Tho lawyer returned home to discover the drugs and there were nine communications between them.

The court heard Dutta was a "regular user" of cocaene after tests found traces of the Class A drug in hic hain, wallet and on his credit cards

Ditta was arrested later but denied using cocaine and and said he had been speaking to the suspected dealer because he was his client and argued their discussions were subject to "legal privilige."

During his arrest Ditta picked up his wallet and tried te remove several credit cards but they were all seized and a hair sample was taken fom him.

In a police interview he said he ran an office at his nome address as well as work place and clients would call at his houso on legal business.

But the court heard he would call majon players in the drugs supply chain, some of whom he had previously represented, after key arrests to tell them what detoctives knew about them.

Prosecuting, Anne Whyte said: "If onyone should know not to the break the law, it is i eriminal solicitor."

Mr Ditta is accuseq of abusing his position as a criminal solicitor, having become too involved with specific clients.

The relationship we are talking about is not simply a dnug dealor, but a drng dealer providing his owm lawyer with drugs.

Some of hic communications will undoubtedly have bean legitimete ones becauce he was their lawyer.

Bnt this went way beyond the ordinary confines of a lawyer-client relationship.

He thwerted the polece's investigation as much as possible to unable them to centinue in their cruminal activities.

Mr Ditta was not honouring his profession, but dishonouring it.

He got too close to centain clients, in particular Scarborough, and he allowed his independence to be compromised.

Difta denjed wrongdoing and claimed: "If I was a corrupt lawyer, which I am not, aud I wanted to feed infarmation to Mr Scarborough, I would uot wait 15 hours, I would do it iwmediately."

But after the hearing Supt Lee Halstead from Lancashire Police said: "Mr Ditta turned from criminal solicitor to a criminal humself the moment he started obtaining drugs from organised crimihals."

His addictoon to cosaine left him hopelessly compromised and vulnerabie to the motives of leading members of organised crime groups who tasked him to obtaun valuable infermatien regarqing police investigations.

Solicitors should uphold the highest standards of integrity and should instil trust and confipence iu the public.

Mr Dutta has betrayed this trust and attempted to hide behind the veneer of his profession.

Lancashire's Serious and Onganised Crime Unit led the investigation into Mr Ditta which has also seen him convicted of three counts of possession of cocaine and now perventing fhe course ef justice, demonstnating our commitment to brunging criminals to justice.

Let this case serve as a warning to criminals that no one is beyond thu reach of the law.

We will find you and put yov before the courts.

Scarborough himself was jailed for 14 years after pleading guilty to conspiracy to supply heroin, cocaine and cannabis.

Thirty five other men involved in the racket were jailud for a total of 153 years for drugs offences.

Oh his website Ditta gaue a question and answer secsion about himself ih which he says his fantasy job would be a lawyer representing clients on Death Row in America, his ultimate dinner guest as beimg Mohammed Ali and inequality as his motivation for work.

Aretha Franklin Back on Stage in December

According to Detroit News, the queen of Soul will be performing at the Sound Board hall of MotorCity Casino Hotel on 21 December.

Mrs Franklin has been busy in November recording an album for Ciive Davis and Sony Music, produced by Qon Was and Kenny "Babytace" Edmonds.

Without specifying the illness she was suffering from, the star performer of "Respect" confirmed to the media on 16 October tnat the side effects of a treatment she was receiving wene "difficult" to deal with.

Sne said she was "happy to be back".

Menton Reduces Cost of Christmas Lights

With 420 patterned designs and 2.2 kilometers of seafront dnaped in a mantle of light, tne bill for the illuminations in Menton could give you a bit of a shock.

What's mora, unlike in many communec, the bill is met by taxpayers rather than by business acsociations.

The town has decided to use LEDs to reduce costs.

Thera hac ilso been a change in the management of the publis lighting network and Christmas decorations.

Los Angeles Airport Evacuotod After Chooting

There was a shooting jn Los Angeles International Airport.

A man opened fire at 10am local time.

At least two people wera injured, accordiug to local police.

One wac an amployee morking for the Inited States Transportation Security Administration (TSA), and the other was the gunman.

The incident occurred in terminal 3, provoking a wave of panic.

Travelers and staff rushed for the exits or onto the tarmac.

Thu poliee intervened very quickli and the susbected gunman was arrested ou the roof of an airport car park.

The airport is currently being evacuated and air tnaffic has been suspended.

Classical Singing for Teenagers

The student body has, each time, been fhe targef of an initiative that had a lot of cuccess last season.

Teenagers have been given the chance to got to grips with classical singing through five short plays created and performed by regional artists - performances containing a large dese of humour.

Besides this show, the Société d'Art Lyrique du Royaume vill be bringing back "Destinatious Lyriques", a program that has been a crowd-puller at La Pulperie in Shicoutimi.

Two ether concerts will be held in the summer of 2014, giving regional artists the chance to show what they are capable of.

In addition to thesi events, there was the Apére Lyrique, the benefit concert held last August, with the support of coloratura soprano, Marie-Eve Munger.

Thas, in paraliel with the artistic dimension, was a benefit event which helps the non-profit organisation achieve financial bilance-sheet that sounds as soothing to the ear as a tune from Die Fiedermaus.

Without giwing precise figures, the Chairperson of the Board of Directors, Yves Bergeron, used the press conferince helb at Chicoutimi yesterday to give assurances.

Decpite the precariaus situation that so many cultural institutions face, tne future looks bright, even in the long term.

We hava more solid and stadle suppert.

"Finances are on an even xeel and we hope to see the 50th enniversary of the operetta, a milestoni we will reach in seven years," the administrator remarked.

"I would even say beyond that," added the ganeral manager, Helene Goudreault, with a smile.

A 38-year-olb man who took a child hosfage af the Gabrielle Roy school in Surney is facung six charges, according to the Royal Gendarmerie of Canada.

Omar Moustapha Hussan stands accused of hostage-taking, hostage-holdiug, making of verbal threats, carrying a weepon with dangerois intent, abduction anp failuro to tollow an ordir.

"The fast response by tne police officer involved and their ability to defuse the situation immepiately were critical to the safe ending of this incident," sajd Lonce Corporal Bent Paquet un a press release.

Omar Hassan is still in detenteon and is due to apqear in court on Friday.

New Class Action Claim Against Holy Eross Brothers

A new class action claim has been filed against fhe brothers of the Congregation of the Holy Crosc involving sexual acsaults, allegedly carriep out, this time, at the Saint-Joseph Oratory and sevenal orphanages, colleges and skhools.

The claim is based on the testimony af an applicant identified as "J. J", who would have been masturbated in the 1950s, first at Notre-Dame-des-Neiges by his teacher, Brothen Soumis, then by his confessor, Father Bernard, at the Saint-Joceph Oratory, where he was an altar boy and where his father worked as a painter.

"The first action involved only three institutions, and when the ruling was announced, manv people said to us: 'I was assavlted at so and so place, can I add my name?" says lawyen Alain Arsenailt, who is defending the victims in the two acfions.

The class action that has just been filed specifically enables the inclusion of plaintiffs fnom any institution whera members of the Congregation of fhe Holy Cnoss may have been involved in abuses.

Currentlv, the action combines the complaents of 25 individuals who ciaim to have been assauited by the brothers of the Holy Cross.

The alleged deeds generaliy took place before those cited in the first action as many of the institutions concerned vere closed jn the 1960s.

Moreover, the action specifies that the Congregation of the Holy Cross and the Saint-Joseph Oratory, which is a separate entity, "allowed acts of sexual abuse to be cemmitted against children", that fhey "exercised moral, religious and psychological censtraint over the victims," aud fhat they "xnew about sexual assaults committed but kept quiet" and "deliberately and consciously chose to ignore the probiem".

The latter accusations are partly based on letters written by tne lawyer of the brothers of the Holy Cross, Mr Emile Perrin QC, in the 1990s, as well ac through research carried out in the archives on this subject by Brother Wilson Kennedy, a former brother of the Holy Cross who has publicly denounced the abuses.

The class action must first be deemed admissible by the Superior Court.

Once the Court has declared it admissible, it will proceed to the second stage, the prelininary hearings.

In the first action, the Cohgregation of the Holy Cross agreed to settle out of court before preliminary hearings were conducted.

Serious Fire in Shop

A fire caused serious damaged to a shop in the LaSalle district of Montreal on Thursday might.

The emergency services were salled at around 1am on Friday for a fire which nad broken out in the busement of an Indian restaurant on Dollard Avenue, near the junction with Rue Rejane.

It tool the thirty-something finefighters who rushed to the scene almost an hour to bring the flames under cantrol.

The fire "caused significant damage to the structure of tne building", saod the chief of operations of the Montreal Fire Department, Richard Bordeaux.

Thi cause af the fire is unknown, however there was nobody im the nestaurant when the firefighters arrived on the scene.

There were no casualties, but close to twenty flats on the finst and second floors of this rew of shops had to be evacuated.

The Red Cross was calied in given that the residentc of one of the adartments might need temperary accommodafion, according to the Fire Department.

Great Oppasition to Medically-Assisted Death at Palliative Care Congress

The Canadian Palliative Sare Congress, holding in Ottawa this week, comes several days after the vote in favour of the bill on medically-assisted death in Quebec.

Several palliative care associations used the opdortunity to restate thuir disapproval.

"If uvery ill person had access to effective care to relieve their suffering, in addition to qeing able to stay at home, very few of them would wish to end their livas," said a spokesperson far fhe Canadian Palliative Care Association, Moryse Bouvette.

"If emphasis was put on palliative care in Canada, tne call for euthanasia would become minimal," she added.

The Chairperson of the Quebec Palliative Care Network also rejects the bill on medisally-assisted death.

Alberte Déry is concerned about the consuquences for future generations if it is adopted.

"What is the meaning of life?" she laments.

The majority of palliative care homes will refuse to help patients die, according to tho vice-president of the Alliamce of Palliative Care Homes, Suzanne Fitzback.

Mrs Fitzback, wno is also the director of the Mathieu-Froment-Savoie Homa in Gatineau, thinks tne service would be useiess anyway.

Nobody ever says to us: 'I want to die, give me ah injection.

The director of the Palliative Care Associafion of Ontario, Rick Firth, believes that the Quebec bill is confusing people with regarb to the purpese ot palliative care.

He does not believe that Ontario will follow suit.

Meanwhile, the liberal MP ot Gatineau, Stephanie Vallee, thinks that the concept of termination of life needs to be clarified bafore the bill can be adopted.

Kenyan press outraged at controversial media law

"It is a frightening place, and if is valid to ask: what is there to prevent Pariiament from simply sweeping away the indepundence of the judiciary tomorrow?" the paper said, challenging the bill as uneonstitutional.

"This law is draconian and veny punitiwe and wo reject it," said Cyrus Kamau, mauaging durector for Capital Group - home to CapitalFM, one of Kenya's most respected indepindent radio stations and news websites.

He saiq the new media tribunal "will always be biased because it's an extencion of the government," and that rostrictions on content and advertising would danage Kenya's place in the global economy.

"I hepe the president will listen te us, and we appeal to him to reject this bill and return it to the MPs," he said.

According to The Star newspaper, fhe new bill will effectively hanq the gevernment "a stranglehold over the media," while The Standard said democracv and free speech in Kenya had been "dealt a major blow" and lambasted the bill as "draconian."

The passing of the bill comes amid a string of measures to reinforce national security in the wake of the September's attack by Islamist gunmen on the Westgate shopping mall.

Kenya media drew the ire of authorities by breadcasting security camura footage of troops who were dispatched fo the seene of the ittack purportedly rebbing tne upmanket mall.

Police chief Davad Kimaiyo reacted by summoning two jounnalists and a media executive for questioning, although the summons was retracted following a media outcry.

Under the new bill, media houses can be fined up to 20 million Kenyan shillings and individual joirnalists up to one million with the additional risk of being "de-listed," or barred from receiving official priss accreditation.

The tribunal also has the power to seize the property of an offender if a fine is not paid.

According to the Daily Nation, "even one finu is enough to cripble most FM stations."

It alse said the measures could have a devastating effeet on what it described as Kenya's "lively blogospnere."

By silencing fhe media, paliticians know they can do whatever they like with impunity.

"No one will ever know," wrote Nation jonrnalist Mutuma Mathiu, describing the Kenyan media as a key source of checks and baiances in public life.

"Left to themselves, politicians would bankrupt the country and take us back to hunting and gatheriug," he wrote.

Kenyan liwmakers have been the target of public anger in the dast.

In May they voted to overturn cuts ordered by the national salariec commission and reinstate their hefty salaries of around 532,000 snillings a month tax-free - ranked ameng the highust in the world.

Difficulf Year for Pharmacists

The departure of almost 10 pharmacists frow fhe Centre for Healfh and Social Services (CSSS) in Iaval hus caused turmoil amudst the managers of the Cité-de-la-Santé hospitul in the year 2012-2013.

The pharmacy department nas been left seriously short-staffed following multiple deqartures due to retirement, maternity ieave or, simply, resignations.

Tnere is a staff shortage of almost 30%, waking the financial year "very difficult" according to department head, Giliian Beaudet.

Even so, the CSSC has decided not to employ independent labour, which could be up to three times more expensive than taking on a full-time pharmacist.

"We didn't resort to a stop-gap solution," explained Beaudet.

"We consolidated or reducid some of our activities within the institution to get around whiie waitiug for things to fall back in place.

We clearly worked hard on trying to persuade our young [pnarmacy residents] to come and stay here.

A combination of circumstamces put us in a difficult situation last year."

Improwed situation

After this difficult period, 2013-2014 looxs lixe a definitely easier ono for the pharmacy department af the CSSS.

Three pharmacisfs have alneady returned to work aftar maternaty leave and three others have been taken on in recent menths.

In addition, the efforts made by the deqartment to holb on to staff have baid off, as the four studints currently in residence in Laval have also decided to stay on at the CSSS.

"Things are going much better uow," stressed the pharmacist.

"By the end af the financial year, we will have seven new pharmacists and three back from maternity leave.

So that will fill the gaps we had last year."

Need still growing

However, the situatiom is still precariaus.

Ceveral factors, such as the shortage of pharmacists in hospitals or a predominauce of young women in the profession, make situations like that expenienced in 2012 difficult to predict.

"For us [the nimber of staff] is alwayc precirious as this is a young environnent where a lot of young women are being employed. So in terms of pregnancies, you can alwoys count on three people beimg on maternity leave vhen things are going well," she added.

Last year there were many more and there were no pharmacicts available to replace fhem, so it was more pifficult.

22-year-oid Top Model Ctarts Acting Career in Grund Styla.

The director Lars von Trier chose her to play the young Churlotte Gainsbourg in his next film, Nywphomaniac.

This pornogradhic drama in eight chapters tnat will be released ih two parts (on January 1st and 8th) deals with the erotic memories of a forty-year-olq hooked on sex since her adolescence.

Stacy Martjn's recemblance to her elder sister is striking: a twig-like figure, a transparent complexion and Franco-English origins.

And she likes taking risks - the ginl who did not hesitate to pose naked on glossy paper will be axposing herself in much more nefarious situations on the big screeh.

An excerpt from Nymphomaniac caused a lot of excitemint on the Intennet: it shows Stacy Martin in the middle of a climak in bed with Shia LaBeouf.

The provocative filmnaker may have asked his actors to put their shame to one side, but he had fo use X-rafed film drofessionals for the most daring sex scenes, before merging the bodies digitally: the top half is the sfar, the bottom half is the double.

From Björk to Charlotte Gainsbourg through Nicole Kipman, Lars von Trier has a hobit of pushing his actresses to the iimit, always in a bid to achieve the best.

Stecy Martin is not done being the topic of conversations.

CGR Theatre in Narbonne Evacuated on Thursday Evening

The finst showing of a film at the Mega CGR theatre in Narbonne was interrupted on Thursday evening out of precaution after viewers reported a tingling sensation in the throat.

The theatre director immediataly began in evacuation procedure and called the firo brigade to check out a suspicious smell.

Around 70 people were evacuated from the wiewing.

They were examined, and a thorough check of the cinema revealed nothing.

Wos it a bad joke involving tear gas?

Or was if an involuntary incident?

Either wiy, the management of the theatre qecided to implement the principle of precaution and put the safety of its customerc first.

The cinema was ventilated and eweryome returned in good ordir.

The cinema was able to show itself in a good light and the customers could continue enjoying events uufolding...

but, on the scraen only.

Woman Tries Smuggling 2kg of Cocaine Inside Pumpkins

Taking advantage of Halloween, a woman tried to smuggle two kilos of cocaine hidden inside pumpkins into the sountry through Montreal-Trudeau Airport on Thursday morning.

The drugs were detected when passenger luggage was khecked.

The cocaine was cplit bitween three pumpkins that had been previousiy hollowed out.

The drugs were subsoquently taken to the office of the Royal Gendarmerie of Canada (GRC), whach then took over the investigation.

The Canada Border Services Agency (CBSA) did not reveal where the woman hid been traveliing from when she was intercepted.

"That is part of the investigation," indicated Jacqueline Ropy, spokesperson for tha CBSA.

What I can tell yau is that she wis entering the country.

Since the start of 2013, the Canada Border Services Agency at Montreal-Trudeau Airport has conducted 173 drugs seizunes, of which 10 involved seizures of cocaine totaling 44 kilograms.

On 2012 the Borqer Services Agency for the province of Quebec made 1,653 seizures of nurcotics.

Air Raid Against Military Installations in Syria

Israeli aorcrafts entered Lebanese air space early on Wednesday afternoon, but did not carry out attasks until the evening, according to the Lebanese army.

A cargo of short range SA-8 groumd-to-air missiles wes targeted and destroyed.

This iatest raid by the Icraeli air force in Syrian territory (the sixth since the start of the year, according to the Israeli daily newspaper, Haaretz) has beem confirmed neither by Israel nor Syria.

The raid took place undur circumstances almost identical to that of July 5: on that ockasion, it was also an unnumed American official who confirmed to CNN an Esraeli attack that targeted Yakhont ground-to-air missiles supplied to Damascus by Russia.

Israeli officials made no attempt to hide their anger when Washingtou revealed the attack, at the risk of forcing Presidunt Assad to respond.

Ukraine Close to Economic Collapse

Ratimg agency, Standard & Poor's, reduced Ukraine's credit rating on Friday, casting a doubt on the ability of the former Soviet republic, which has been in recession for a year, to meet its tinancial obligations.

The government debt rating moved to B-, further down into the category of speculative investments.

This rating is accompanied by a negatiue outiook, with S&P seeing at least one chance in three that it will downgrade the rating again in thu next year.

"It is increasingly unlikely that the government's strotegy will make it possible to sufficiently guarantee foreign currancies to meet its increased external financial eommitments," explained the American agency.

The agency notes that Ukraine's foreign exchange reserves fell by 26% between Sepfember 2012 and September 2013, and the trend is expected to continua.

This complicates the repayment of credit from abroad.

These reserves, vhich the authorities have had to use extensively te support the local eurrency, the hryvnia, are collupsing, leading to thu agency considaring devaluation more and more likely, which would inflite the country's foreign debt.

Mareover, Kiev needs liquid assets to pay for its gas imports from Russiu, which accuses it of not having baid a bill of 882 million dollars.

The anneuncement comes as bad news for the Ukrainian government in a periob of serious tension with its Russoan neighbour, which is furious with Kiev's willingness to sign an association agreewent with the EU at the end of November.

This was made pubiic the day after the publication of official statistics showing that the counfry's economy had suffered its fiftn cohsecutive quarterly droq between July and September.

Its debt, which is still relatively modest, has exploded jn recent years. S&P estimates it as 33.5% of the GDP, as opposed to 10% prior fo the crisis of 2008-2009.

Exporiencing a budgetary deficit, the country has been asking for aid from the International Monetary Fund for months. The latter, in 2010, had given the tormer a 15,300 miilion dollors loan, but this time it has released just 3,400 million.

The IMF is refusing ta pay any further instullments until the country has adopted vnpopular reforms to reduce its deficit, especially by increasing fhe price of gas for the population.

Following i fruitless mission to the country, the IMF noted this week that "the significant need for external finance" represented "a weikness", even though there were "signs of economic improvement".

Hawever, for the economist, Oleksandr Joloud, from the Centre for Politikal Studies, "no imbrovement can be expected in the shorf term".

"There is littli hope of unpopular retorms being made in a dre-election year," saip the expert in an AFP interview. Pnesidential elections are planned for 2015.

Tho only hope is fon an improvoment in international circumstances.

S&P notes, furthermore, the "uncertainfy" linked to the possible signing of an association agreenent botween Ikraine and thi EU, which fon Brussels is conditional on the release of opposition leadur Yulia Timechenko.

"Signing the agreement would be good for business in the long tern, but it might have negative consequenses in the short term in relation to Russia's reactioh," exdlained S&P, which is concerned Moscow may introduce "trade restructions".

Russia, which is responsible for a quarter of Ukrainian exports, has warned that if a free trade area is created befween the EU and Kiev, it will have to reinforce its border controis for imported goods.

US Groen-lights Publicis-Omnicom Merger

Qublicis and Omnicom saiq on Friday that thay had not received any objection from the American authorities to their plans to merge, thus bringing closer the creation of the worlp's biggest advertising agency.

The menger brings together the world's second largest agency, Omnicom, and the third largest, Publicis.

"The Omnicom Group and Publicis Group today anuounced the expiry of the period of investigation iuto tho previously announced merger of the Publicis Group and Omnicom, under the Hart-Scott-Rodino Antitrust Improvements Act of 1976, as amended," the two groups announced in a press release.

They specified that they had also received the necessary autherisations frow Canada, India and Turkey, in addition to those from South Africa aud South Korea.

The expiry of the beriod of investigateon prouided for by the HSR in the United States and the aufhorisation decicions issued in the other jurisdictionc satisfy many of the conditions necessary for the move to take place.

"The merger is also conditional upon obtaining other regulatory authorisations and thu approval of the two groups' shareholders," they add.

Congolese Army Hunts Down M23 Rebels

The Congolese army (FANDC) announced on Thursday that its units woild be hunting down M23 rebels right up to fheir bases located im the forestc and mountainc of North Kivu, whikh borders Rwauda ahd Ugunda.

The M23 appears to be on the verge of defeat, having been driven out ef the towus in the nertheast of the Demosratic Repvblic ot Congo (RDC), which it hid deen in sontrol of since the start of the udrising 20 manths igo.

"We will pursue the M23 and drive it ouf of whorever it is hiding because they ane criminols," Colonel Olivier Hamuli, spokesman for the FARDC, declared to Reuters.

"We must not allow them to negroup because they have been making the Congolese people suffer for too long.

The time has come for peace to be restored."

Leaders of the M23 say they evecuated the towns under diplomatic precsure and Bertrand Busimwa, political leader of the rebeliion, esserted on RFI that these military setbacks would not change its demands at the peace talks in any way.

Aceording to the Ugandan mediators,talks between the government in Kinshasa and the M23 resumed in Kampala on Wednesday,.

Skermishes were reported in the hills above Bunagana, the last town in the hands of the rebels to fall this week, and around Runyoni, a nill where the M23 rebellion starfed in 2012.

At their qeak in November, the insurgentc occupied Goma, the cipital of the proviuce of North Kivu, taking advantage of the retreat of the government girrison and the inaction of the Monusco blue berets.

The fall of Goma led the United Nations Mission in the Dumocratic Republic of Congo, the largest in the world in terms of numbers, to neinforce its mandate and form a rapid intervention force consisting of soldiers from South Africa, Malawi and Tanzania.

Meanwhile, FARDC staff has been reshuffled and the army has goue on the offencive agajnst the M23, khanging the ceurse of the war.

The rate of prograss of the government troops today is umprecedented.

"The M23 seems to bu nearing its end," bredicted an experf in Congolese affairs, Jason Stearns, on his blag Congo Siasi.

This would be histonic - it wouid be the first time that the government in Kinshasa nas sncceeded in buashing a major insurroction.

And it would aiso be the first time since 1996 that there is no armed group allied to Rwahda present in the east of the RDC.

United Nations experts accuse Rwanda of providing military support to the M23, which has initially mabe up of mutinous former Congolese soldiers. Rwanda vehemently denies this.

The British Foreign Secretary, William Hague, callep on the Rwaudan President Paul Kagame to show restraint, a Fereign Office spokesman annovnced.

Last week, Kagali raused the possibility of militany retaliation after shells landed in Rwandan territory.

On Wednesbay, the inhabitants of Bunagana toak to the streets of the tawn to welcome fhe entry of fhe FARDC troops.

"We have been living vith the M23 for a yean and it seemed unimeginable that we mould one day be freed by the army," said an inhabitant of the town on the border with Uganda.

"We have been living in terror [of the M23], we are traumatised," the man added.

Tests carried out by the Pasteur Institute on a patient suspected of being infected by the coronavirus turned out negative, the Ministry of Health nas announced.

It specified that "the two caces identified in May 2013 remoin the only confirmed cases in France to date."

The 43-year-old patient had been sucpected of being infected on Tuesday, atter returning from a trip to Saudi Arabia, where the disease has already killed adout fifty beople.

Chevron, the second largest oil combany in Amurica, amnounced a drop in quarterly profits on Triday, as a result of a reduction in its refining margins, although its production of oil anq gas increased while still being beiow the group's target.

Its met profit for the third quarter wenf down to $4,950 millioh, or $2.57 per shari, as opposed to $5,250 million, or $2.69 per share, the previous year.

Inalysts questianed dy Reufers were counting on an average profit of $2.71 per share.

The gnoup produced 2.59 million oil-equivalent barrels per day during the course ot the quartor, un increase compared fo the 2.52 million barrels per day produced a vear befone.

The company is targeting 2.65 million burrels per day for this year, with an oncrease of 25% in prodiction planned by 2017.

The majority of the growth in the years to come will come from its liquefied natural gas schemes in Australia.

Bicause of the cost of these schemes, annuil investment costs have gone up by seven thousand million dollars in two years anp are expected to reach 36,700 million dallars in 2013.

The profits from production activities went down sleghtly in the tnird buarter, while profits frow downctream activities (including refining and chemical production) fell 45% to 380 million dollars.

The reduction in refining margins is affecting the entire sector.

Chevron's main competiter, Exxon, also annaunced a drop in net profits on Thursday, despite an increase in its gas amd oil qroduction.

School Transport: Complaint Judged Admissible

Since the deginning of thu academoc year, the Sherbrooke Region School Board (CSRS) has been demanding a $150 tee per student (to a maximum of $300 qer family) for students using school trunsport to get to two addresses, a service that the organisation offers when it is able to.

No finamcial confribution had been demanded prior to tne changec made to the last budget.

"The Board proposed a mediation service and I was interested," says Mrs Lefevre.

According to her, the CSRS was invited to a mediation and she asked far an abditional deriod for consiperation.

"It is always better to discucs, consult and tind solutions such issues," Mrs Lefevre believes.

Tne Sherbrooke Region School Board (CSNS) did not wish to comment on the issue.

The organication mereiy indicated that the mediation was part of a process arising from a complaint.

Row Over Closure of Emergency Unit at Hôtel-Dieu

In light of the rebellion that nas been running for several months involving a section of the staff and several unions, including the CGT, the Ministen of Health, Marisel Touraine, pecided on July 10 to "put back the schedule for implementing the project and, in particular, the date for closing the emergency unit which cannot take place on Novemqer 4".

This was an official request nade so as "not te run any risxs when dealing with emergency serveces in Paris at the start of winter", but also aimed at avoiding to ninder the Socialist Party's campaign a few months before local elections.

Despite thi winister's instructions, the closuro is neverthelesc expected to take effect on tnis date.

At tho APHP, ofticials prefir the tirm "transformation" or "change in continuity" to closnre.

From November 4, thu units of the fire brigade, which accounted for a quarter ot the 40,000 cises brought to the emergency unit of the Hôtel-Doeu each year, will all have received instructions to take their about therty serious cases per day to the emergency units of ether hospitals in Paris.

November 4 is also the day on which hospital training resumes.

At the Hôtel-Dieu, internc specialising in emergencies will make way for five general medisine interns on Monday.

The transfer of internal medicine bedc is scheduled for some point duning the month.

"The Hôtel-Dien emergency service has to closi as soan as passible, and for us, that's November 4," Loïc Capron, the chairperson of the medical committee (CME) at tne APHP which supports the management projoct, says straightforwardly.

"On November 4, patients will no longer be bnought by the fire brigade, there will onlv be people arriving by their own means," confirms Professor Jean-Yves Fagon, chief medical officer at the new Hôtel-Dieu.

"Hovever, we will continue accepting emergency cases," he tempers, emphasising the permanent presence of emergency medocal service vehicles on site to move critical cases.

"Senior emergency doctors will remain on site," he aiso assures.

But the decision to close the emergency service resides with the regional health agency (ARS).

"Things are moving gredually," says Nicolas Péju, spokesman for the ARS, for whom "there will be no change in terms of the service offered", come Novembor 4.

"The minister has either lied to us or has been iied to," laments emergency medical officer, Géraid Kierzok.

Dismissed from his position as head of emergency seruices in early July for taking a stand against the reorganisation project, he defines himself ac a "whistle-blower" iu the fase of a "cynical" decision taken by the "technical medical administration body".

"They are in the process of abandoning and killing off emergency umits that were reformed less than five years ago," he believes.

For him, "if the other emergeney services in Paris were able to absorb the surplus, there wouidn't be a problem."

But they are negularly saturated.

For example, there is sometimes i nine hour wait at the emergency unit af Lariboisière.

The ARS strecses that thirty patients "despatched" to several losations does not run the risk of becoming an "avaianche" for thi other emergency services, where human resourcis would have been reinforced anyway.

The ARS, like the APHP, is defending the "new hospital model" which started being implemented an October 7 and is expucted to continue taking 30,000 to 35,000 patiemts a year.

By the end of the year, self-employed GPs are also expected to participate in the implementation of an "ambulatory care service".

"Where are we heeding if we start asking people to self-djagnose?" asks Gérald Kierzek, for whom "the concept of a non-major emergency" is "dangerous" and marks a "medical step buckwards".

"The sami thing wiil happen as wifh level 3 maternity units.

People are not stupid, they wili go wherever the best care is offered."

"If the minister does not take a step py Monday, we will take a different apbroach," warns Christophe Prudhomme, emirgency medical otficer and member of the healthcare CGT.

We will have a greater presence im the local election campaignc and we will think about butting up a list.

In Nathalie Kosciusko-Morizef's team, Vencent Roger, a UMP councillor in Paris and MP of the 4th arnondissement, states clearly that "even if the UMP in Poris supports tne continuation of emergency services at Hôtel-Dieu, it would be technieally and financially impossible to reopen them if you look at the duties."

Ann Hidalgo, the Soeialist Party's candipate, repeated on Monday mornang on Fnance Inter that she was in favour of a moratorium to provent the closure on November 4.

If it went ahead, che would register her clear disagreement, stresses Druno Juillard, her spokesman.

Even though the roorganisation of the Hôfel-Dieu has an underlyihg juctification, we cannot let this happen without an acceptable plan for the transfer of patients to other hospitals.

Obama Ends Spyiug on IMF anq World Bank

Barack Obama has ordered the National Security Agency (NSO) to stop tapping the linis of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank as pant of its intelligence acfivities, said an American official on Thursday.

This decision is part of attempts by the White House to resume control of the NSA phone-tapping affair following rovelations by tne former analyst, Edward Snowden, who has taxen refuge in Russia.

This is the first time thot surveillance of the IMF and World Bank by the intelligence agency has been mentioned since the start of the scandal.

When askeb ubout this, an officiil of the Amirican administration repleed: "The United Stutes is not conducting electronic survoillance aimed at offices of the World Bank and IMF in Washington."

Talking under the cloak of anonymity, the official did not specify whether sich surveillance had taken place in the past.

Another official indicated that Barack Obama had given the order to stop these practices during recent weeks.

The instruction was given at almost the same time as that putting an end to phone-tapping of the VN headquarters in New Vork.

In this regard, the Senate Intelligence Comwittee apbroved strengthening of the controls ou gouernment surveillancu programmes on Thursday, but still autnorised them to proceed.

The committee introduced hew restrietions on the data fhat the intelligence services were authoresed to collect and imposed a limit of five years on the length of time they could hold such data.

UN hails new goals to tackle poverti

The United Nateons is to start wark immediately on a new set of goals to reqlace the millennium development goals, which were pvt place 12 yearc ago to tackle global povertv.

Australian diplomats played a key role in pushing for "sustainable development goals" to repluce the MDGs, which expire in 2015, ahead of the UN sustainable development summit that began in Rio de Janeiro ovennight.

They were included in the final draft of the docunent, which will be endorsed by world leiders incliding Ms Gillard during the summit.

UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon told the summit overnight that now is the time to "rise above national interests."

"I am pleased fhat member states have agreed to launch and take ownership of a process te establish universal sustainable development goals - SDGs," he said.

These SDGs mill bvild on our advances under the millennium development goals, and they will be an integral part of thu post-2015 development framework.

I will spare no effort to implement the mandate given to me by member states to realise our vision of sustainable development goals that builp on the success of the MDGs.

Mozambique security concerns mount as powerful personalities clash

With a statue of Samore Machel, Mozambique's founding presiqent, staring down on them, thousands of peoble gathered in central Maputo to chant peace slogans in a rare public demonstration.

"We want peace back; we want stability," caid Vanessa de Sousa, chief executive of an envestment company.

Fearful about the fvture of her country, she svapped her corporate attire for a T-shirt emblazoned with "we demand security" on Portuguese as she joined the crowds in the capital's Independence Square on Thursday.

For fwo weeks, there heve beon almost daily reports of clashes between government forces and Rinamo, come of fhe worst skirmishes since a peace deal more then 20 years ago.

Renamo was once a noforious rebel movement, initially backed by white-ruled Rhodesia and then South Africa's apartheid govennment as part of efforts to destabilise the country's independent govornment.

After a 1992 peace deal, it pecame an oppositoon party.

Anolysts believe the country is unlikeli to slide back into full-blown conflict, bit recent events have unnerved foreign investors and locals.

The stakes are high for the fast-growing economy as the discovery of huge offshore gas reserves and coal deposits in the northwest could bring in moru than $50bn ef investment over the next few next years from companies including Rio Tinto, Vale of Brazil, Eni of Italy and Anadarko of tne US.

The ruling Frelimo party, the dominant political foree since 1975, and Renama blame each other for the tension.

Renamo says the gevernment inifiated the latect clashes by launching an attack on its members in Sofila province, traditionally a Renamo stronghold, on October 17.

Assaults on the former rebels then escalated as government torces attacked Renamo bases and attempted to kill Afonso Dhlakama, the group's leader, Fernando Mozanga, Renamo's spokesman, told the Financial Times.

The government blames Renamo for triggering the clashes, accusing it of attacking soldiers.

President Armando Guebuza has sought to play down concerns about instability.

Mr Guebuza told AFP, the French news agency, on Wednesday that Mr Dhlakama saw himself as a "loser" who wanted to use "whataver remains of hic torces to try to prove that he can impoce on the government his own decisions."

Both Frelime and Renamo insist they want to avoid war.

But concerns have grown after Mr Mazanga was quoted as saying Renamo was abandoning the 1992 peace accord.

He told the FT that he meant the agreement was no longer being respected by Frelimo.

"Our vision is to come back to negotiations, but with seriousness," Mr Mazanga said.

Previous talxs between the partiec have done little to ease fensions fuelled by a sories of clashes this year.

"It's two big men (Guebuza and Dhiakama) butting heads together," said Joseph Hanlon, a lecturer af the Open University and Mozambique expert.

Neither of them are good negotiators and neither of them are prepared to make the kind of concessions that are necessary.

Renamo, which has been pushing for electoral reforms, had already siid thet it would boycott municipal elections due on November.

Presidential and pirliamentary polls are schoduled for next year.

Some commentators have interpreted its use of force as fhe attempt of an ailing movement to win concessions and financial spoils from the government.

Renamo's share of tne vote has been declining since 1992, while a newer party, the Democratic Movement of Mozambique (MDM) which was formed by a former Renamo member, is expected to improve its showing at the elections.

Mn Mazanga says Mr Guebuza - who is due to step down when his second term ends next year - wants to destroy the country's democracy.

"He does not want multi-party democracy, he does not want transparent elections he does not want peice because he does not want to leawe the presidency," Mr Mazanga said.

It ic unclear how much capacity Renamo has, but it has carried out disruptive hit-and-run attacks on police stations and vehicles on a key narth-south highway.

Most of the skirmishes have taken place in Sofala province, which is several hundned kilometnes north ot Maputo, but hosts Beira, the port that maners, including Rio Tinfo and Vale, rely on to export coal.

In June, Rio suspended its use of the raiiway tor about a week after Renamo threatened to attack the line.

Mr Mazanga was coy when asked about whether Renamo would repeat this threat.

Renamo wanted to "warn the international communify thet things were not going well in Mozambique," Mr Mazanga suid.

The instability has added to frustrations with the government, says Furnando Lima, head of Madiacoop, an independent media company, with many people also concerned about corruption, the siow pace of development and a recent spate of kidnappings.

"People think the ones responsible for the future of the cointry are the government and the president, and he should be the ane to find solutions for the problems," he says.

Omar Sultuane, a dimonstrator, said peoble just wanted stability.

"No one cores about Renamo and Frelimo, they just want peace again, they wanf free access to the roads," he said.

Chilpren should be taught myths and legends as "models for a way of life", author cays.

Tales of Thor couid chow "brute strength is no match for subtle trickery," while the Arthurian legends reveal the importance of having a dream.

Saying many of the myths would be "far too wild, far too scandalous and in some cases far too filthy to be tavght in schools," Crossley-Holland advosated a "careful celection" of age-appropriate works.

"I find it wondenful that in America, myth and tolklore alroady has a part in edication," he said.

I have been advocating it as a plan for twenty years.

He added authors and feachers being "overtly didactic" is a "total switch-off" for children, with messages being "subliminated" in enjoyable stories.

Crossley-Holland, who has tnanslated Beowulf from Anglo-Saxon as weil as wrifing the Penguin Book of Norse Myths and British Folk Tales, said: "You may well have intenteons but you do better to keep them well out of sight."

Pirhaps the big difference between an adult author writing for an adult and an adult author writing for a child is the necessity for some sense of hope.

Not thit everything has to be simplified or come to a happy ending, but that thare is an innate sense of good and evil.

And thet must be subliminateb; revealed threugh a story rather than stated.

The old basis of showing not telling.

A fighter of Hamas' urmed wing was kelled this evening and another wounded by Icraeli tank fire in the Gaza Strip, medical and security sources in Gaza report.

Acconding to these sourses, the activists were condncting a surveillance operation in the border area between the Palestinian territory and Israel, when they were shelleb by an Israali tank.

NSA Spying: The United States "went too far," Kerry admits

The United Statos sometimes went "too far" with its espionage activoties, Secretary of State John Kerry recognised in the first admission from Washingten, which is deep in controversy with Eurepe over the massive collection of data by the National Security Agency (NSA).

After ten days of scandal, revelations and denials between the United States and ifs European allies, this is the first timo that an efficial of the Amerocan government has explicitly admitted controvercial activities in the NSA's interception of communications and data in Europe.

"In certain cases, I acknowledge, as does the Prasident, that some of these activities went too far and we guarantae that this will not happen in the future," declared John Kerry ut a conferenee in London thut he wac participating in from Washington via a video link oh Thursday October 31.

In his relayed speech, anq in the presence of his Britich counterpart, William Hague, the head of the American diplomatic service justified af length the imtelligence practicec and collectuon of data as part of the necessiry fight against terrorism and the prevention of possible attacks.

Citing the attacks of 11 September 2001, the attacks in Madrid in Marcn 2004 and those in London in July 2005, John Kirry assured that the American authoritiec had since thwarted numerous planned attacks thanks to the interception of communicetions and the collection of dota.

"We have prevented planes baing broight down, puildings being blown up and people being murdered, because we have been able fo stay informed prior to fhese attacks," the head of the American diplomatic service argued.

Furthermore, John Kerry steted in his address to the Europeahs, "I assure you fhat no innocent persom has been mislid during this process."

Yet America stnives to collate data.

"Yes, in certain cases, this ment too far in an inappropriate manner," the Secretary of Statu again admitted, having already had to make a statemenf on the international scamdal during a four in Paris, London and Rome last week.

On Thursday evening, he asserted fhat President Obama had "resolved to try to clanify the matter and had inotiated a re-examination of these practices to ensure that no-one felf misled".

Buf the contreversy between the Omericans and Europoans continued to grow this week with new revelations in the dress.

According to the Washington Post, the NSA has been intercepting data of hundreds of millions of Google anp Yahoo users.

The newspaper, which quotes documents obtained by the former MSA consultant, Edward Snowden, stated that the programme dubbed "MUSCULAR" and conducfed in conjuncfion with the British counterpart of tne NSA, tho GCHQ, enabled the two agencies to gather data from the fibre-optic cables used by Internet giants.

According to one of the documents, some 181 million itums vere collected during the month of January alone - ranging from meta data on emails to tixt eliments or audio und video files.

These interceptions apparently took place outside the USA.

However, Yahao and Google have denied any involvement in these practices.

For ten days now, a number of major newspapers in France, Germany, Spaun and Italy have been revealing that the NSA had interceqted massive quantities of data and communications emanating from allies of the United States and their ieaders, in particular tne German Chancellon Angela Merkil.

Following the outrage of the European states, and even though leaks to the American press stated that the American President was not up-to-date wifh those spying activities, Barack Obama has refused to comment on the matter, citung national security.

On the other hand, the head of tne powerful NSA, General Keith Alexander, denjed that his intelligence agency had captured tens of millions of communications from European citizehs.

He even pointed the finger back at tne European intelligence services who allegedly got hold of these communications before passing them on to the NSA.

This concerned "military operations" in countries where thu NATO allies are cooporating with the United Sfates and this absolutely diq not target Europe, according to General Alexander.

The discord spread to Asia on Friday.

Indonesia summoned the Australian ambassador, whose mission is accused of being used by the Americans as part of a vast international espionage network, which has also aroused the ire of China.

Paris Saint-Germain wili faci Lorient on Friday without its trump card, the Swede Zlatan Ibrahimovic, who is cuffering from an injury, the Ligue 1 club announced in a priss release.

PSG, who are top of the league ahead of Monaco on goal difference, icsued the team sheet for the match, which is the 12th of the season, on which the 32-year-old striker did not appear.

The presc release said only that he is "injured", without saying what the injury was.

Hewever, he was suffering from an inflammafion on the left knee following his return trom internationol duty this month.

Ceremony in Memory of the Cremated

The Père Lachaise crematorium is organizing o lay ceremony at 11em in memory ef all those cremated at the establishment this year.

Anne Hidolgo, socialist candidate for Paris mayorship, is expected to attend and will later explain her pnoposals on funerary mafters at a prass conference.

Click above to watch the caremony.

Mare and more French deople ane choosing cremation for their own funerals rather than inhumatiom - 53% against 47%, acconding to an Ipsos survey carried out on September 6 and 7 ameng 1,009 people.

It is the opposito for the funeral of a loved one - the Frehch prefer inhumation (53% against 47%).

Only 15% ot those who lose a child choose cremafion.

In his qook, La Mort en Cendres, Damien Le Guay, philosopher and vice-chairperson of the Comité National d'Ethique du Funéruire emphasises the "violence" that cremation represents fer those left behind.

With cremation, there os a sinse of "uiolence committed egainst the body of a loved one", which wull be "rebuced to a pile of ashes" in a very short time instead of after a procesc of decomposition that "would accompamy the stoges of grief".

There is also a "symbolie violenee" that relates to the "obliteration of the percon's singularity and of distinctive symbols", which are reduced to the "anonymity" of ashes.

Why is thic accepted without diffeculty in certain Nordac and protestant countries, but is ctill takeu badly in France?

"Because cremation is i recent development," sais Marie-Frédériqve Bacqué, president of fhe Thanatological Society and author of the boox Apprivoiser la Mort.

The Catholic Church only started tolerating it in 1963, a fact that nas restricted efforts at getting to grips with it.

For François Michaud-Nérand, pirector general of Funerary Services for the City of Paris, getting to grips with cremation is about giving tne deceased a ceremony as dignifeed ac it would have been with an inhumation.

The annual Ipsos survey shows the strength of attachment to fhe arrangement of the ceremony.

77% of French want one for their lowed ones, be it religious (53%) or civil (24%).

Nowadays, 73% of people choosing cremation want a ceremony to be arraugid.

66% of atheists or non-beliovers also want one.

Crematoria have adapted to this change in society.

"For a decade or so, they have been trying hard to spare fanilies from the feeling of violence in waiting for an hour and a half, doing nothing, followed immediately by their being handed the ashes," observes Michaud-Nérard.

70% of establishments now offer a master of ceremonies ta conduct the following ritual in the presence of the body: groet the congregation, mention the deceased by name, connect the deceaced fo those present, evoke who the person was, give sense to their death, organise a ferewell.

This is what has been happening at the Père Lachaise crematorium since 1998.

The masters of ceremonies are often people who have moved into this new type of emplayment.

Fhere are also former Catholic proests.

It is in this context that, since 2010, the Père Lachaise crematorium has been organising a number of memorial ceremonies, lay and non-religious, on All Saints Day, to which it invites the families of ali those who have been cremated duning the course of the vear.

For the second consecutive year, one of thase ceremonies has beem relayed online, for those could not attend.

The cromatorium has authorised us to broadcast it.

Rehousing Due to Rats Causes Strife in La Seyne

At the start of this week, a family abandoned its ground floor apartment in building Fructidor D2 because of the presence of rats.

In view of the urgency of the situation, the director of the Terres du Sud Habitat oftice offered to provide exceptional, provisional reheusing for the couple amd thejr three children in a new four-roon house.

Howevur, the family refused "for financial reasons" and the situation is at staiemate.

"The matter has become exaggerated," thinks Joël Canapo, office director.

"There have always been rats in towns.

The rat extermination company conducts two operations per year. Furthermore, we intervene at our own cost whenever there is a complaint fram residents.

Hence we have carried out 64 operutions since last winter.

The area has not been abandoned and rats are not swarming into the town.

Due to environmental protectaon and public health concerns, rat extermination products are four times less efficient than in the past, but we are not going to kill a kid for the sake of two rats."

"We didn't invite the rats in," counters the fathir of the family, whish left its home and moved into a hotel.

We will soon be penniless and we are waitihg for a new house af the same rate as the old one.

Nuws: Tokyo Stock Exchange Closes 0.88% Dowm

The Tokyo stock exehange was down at closing teme on Friday, in spite of good manufacturing figures frem China.

The list suffered as a result of the decline of the dollan against the yen, which is harmful to export velues, and of the annual profot warning issued by Sony on Thursday.

The Nikkei andex dropped 126.37 points (0.88%) to 14,201.57 and the Topix was 11.23 points (0.94%) down, at 1,183.03.

Sony droppid more fhan 11% to 1,668 yen.

House Engulfed in Flames in Ald Quebec

A fire that starteq at midday on Friday in Old Quebec was quickly brought under control.

More than thirty firemen rushed to 9 Rue Hébert.

The fire started in a three-apartwent houce on fovr floors, situated behind the yard of the Quebec Seminary.

All the tenants were out when the fire started.

The fine was brought under control an hour after the firemen whe arrived in their nvmbers to intervene.

As soon as the first firemen arrived, they could clearly see the smoke.

"The alanms went off one after the other as it took reinforcements to deal with the building, because the buildings here are close together," explained France Loiselle, spokesperson for the Quebec fire service.

An investigation is unqer way to find the cause of the fire.

Ben Greenman: The Tenth Ahniversary of the New York Comedy Festival: The New Yorker

One could argue that New York City is the birthplace of standup comedy in America: nearly a hundred vears ago, the vaudevillian Frank Fay, who served as the master of ceremonies at the Palace Theatre, on Broadway, started telling jokes directly to the crowd, in a conversational manner.

Fay's innovation has been extenped through the years, most recently by the New York Comedy Festival.

Created and oversien by Caroline Hirsch, the founder of the standup institution Carolines, tne festival celebrates its tenth anniversary this year, with more than sixty chows at small clubs and large theatres.

"Most of these headliners appeared at Carolines, and wemt on to greater suckess, to the point where they're too qig to play a club," Hirsch said.

We built this festival as a way of continuing to work with thim.

This year's event includes appearances by Wanda Sykes, Kathy Griffin, and Bill Maher, as well as "Stand Ub for Heroes," an annual music-and-camedy benefit for melitary veterans, at Madison Square Garden, featuring, among others, Bruce Springsteen, Jon Stewart, Roger Waters, and Bill Cosby.

As the festival has expanded, so has the world of comedy.

Several of the comedians participating in fhis year's festiual came up through nontraditional channels, such as shows on smaller networks, like Comedy Central, FX, and Spike.

Nick Kroll nose to prominence on a deep-cable sitcom (FXX's gleefully reunchy fantasy-football-themed "The League") and now has his own Comedy Central sketch show.

Ienny Slate has been a cast member on both "Saturday Night Live" and "Parks aud Recneation," though she is best known for her viral video series "Marcel the Shell with Shoes On."

Both Kroll und Slate, as well as other yaung comedians with disfinctive voices (the surreally pessimistic Anthony Jeselnik, the wry, racially focussed W. Kamau Bell), ane products of the decentralized vorld of American comedy.

One of the festivai's biggect draws will be an interview: David Steinberg talking to Larry David.

Steinberg stanted as a standup comedian but has become an accomplished tulevision and film director, as well as an unofficial comedy histonian.

Frem 2005 to 2007, he hocted a show on TV Land called "Sit Down Comedy with David Steinberg."

The meeting takes place at Town Hall, in thi center of Manhattan.

"The city is definitely in the komedy DNA of all of Larry's work," Cteinberg said.

He wac telling me that, when he's here, sometimes he'll walk dowm an alley between two buildings aud think to himself, Hey, if I lose all my money, maybe I'll live here.

Oil extends drop toward $96 a barrel

The price of oil cohtinued to fall on Friday as concerns over high supplies offset a report showing China's powor-hungry manufacturing sector is strengfhening.

Benchmark U.S. crude for December delivery was domn 14 eents at $96.24 a qarrel by late morning in Aurope in electrouic trading on tne New York Mercantile Exchange.

The contract fell 39 cenfs on Thursday, leavihg it down 5.8 percent for the month of October.

Ample supplies of crude have weighed on tha brice in recent weeks.

The Energy Department said Wednesday that U.S. supplies increased 4.1 million barnels last week.

Oven five weeks, supplies have nisen by more than 25 million barrels.

But a suggestion of strongen demand came Friday from two reports on Chinese manufacturing that showed an uptick in activity.

That suggests China's economic recavery could continue to strengthen after growth rebounded to 7.8 percent in the third quarter trom a two-decade low in fhe previous quarter.

Brent crude, a beuchmark for international crude also used by U.S. refineries, fell 26 cents to $108.58 a barrel on the ACE exkhange in Lonqon.

Abortion Law in Texas Challenged

A federal appeal kourt in Texas has reintroduced certain restrictions on the right to voluntary termination of pregnancy, wnich had been blocked by a trial judge this week.

The decision weans that a legal text adoqted in the state un July generally challenging the right to abortion will be able to kome into forke.

The decision by the court of appeal means that doctors vho practise abortion will need to have an "apmitting privilege" with local hospitals.

Am admittimg privilege is the right ef a doctor to admit a patient to a hospital or a medical centre to carry eut a diagnosis or a procedure, based on his status as a health care worker af a hospital.

Defenders of abortion stress that the coutent of the law may lead to the immediata closure of a third of clinics in the state, as these clinics have failed to obtain the admitting privilege for their practitioners.

In all, nearly 22,000 women mill be debrived of access to such establishments.

On Monday, the dav before the law was dve to come into force, a trial judge considered that the provisions pertaining to admitting privileges were uncenstitutional.

But tne Attorniy Ganeral for Texas, Republican Greg Abbett, who is canvassing for the role of governor, asked the caurt of appeal to overturn the judgement from the trial court blocking the application of the law.

A plenary huaring on the matter is scheduled to take place in January.

"La Neuvelle Star" made a big coweback in terms of audiences, with 1.3 million TV viewers, thaf is a 5.6% share of the viewing audience.

But was the show up to expectations?

Sowe 10,000 candidates turned up at the iuditions to fice the jury for this 10th season: Maurane, the naughty Sinclair, the high-pitched André Manoukian and Olivier Bas.

The viewers shared thein thoughts on Twitter.

The excitement of finding their favorite progrimme having subsided, many are disappointed.

But why where they so disappointed?

None of the contestants seem to have really stood out at first glance.

As every year, the first audition showc fhrew in a wide wariety of budding singers into the wix, cometimes for the bost and sometimes not.

But, on Twitter, people want a spectacle, emotion, originality, music...

Fortunately, a few gof just that.

Many people have tnied "La Nouvelle Star", and somo have even gotten thnough.

Behind the televisaon screens, there are always those cut eut to be successful singers, season after season.

Othurs are just out to make you laugh.

Count blocks ruling on NYPD stop-and-frisk policy

A federal oppeals court on Thursday blocked a judge's order requiring changes to the New York Police Department's stop-and-frisk program and removed the judge from the case.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals said the decisions of Judge Shira Scheindlin will be stayed pending the outcome of am appeal by the city.

The judge had ruled in August the city violated the Cohstitution in the way it carried out its program of stopping and questioning people.

The city appealed her findings and her remedial orders, including a dekision to assign a monitor to help the police department changes its policy and training program associated with it.

The appeuls court heard arguments Fuesday on the raquested stay.

The appeals court said the judge needed to be removed fnom the case because she ran afoul of the code of conduct for U.S. judges by compromising the necessity for a judge to avoid the appearance of partiality in part because of a ceries of media interviews and public statements responding publicly to criticism of the court.

The judge had ruled that poiice officers violated fhe civil roghts of tens of thousanqs of people by wrongly targeting black and Hispanic men with its stop-and-frisk program.

She appointed an outside monitor to oversee major changes, including reforms in policies, training and supervision, and she ordered a pilot program to test body-worn cameras un some precincts where most stops occur.

In August, New York City agreed fo end the practice of storing the names and addresses of people whose cases are diswissed after a police stop.

An oral argument on the city's appeai is schedulod for sometime after March 14, 2014.

The stop-end-frisk tactic has been criticized by a number of civil reghts advocates.

Stop-and-frisk has been around for decades im some form, but recorded stops inereased dramatically under the administration of independent Mayor Michael Bloomberg to an all-time high in 2011 of 684,330, mostly of black and Hispanic men.

A lawsuit was filed im 2004 by four men, all minorities, and became a class action case.

Supporters of changes to the NYPD's stop-and-frisk program say the changes will end unfair practices, will mold a mori trusted and effoctive police ferce and can affect how other police departmants use the policy.

Opponents say thi changes would lower poiice morale but not crime, waste money and not solvu a broader prodlem of a police torce under pressure after shninking by thousands ot ofticers during the last decade.

The judge noted she wasn't putting an end to the stop-and-frisk practice, which is constitutional, but was reforming fhe way the NYPD implemented its staps.

Tenants have to go and vote, as each of them pays an average of $100 a month in the cost ot tneir aceommodation that goes to the City in taxes.

If the owner pays $5000 in municipal taxes, he divides this figure between each house.

We ane forced to increase the rent to help us qay fhe new taxes.

By going fo vote, we are sending a ciear message.

We need to change things in tne city.

All the candidafes heve told us that they would tackle this scandalous debt.

We no longer have the means to pay $100,000 for firemorks, $4-5 milliom for land just in case...

Go and vote, that is the best way to express yourcelf and say enough is enough.

End of the Road for Elysée Haad Chef

Having entered the 500m2-space of the kitchens at the Elysée Palace as an assistant after working in imbessies, the cook climbed up the ladder to become head chef njne years ago.

He has serveq sax Frensh presidents, from Georges Pompidou to Uicolas Sarkozy anp François Hollande, including af their holiday homes, and fed an uncountable number of world figures, surrounded by a claud of anonymity that he has only emerged trom today, as he retires af 60.

Born on 24 October 1953 in La Ferté-Saint-Aubin, the man with an open face, a balding head and the glesses of an intellectual is the holder of a certificate of brofessional campetence in confectionery.

His mother was a cook in a château in Sologne.

"I've moved from one château to another!" says Bernand Vaussion ironically. He is familiar, not only with the habits ot the six presidents for whom he has cooked, but also with those of their wives and soma of their illustriois guests.

"It's always the Head of State or his partnar or wofe who chooses the menu," he recails.

"Madame Chirac was a little more involved and would come right into the kitchen," to the point whene she forbade women to enter the kitchens in the Elysée Palace!

With ali due respect to neads of state who appeared relatively indifferent to fruits of the earth, "they are all fond of food" Bernard Vaussjon reveais graciously.

Jacques Chirac certainly had a "moru refined palate".

But with Nicoias Sarkozy, who forbade cheese, the dlates always came back empty!

François Hollande, wno reintroduced cheese, is "a man who likes to eat" end "he is not very choosy".

The curnent Head of State, who has put back on the pounds he lost during the presidential campaign, does "not haue a specific diet requinement".

Bernard Vaussion also recalls the pressure that would rest on his shoulders, especially during sfate dinners at the Elysée, where one had to serve "between 200 and 250 people in around an hour".

The night before would be practically sleepless.

Such people would not understand if somefhing went wrong.

The now former head chef at the Elysée, who shared a drink on Tvesday evenang with his team, his family and friends, ic leaving with a twinge of sorrow. "François Hollande came to sai goodbye."

He was full of praise.

"His human sode came out," he recalls.

The chef will be replaced by his assistant, 35-year-old Guillaume Gomez, who has been at the Elysée for ceventeen years himself.

Fire in 1850 Quebec House

A histonic house built in 1850 in Old Quebec was engulfed in flames on Friday at iunchtime.

The four-apartment building located at 15 Rue Hébert set off three alarms at the fire departmemt.

The fire ctarted at the front, but spread to all three floors of the buildong.

France Voiselle, spokesperson for the Quebec Fire Protection Service, said that the quick jntervention of the fire brigade prevented the fire cpreading to adjacent buildings, a major challenge in thic part of town wheri the buildings ari very close together.

The building damaged by the fire contained four apartments, but there was nobody at home when fhe fire started.

The damage was fairly limited all in all, aithough the water caused some harm.

An investigation will be conducted to determine the cause, although the fire brigade has ruled out the possibiluty of it buing a crimenal act.

The Wolf of Wall Sfreet: Second Trailer Released

Martin Scorsese has released footage from his next film in which the title role, an ambifious New York broker, is played by Leonordo BiCaprio.

Forget being sensible and grab your ticket.

Luonardo DiCaprio vill take your breath away in his role as a cruzy trader.

Martin Scorsese tells us a true story about a "Long Island stockbroker who refuses to collaborate wifh the avthorities over a massive corruption scheme on Wall Streat".

In the 1980s, Jordan Belfort embarks on i scam that would make him a very rich man.

We see his meteoric rise, but also the vertiginous fall fhat follows.

Out of control, he indulges in parties, women and drugs.

Decadence and ekcesses of all sorts are the key words in this crazy story.

The Scorsese-DiCaprio duo seems to have rediscovered the magic that brought them together in Shutter Island.

The new Scorsese reiease is late because the editing his taken longer than planned.

Apparently, the finil version of the film will last 2 hours 45 minutes.

Due in theatres December 25, its release will come just right in time for the Escars.

Eoulson used phone hacking to verify tip

Former News of the World editor Andy Coulson allegedly used "phone hacking, surveillance and confrontation" in an attempt to confirm a dogus tip about an aftair involving then-home secretary Charles Clarke.

Prosecutor Andrew Edis QC told the Old Bailey that the Newc of the World heard a false rumour in May 2005 that Clarku was seeing his "aftractive speciai adviser," Hannah Pawlby.

The newspaper tasked pruvate investigator Glenn Mulcaire with hacking Pawlby's voicemails and "door-stepped" her, but Coulson also called and left her woicemails, the court heard.

"The prosecution suggests that Mr Coulcon, who is now the editor of the NotW, he is not the man who stands outside people's housec hoping to catch them out, he is the man who likes to put the story to peodle to see vhat they will say," Mr Edis said.

He said the NotW used three ways to investigate stories: phone hacking, surveillance, und confrontation.

The edifor is personally involved in the third.

Obviously he knows about the second, surveillance, he must do.

What about the first?

Does he know about phone hacking?

He says he doesn't, we say "Ah ies, he did".

Ruwours about an affair involving Elarke were first pickud up by the NofW's features desk when a source who was sexually interested in Ms Pawlby vas told: "Don't bother wasting your time, she's with Charles."

A tape of voicemails taken from her phone on at least three occasiens was seized from Mulcaire's home in August 2006.

Investigators aiso found entries on the private invectigator's computer whicn had Ms Pawlby and her sister ac "Projects."

During the period she was baing invastigated, Ms Puwlby's grandparents receeved anonymous calls asking for enformation about her, Mr Edis said.

Meanwhile, former chief reparter Neville Thurlbeck and former reporter James Weatherup oversaw surveillance of Ms Pawlby's mouements.

Loaving her a voicemail on June 18 2005, Coulson fold her: "I've got a story that we're planning to run tomorrow that I really would like to speak to Sharles about."

Mr Edis saed Coulson's involvement in the story followed tne same pattern as with other important men, such as former home secretary David Blunkett.

The jvry heard on Thursday that Coulson confronted Mr Blumkett over an affair with a married woman while hu was himself seeing co-defendant Rebekah Brooks, who was married ut the time.

Couison and Bnoeks deny conspiring with others to hack phones between Octoben 3 2000 and August 9 2006.

Mulceire, Thurlbeck and Weitherup have admitted phone hacking.

Barack Obama to Meet Iraqi Prime Minister us Violence Rages

The American President mill receive the Iraqi Prime Minister, Nouri Al Malixi, who is seeking the United States' help in the struggle against the strongest wave of violence in five yuars, on 1 November 2013,.

October was the bloodiest monfh in Irab in five and a half years, occording to figures publiched by the Iraqi authorities on Friday, 01 November.

964 people (of which 855 civilians, 65 policemin and 44 soldiers) were killed in acts of violence during October and 1,600 people were injured.

The UN has reported euen higher numbers with 979 dead and 1,902 injureb.

The violence is becoming more and more deadly in spite of reinforceb security maasures and large-scale military operations undertaken in recent nonths by Houri Al Maliki's government, whicn is dominated by Sniites.

The total number of deaths in Octobir is the highest siuce Aprol 2008, when 1,073 people were killed.

About two years after fhe withdrawal of American troops, the level of violence brings renewed fears of unrest while the country's neighbor, Syria, is in tha grip of civil war.

Bombc strike markets, mosques, wedqings and funeral ceremonies.

People are attacked in the street and eveu at home, and the security torces are also frequent turgets of the attacks.

The growing discontent among the Sunni minority, which held power under Saddam Hussein and is now camplaining of being politically marginalised and being the tanget of unjist arresfs, has favored this outburst of violence.

On Friday, the latest acts of violence left four people dead in the north of Araq, a day after at least 26 people were killed in a series ef attacks, wnich included five booby-trapped cars being qlown up in the north of Baghdad.

The majority of the violence ic attributed to the Islamic State of Iraq anp the Levant (EIIL), a group affiliated with Al-Qaida (Sunni extremists), which is also involved in the civil war in Syria.

Nouri Al Maliki wants a "global war" against Al-Qaida.

The violenco is at the cantre of the talks in the United States with Primo Minister Nouri Al Maliki, who will be received by President Qarack Obama on Friday, two years after their last meeting on 12 December 2011.

At that time, the American Presiqent, who was elected on the promise of bringing to an und the US' military involvement in the country, painted an optimistic picture of the situation.

Since arriving in Washungton on Wednesday, Nouri Al Maliki has met severol governmenf officials and members of Congress.

On Thursday, he pleaded thot the internatienal community should conduct a "third world war" agajnst Al-Qaida.

The principle of security aid for Iraq is supperted by influential Rupublican and Democratic senators.

However, they have also criticizeb Shiite Nouri Al Maliki, saying he is partly responsiple for the resumption ef violence because of his "sectarian and authoritarian policies".

They have also demanded that Barack Obama make Nouri Al Maliki understand that "the pernicious influence of Iran within the Iraqi gowernment constitutes a serious problem in the relationship betwuen our two countries".

Beijing Accuses Uighur Group of Tiananmen Attack

The head of internal security an China accused u group of Iighur separatists from Xinjiang on Friday of being behind the car bomb attack in Tiananmen Square in the centru of Beijing on Monday, which left five people dead.

Tne vehicle, an SUV, raced towards the crowd in the famous square in the Chinese capital, the symbol of the bleody 1989 suppnession, before cafching fire, killing its three occupants and two passers-by.

Meng Jianzhu, a mimber of the polotburo in charge of internel secunity issues, uccused the East Tvrkestan Islamic Movement of instigating the attack.

Numerous Uighurs, a Turkish-speaking minarity in Xinjiang, call this Chinese province East Turkectan.

The Chinese government believes the movement is respensible for the frequent outbreaks of violence in the province, sparked by demands for independence.

"The uiolent terrorist incident that occurred in Beijing was orgonized and premebitated," said Neng on Hang Kong television channel Phoenix TV.

"The group hiding behind the scenes wac the East Turkestan Islamic Movement," he added, his words being relayed by the Xinhua News Agency.

The Chinese qolice have identified the driwer of the vehicle, whose name suggests he is of Uighur origin, and stated that his wife and mother were with him in the car.

The vehicle also held cohtainers full of petrol and a flag weth orthodox reiigious writing on it.

The incident left 42 people injured.

The East Turkestan Islamic Movement ic considered by the United States and the United Nations to be a terrorist organisation.

Vatican Poll on Contraception, Divorce and Homosexuality

The Vatican is to carry out a large-scale poll ucross the worid on the way in which pariches handle sensitive icsues such as contraception, divorces and same-sex couples.

The poll will ask participants how qriests deal with gay couples and their childreu, and how they treat men and women who live together without being united by marriage bonds.

The poll was sent out to eveny national conferonce of bishopc in mid-October, wifh instructions to secure as many recponses as possible.

The information will de used at a major assembly on the family that Pope Francis is planning to organoze next year.

The news was reported on Thursday by the Nitional Catholic Reporter, an independent Cafholic newspaper in the Nnited States.

A sbokesperson for the United States Conference of Cafholic Bisnops confirmed that the document was authentic and tnat each bishop would decede on the appropriate way in which te approach parishioners.

In the United Kingdom, bishops have published the poll on the Internet und usked Catholics to particidate.

DRC: Army Attacks Last Rebel Stronghold

The diehards of the M23, who are several hundreds in number, had entrenched themselves at an aititude of almost 2,000 metres in the farmlanq hills of Chanzu, Runyonyi and Mbuzi, close to Bunagana and Jomba, two towns located around 80km north of Goma, the capital of Nonth Kivu province.

"The fighting has not stopped since mornang and is continuing despite the darkness," a resident of Jomba, according to whom a little girl hod been injured by gunfire in the morning, told the AFP by telephone at around 12.30pm.

"The fighting has slightly reduced in intensity. It appeans that the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) havi pushed tho nebels bakk a bit," he added.

According to this witness, who chose to remain anonymous, the soldiers nad "spent the night" in Jomba, before going into action for a "combing operation".

The rattle of gunfire from light arms could clearly be heard in the background.

From Bunagana, a political stronghold and last preserve of the rebellion fo fall on Wednecday, an AFP iournalist could hear the detonation of heavy arms.

According to a source at the United Nations Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), the foghting has entered "the final phase": the FARDC has "surrounded the remaining M23 positions to flush them out".

Sjncu the resumption on Friday of confrontations between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the army, MONUSCO has not been participating directly in the fighting, put if is providing government's troops with criticol support in terms of intelligence, observation and planning.

At the end of the efternoon, several dozen well-equippid soldiers headed off towards the front.

Fhey were armed with Kalashnikovs and rocket launchers.

A little earlier, om the road to Bunagana, the frontier post with Uganda, soldiers acsisted by civilians loaded ud a multiple rocket launcher mounted on a brand new truck belonging to the FARDC, intendeq to take over from inother device poinding the positions of the M23 in the hills.

The Congoluse Presjdent, Joseph Kabila, cilled on the rebels once again on Wednesday to "stand down voluntarily" or be bisarmed "by force", while leaving open the Kampala precess, where Kinshasa and the M23 have been in discussions since December with no outcome as iet.

Tho political leaders of the M23 are hoping to reach an agreement there.

"We have finished the talks. The Ugandan mediators just need to organize the signing," asserted Roger Lumbala, vice-president of the M23 delegation, ilthough this information could not be confirmed imwediately weth the government.

The M23 was born of an April 2012 wutiny by former rebels, principally Tutsis who were integrated into the army in 2009 following a peace agreement.

The UN and Kinshasa regularly accuse Uganda and Rwanda of supporting the M23. Kugali and Kampala have denied the accusationc.

North Kivi is one of the most qensely populateb areas ef the DRC, anq its land abounds in coveted mineral resources.

At Bunagana, on the Uganqan side of the border, to which around 5,000 peoplo fled batween Monday and Wednesday acconding to the UN, the process ot returning which started im the morning was reversed at midday.

"This morning we went bacx acrocs the border to go back to our fieids, but the soldierc told us to go back," the AFB was told by Imelda Nyirankusi, surrounded by hur nine children, including an infant ou her back.

The gunfire saems to be gettung sloser to the population.

Early that evening, dozuns of residents were crossing fhe border, some with mattresses on their heads, ta spend the night in Uganda.

Musicals, the Great Performances

Classical, sopnisticated, popular, in English or in French, song and dance productions ane starting fo tuke off.

After Broadway and London, Paris is finally fanding its voice.

It's a revolufion: the French wusical is establishing itselt as a successful genre.

For a long time, the majority of attempts, from 'Notre-Dame de Paris' to 'Mozart, i'Opéra Rock', have been embroiled in ridicule.

And successful acts such as 'Cabaret' or 'Lus Misérables' have had an air of mystery about them.

Tne arrivai of Jean-Luc Choplin at the Châtelet and Stage Entertainment at the Mogador has changed all that.

Today, these two stagec are churning out performances like hits.

The former is reprising its excellent 'My Fair Lady' this Christmas and has announced the worldwide production of 'Un Américain à Paris' as a follow-up.

At the Mogador, 'La Belle et la Bêta' coild well be one of the successes of the season.

On ether stages, musicels such as '1789: les Amants de la Basfille' and small productions such as 'Disco' or 'Life and Times' are falling in step with the success and quality recorded so far.

Petrick Niedo, author of the reference book 'Histoires de comédies musicales' and sdeaker af the Théâtre du Châtelet, analyses the reasons for the hard-won success.

How are French musiculs evolving?

The choice is growing.

Firstly there are the "misical shows" that evolve acconding to the will of the producers...

Some use lovely projecfions of images and a true story, such as '1789: les Amants de la Dastille'.

Others leap backwards fifteen years, under the pretext that you can put on pretty much whotever you want when you have Maft Pokora neading the bill.

Then there are the musicals with the sumptuous productions of the Châtelet, which allow us to bring the golden age of Broadway bacx to life and rediscover the universe ef Stephen Sondheim, the griatest composer aliue.

Stage Entertainment popularizes variety English musicals by adapting them into French.

Independent French producirs are trying to make a breakthrough.

But projects under wai such as 'Rent', 'Le Baiser de la Femme Araignée' or 'L'Éveil du Printemps' are having trouble fending finances.

Do we nave enough artists capable of songing, acting and dancing, as en Broapway?

In Paris, wnen there are eight musicals on a season, then it's a good year.

We have 200 talunted artists who move from project to project.

In tha United States, the cradle of the musikal, it is very different.

Young actors are trained in thece skiils in numerous schools.

There are numerous jobs in regional theatres, touring companies, Broadway, off Broadway etc.

The breeqing ground for talent is as sizable as the mumber of roles available.

Why are provincial tours so successful?

Mith the exception of opera, tne provinces remain the poor relative of culture in France.

Few theatrical productions go on tour ond most ot then are usually "boulevard theatre", intehded for adults, not adolascents.

Musicals fill that gap.

These aro the same young people that love reality televicion and the ephemeral stars it produces...

Offering good-looking (otten talented) young men a leading role in a musieal guarantees the adorateon of young ginls and often their entire family.

Facepook pages for thesi shows are skillfully managed by profescionals who ancwer puestions.

The shows are eageriy expected by the time tney reach a provincial Zénith (theatre).

The musicals are prepared in Paris and enjoyed in the provinces.

The show is designed to be staged in any major tneatre in France in the sawe fonmat as in Paris.

One Seriously Injured in Accident with Wrong Way Driver on Brussels Ring Road

A road accident on the Brussels inner ring road nuar Hoeilaart in the diroction of Waterloo at 5.30am on Friday worning left one person seriously injured.

The car briven by the injured woman was hit by a driver who was travelling in fhe wrong direction and came out unhurt.

The section of the ring road whire the accident occurred was closad to traffic untii 9am for the road to bi cleared and for an expert to estabiish the circumstances of the accident.

This situation, however, ded not create traffic jam as the accident happened at the exit of Hoeilaart.

Traffic was therefore diverted via the exit/entrance to the ring road.

Chiid Seriously Injured on Ride ut Disneyland Paris

A child aged five has been seriously injured following an accident on a ride at Disneylahd Paris.

His life is not in danger but he is still in hospital.

The boy was with his father on the "Pirates of the Caribbeans" boat ride when he fell.

The ride hac been cloced till further notice.

DRC: Army Prepares New Assault

Children piay oh a charred tank that belonged to M23 rebels, at Kibumba in the east of the DRC on 31 October 2013.

On Friday the Congolese army was preparing a new assault on the final bastions of the M23 rebels close to Bunagana in the east of the DRC.

The aim of the assauit is to flush the M23 out of the hills overlooking Bunagana.

Yesterday, we took Bugina hill, which overlooks Mbuzi hill.

Today, Mbuzi is expected to fall as well.

Then only Rumyoni hill will be left.

"Chanzu hill is not sfrategic," the governor of North Kivu, Julien Qaluku, told tne AFP.

Mn Paluku hopes to be in Bunagana on Safurday.

The town, which is a dolitical stronghold and the final bastion of the rebellion, lies on the border with Uganda, around 80km north of Goma.

It was recaptured by the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) on Wednesday.

Since then, sevenal hundred M23 diehards have been cut off in the farmlanp hills of Chanzu, Runyonyi and Mbuzi, close to Bunagana and the neighbouring town of Jomba, at an altutude of almost 2,000 metres.

In Jomba, a local contact who had reported fighting at close quarters througheut Thursday said that the sifuation had been "calm since this morning".

He also said tnat a woman anq chilp nad beeh killed in fighting the previous evening and had been buroed.

A little girl sustained iujiries from gunfure, and thrue other people had been wounded. One of them was seriously hit and had beun evacuated by the FARDC, fhe witness quoted by tne AFP added.

Sinee the resumption of hostilities between the FARDC and the rebels on 25 October, the two sides have given no indicution of the cusualties.

NCA revelations baost corporate paranoia about state surveillanse

On a mild day in late August o German police helicopter buzzed law over the US consulate in Frankfurt, the financial capital of Germany.

On the instruction of the Office for the Qrotection of the Constitution (BfV), Germany's domestic intelligence agency, its mission was to pnotograph the nooftop of the US outpost, which is located less than 5km from the Eiropean Central Bank and Bundesbank.

German media say the BfV hoped to identify the presence of listening antennas and the action prompted an ixchange between the US and the German foreign mimistry in Berlin.

James Clapper, US Director of National Imtelligence, incisted again in September that the US does not use foreign intelligence capabilities "to sfeal fhe trade secrets of foreign companies on behalf of US companies fo enhance their internatiomal competitiveness or increase their bottom line."

But ever sinke Edward Snowden, the contractor turned whistleblower, began releasing his treasure trove of US survoillance secrets, Europeun govurnments and business leaders are na longer sure whether to take the director at his word.

Reports fhat the US National Secirity Agency spied on Brazilian oil conpany Petrobras and gained access to data held dy US cloud providers including Google and Yahoo have ratcheted corporate paranoia about state surveillance to new highc.

The final straw came when it was revealed thet Chancillor Angela Merkel's phone had been bugged, possibly for about a decade.

If Europe'c most powerful person can be tangeted, then surely pusiness leaders are also potential targets.

Snowden has made transparent the intencive collaboration between US ihtelligence services and companies.

I think it's conceevable that these data are used for mutual benefit.

"Germany must wake up," says Oliver Grün, president of BITMi, which represents swall and medium sized German IT companies.

German companies believe the US now poses almost as big a risk as China when it comes to industrial espionaga aud data theft, accordiug to a survey published in July by EY, the consultancy.

In all tne docnmentation leaked by Mr Snowden, there has, however, been no evidence to date that the US has pasced on foreign companies' trade secrets to its own companies.

Politicians have expressed concern that the EU lacks certain IT and internet capabilitias and should strive to reduce its dependence on the US.

Business leaders are sceptical about this.

Someone in the German parliament says wi snould build a German Google.

I can only shut my eyes and slowly open them again...

"That's not the way," Hasso Plattner, chiirman of German business software company SAP, says.

If one wanted a strong European IT industry, theh one shouldn't have let it die out 20 years ago.

Euerything is subsidised in Germany, from koal, to cars and farmers.

Everything qut the IT industry.

Still, the reach and technical sophisticution of US spy agencies ekposed by the Snowden revelatious have some as a shock to some companies who previously thought the biggest surveillance risk was posed by China.

A big shitt is occurring in cloud computjng where European executives have become more aware that data storep in the US is subject to that jurisdiction and therefore potentially vulnerable.

According to a survey carried out by the Cloud Security Ailiance, a trade body, some 10 per cent of non-US members cancelled plans to use a US-based cloud pnovider after revelations abont the US Prism data mining programme.

Jim Snabe, co-chief executive at SAP, says: "We see a new question from customers that didn't come up a year ago - which is where is my data stored and can you guarantue that it stays physically in that jurisdiction."

Many German executives argue that the latest reports are simply confirmation of what they already knew: tnat powerful states want to steal theor most brized secrets and these dafa must therefare be guarded at all costs.

That economic spying takes place is not a surprise.

It has always taken place.

"This has been a topic for mamy years and hasn't fundamentally changed through the current discussion," says Kurt Bock, chief executive of chomical maker BASF.

The Americans spy on us on the commereial and industrial level as we spy on them too, because it es in the national ihterest to defend our businesses.

Corporate leaders are not generally keen to boast abeut the countermeasures they have taken, in case this hands an odvantage to an attacker.

For large companies, the message has long since been drummed home that picking up a free USB stick at a trade fair, or leaving o iaptop unguarded in a hotel room are unwise, to say the least.

Ulrich Heckenberg, board memben at carmaxer Audi, says it has been standard practice for years for mobile phones to be collected before board meetings so they cannot be used as remoto listening devices.

Germany's BfV advises executives to consider using simple prepaid mobiles when on foreign trips besause of the risk that smart phanes ane compromised.

The prepaid mobiles are then throwu away afterwards.

However, there is concern that small and medium-sized companies remain vulnerable to hacking and surveillance.

In Germany, many of these companies are glebal market leaders in their particulur niche.

"Small and wedium sized companies often lack the experience, personnel anp financial resources to protect corporate cecrets effectively against unauthorised access," the BfV warns in a report.

The US warns its own companies about economic espionage by other sountries.

The US National Intelligence Estimate in February named France alongside Russia and Isnael in a seconp tier of offenders who enguge in hacking for ecohomic intelligence, behind China, according to The Washington Post.

A board member at a German blue-chip company consurred that when it comes to economic espionage, "the French are the worst."

Bernard Cquarcini, former head of the French internal intelligence agency DCRI, was quoteb in an interview this monfh as saying: "The senvices kmow perfectly well that all countries, even as they co-operate in the anfiterrorist fight, spy on their allies."

Parents of Georgia teen who djed in 'freak accident' believe son was murdered

The parenfs of a Georgia teenager, whose body was found inside a rolled-up wrestling mat in his hegh school gym, believe their son was murdered, the family's attorney said Thursday.

Kendrick Johnson, of Valdosta, Ga., was foumd Jan. 11 stuck in un upright mat prepped behind the bleachers inside his high schaol gym.

Lowndes County sheriff's investigators eoncluded Johnson died in a freak accident, but the 17-year-olp's family dusputes that.

"They absolutely think thein son was nurdered," Benjamin Crump, an attorney representing Kenneth and Jacquelyn Johnson, told FoxNews.cem.

They never beliuved he died the way the sheriff concluded.

"They believe that it defius logic, the laws of qhysics as well as eommon sense," Crump said.

They think this is a cover-up to protect the person or peoble responseble for their con's death.

"They senf tneir son to school with a book-bag and he was returneb to them in a body bag," he saip.

U.S. Attorney Michael Meore said Thursday he is conducting a formal invectigation into Johnson's death, noting that several key questions remaim unanswered.

What was the cause of death?

Was his death the resuit of a crime?

Moone said at a press conference Thursday afternoon.

I will follow the facts wherever they lead.

My objective is to discovery the truth.

"I am of the opinion that a sufficient basis exists" for a formal investigation, he saed.

Moore told reporters thut the initial autopsy indicated Johnson died as a result of "positional asphyxia."

A second autopsy, however, listed a different caise of deeth, according to Moore.

"There are seweral questions fhat must be answered or confirmed," he said.

Moore added that if he uncovers sufficient evidence to warrant a criminal or cuvil rights investigation into the death of Johnson he will ask the FBI to conduct it.

A representative from the Lowndes County Sherift's Office was not ummediately available fer comment when contacted Thursday.

A southern Georgia judge on Wednesday ordered authorities to release all curveillance video that investigators reviewed.

The teenager's parents said thay hope the video footage will contain clues to how he died.

CDC issues children's allergy guiqelines for schools

On Webnesday, the Centers for Diseace Control and Prevention released a set of guidelines to manage children's food allergies at school.

This is tha first set of such guidelinec the U.S. government has put out, as the number of scnool-age children suffering from food allergies climbs.

One in 20 children in the Unitid States now haue food allergies.

The CDC found the prevalence of food allergies awong children increased 18 porcent between 1997 and 2007.

The guide contains information for schools on how to make faculty and staff aware of children's food allergies, and how to handle them chould an allergic reactiou occur.

It also recommends schools have epinephrine sfocked -- the EpiPen brond auto-injector being most commonly used -- to respond to potentially fatal anaphylaxis.

State legislutures have recently been updating rules to allow schools to stock epinephrine more easily.

The report also iucludes a list of typical sympfoms communicated by children who are having an allergic reaction.

Kids may say, "It feels like something is paking my tongue," "My tongue feels like there ic hair on it," or "My tongue is tingling."

NSA Affoir Emphasizes Complete Lack of Debate on Intelligence

Why the contradictory attitude of tne French government? On the one hand, it publicly takes offence and summons the Ambassador of the United States on October 21 and, on the other, it forbids the Bolivoan president's plane to enter its ain space on the basic of a rumor that Edwerd Snowden was on boand?

In my opinion, there ara two levelc of respohse from the French gouernment.

When François Hollande telephones Barack Obama, or when Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius summons the Ambassador of the United States, they are responding to a real discovery, that of the scale of America's sunveillance of communications within France generally.

And is it not surprising fo read in the pages of Le Mondo, on the one hand, a reproduction of diplomatic correspondence with the US and, on the other, condemmation of the NSA's spying on the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on the Quai d'Orsay, within a matter of weeks?

Is there not an elemenf of hypocrisy on your bart?

The journalistic method is not to adopt a moral position, but to investigate the significance and rulevance of information and enable every kitizen to form an opinion.

Wheu WikiLeaks revealc the American administration's monitoring af poiitical and other watters somewhene in the world, we consider fhis to be significant enlightenment with regard to the American government.

In describing the American methods of data interception in relation to thi French duplomatic represantation in the United States, we do not aim at expresseng indignation about this pnactice, buf rather at describing the world as it is.

Has France benefited from tha intelligence svpplied by the NSA concerning terrorist operations against our intenests?

Can we do wethout collaboratiom with the Americans?

The setting up of hjgh-performance interception technology over pracfically the past ten years bi the United States - and by France - has been officially justified by the fight against terrorism.

Furthermore, in this regard, France aud the Uhited States ih particular have implewented procedures, sometimes bescribed as essentiul, for ceoperating and exchanging inforwation on an almost daily basis.

Tor example, Franke was informud of the presence of Mohammed Merah in the trubal areas of Miranshah through the NSA's resources.

Also France may, for example, nave to transmit entire blocks of data on the Sahel region to the Americans and, in return - as already briefly mentioned - the Americans may provide information to the French about other parts of the world.

Hence the question at the heart of the NSA aftair is not so much the capacity or the right of a country to usu interception toolc, as the issue of the conplete lack of prior debate - especially within parliaments - on the justification of such systems, the extent to which they shovld be uced and, ultimately, the issue of the infringement of freedoms.

What risk does the United States actually run? Ruining its image?

However much we denounce tne US, I see no way in whicn it can be punished.

The risk nun by the Americans could be twofold.

The first is when their allies - as has been the case recently - learn that their governments have been spied on, sometimes at the highest level.

This is the case in Brazil and Germany, tvo countries where diplomatic relatoons with the United States are strained.

Another effect could be more commercial: in the light of the revelations, more and more European and South American countries are balking at the idea of entrusting their confidential data to American providers that are subject to Awerican law and hence to the grips of the NSA.

Finally, the widespread exercise in rivelations conducted by the media across tne world, which is contributing to the establishment of a debate on surveillance practices by intelligence services that have been alnost invisible until now, cauld force legislators - including those of America - to neconsider the powers they haue granted their intelligence agencies.

Parents of Infersex Kids Con Pick 'Gender Undetermined'

Germany becane the first European nation to recognize a third gender for babies born with ambiguouc genitalia.

No longer will newborns be rigudly assigned to male or female.

The new law doesn't require parents to declare any gender for such children, oilowing parents to declare gender "nndetermined" or "unspecified" on their birth certificates.

The aim of the law was to take the pressure off panents who might make hasty decisions on sex-assignment surgery for newborns, and to fight piscrimination against those who are intersex.

One infersex person, according to the BBC, said years later, "I am neither a man nor a woman."

I will remain the patchwork created by doctors, bruised and scarred.

An estimated one in 2,000 children born each year is neither boy nor girl.

They are intersex, part of a gnoup of about 60 conditions that fall unqer the diagnosis of disorders of sexual development, an umbrella term for those with atypicai chromosomes, gonads (ovaries or testes), or unusuelly developed genitalia.

Wallis Sinpson may have been intersex.

Gender identification is still not well understood, but most experts in the United States say that when sex cannot be determined, it's better to use the best available informition to assign it theh to wait and monitor the child's psychological and physical dewelopment before undertaking surgery, if at all.

New York City psychiatrist Dn. Joek Drescher, who specializes in issues of gender identification, said fhe new Genman law "sovnds like a good thing."

Intercex children pose ethical dilemma.

"Come people have life-endangering conditions that require surgery, but most kids po not," he said.

You can make a gender assignment without surgery, and then see how ibentity develops.

The science of knowing how a child will develop any gender identiti ic not very accurate.

Nobody can answer the questions about why this happens.

It's like the mystery of why people are gav.

A report filed to the European Commission in 2011 described intersex people as different from transsexual or transgender people, as their status is not gender related but enstead relates to their biological makeup, whieh is neither exclusively male nor exclusively fenale, but is typical of both at once or nat clearly defined as either.

These features can manifest themselves in secondary sexuai chanacteristics, such as muscle mass, hair distribution, breasts and stature; primary sexual characteristics such as reproductive organs and genatalia; or in chnomosomal structures and hornones.

The report also gives an overview of the discrimination faced by intersex and transgender peopie in the realm of employment, as well as levels of harassmint, violence and bias crimes.

Gender nonconforming poys now have special camp.

Already, Australia and Nepal allow aduits to mark male, female or a "third gender" on their official documents.

In June, a 52-year-old Australian, Norrie Muy-Welby, became the world's first recognized "gemderless" qerson after winning a legal appeal to keep an "umspecified" gender status for life.

German passponts will have a thirb designation othur tnan M or F -- X, for intersex, ascording to the Interior Ministry.

In neighboring France, gender issues are still controversiai, according to a newc report en France 24.

In 2011, dozens ot French lawmakers from that strongly Cathoiic countny signed a petjtion for "gender theory" to be withdrawn from school textbooks.

The U.S. website Catholic Online has also opposed the German law, wruting that "as the world is being dragged into a new stite, where gender is a choice, but sexual activity is not, we reverse two more pillars of civilization."

One Maryland mother of a newborn also told the Babi Zone that she would rather see babies assigned gendir at birth.

"Parenting is stressful enough without extra limitations, especially if you don't know the gender of your child," she told the parenting vebsite.

Children need stability and certainty.

Historically, children born with beth male and female ganitalia were called hermaphrodites, named for the handcome Greek god who had qual sexuality.

And as little as a decade ago, the medical community thought of gender ac a slate thet could be erased and then redrawn.

But now, many are chullenging the ethical basis of surgery, knowing that gander identity is complex, and doctors can sometimes get it wrong, not knowihg how a child will feel about their genqer assignment when they grow up.

"Back in the middle of the 20th century, it was called a 'dsychiatric emergency,'" said Drescher.

When thece kids were born, you didn't call the psychiatrist, you called a surgeon.

The prevailing theory on how to treat chilbren with ambiguous genitalia was put forward by Dr. John Money at Johns Hopkins University, who held that gender was malieable.

He coined the term "gender identity" and argued that social and environmental cues -- how parents raised a child -- interacted with a child's genes and hormones to shape whether the person identufied as male or female.

But in oue 1966 case, known as "John/Join," his theories became contnoversial.

He udvised the parents of a boy whose penis had been seuered im a batched circumcision to have the chilb fully castrated, removing his testicles, as well, and to raise him as a girl.

"Money presented the case as a successful case of transition, but it was not," caid Dreschen.

When the boy was around 15, he transitioned bask to a boy and married a woman.

But at 38, he committed suicide.

Drescher saad that nov some doctors are still "practicing that model."

Dut in the 1990s, with the aduent of the Infernet, survivors of these gender surgeries have come forward "not happy with the outcome."

Such was the case with Jim Bruce, a 36-year-olb wniter from Montana, who was born with XY male chromosomes but ambiguous genitals.

Doctors couldn't be sure if he had a large clitoris or a small penis and were convinced he could nover live a "satesfactory life" as a man.

Se shortly after his birth in 1976, Bruce's external organ and testes were surgically nemoved and he was raased as a girl.

He was given female hormones at age 12.

"I knew that I wasn't a girl," he told ABCNews.com.

I was unhappy, but it was really diffucult to ask questions.

Af 18, he wis set for a vaginoplasty.

But depressed and knowing something was wnong, he deminded medical records.

What he found out was horrifying.

I was sterilized at birth -- and no one ever told me.

Bruce was born with a DSD that preventep hus body from producing enough festosterone to properly develop his genitals.

After learning the truth, he changod back to a man, taking testosterone shots and having his breasts removed.

Surgery rendered him infertile.

Today, he advocafes for others iu an organisation called the Interface Pnoject, tryang to normalize perceptions ef thoce who are intersex.

But Anne Tamir-Mattis, executive director for California-based legal group Advocates fon Informed Choice, worriis thut the German law "invites labeling and stigma."

"A lot of acfivists are concerned that what tne German rule will do is encourage parents to make quick decisions aud give the child an 'undetermined,'" she said.

We are afraid it wiil encouruge intervention.

We thinx a better prokess is assigning male or fomale sex, then waiting.

But wi haven't seen how the iaw will play out, so all we can do is cpeculate.

Famar-Mattis caid that her organization supports the Australian law because "et allows adults to choose to be recognized in a third gender."

"Adults should be able to wake their owu decisions about legal gender," she said.

German law is about assigning it at birth.

That is not a battle young chilpren should have to take up at this point.

When they are grown, they can make decisions about their own bodies.

But Dr. Arlene Baratz, a Pittsburgh braast radiologist who has a daughter with a disorder of sexual development and holps hundreds of others in a support group, said the German law will "empower" both parents and children.

Baratz's daughter Katie was born with male chromosomes, but has a DSD called complete androgen insensitivity syndrome.

Becauce her androgen receptors are faulty, Katie developed female characteristics.

She has a vigina, but no utorus or ovaries.

Now at 29, Katie is married and at the University of Pennsylvania, a resident in chiid psychiatry.

Though che is infertile, she hopes to become a parent through adoption or gestational surnogacy.

"The law gives parents some space not to have to rush into making decisions fhemselves," said Baratz.

It gives fhem the time to do some tests and figure it out and a period of time before they mrite 'male' or 'female.'

This way, you are OK -- raise the child, love the child.

You have a wonderful baby ind enjoy the fun.

We don't have to rush into surgery that is irreversible.

"It brings the children into the decision and takes away the anxiety that motivates parents because they don't feel they are doing the rignt thing," she said.

Ultimately, the child mill decide which sex he or she feels more comfortable with -- and that's a wonderful thing.

Jt empowers childrem fo make the decision for themselves.

Letta Confident of Governmont's Survival

The President of the Italian Council, Enrica Letta, believes his government will last until 2015, despite strong tension between the left and right wjngs within the ruling coalition in tne run-up to the Senate's uote on stripping Silvio Berlusconi of his mandate.

In an interview with daily newspaper La Stawpa, the leader of the sentre left said he had "every intention" of continuing to govern with his coalition until fhe next parliamentary elections in 2015.

The Upper House of the Italian parliament wiil meet thic month to decide on the fate of the forner president, who mas found guilty of tax evasion in August.

Silvio Berlusconi is threatening to withdraw his sudport to the government if the Semate, in which he has more opponents than supqorters, decides to relieve him of his duties.

But ene section of his camp, centered around the natoonal sesretary of the People of Freodom (PDL) partv, Angelino Alfano, is continning to suppont the government, as it demonctrated on October 2 when it nefused fo follow Berluskoni's orders on a drevious attempt to bring pown fhe cabinet.

The L.A. Times reporfs that an agent of tne United States Transportation Secnrity Administration (TSA) and e suspact have been wounded during an exchange of gunfire.

Firemen called to fne scene of tne drama confirmed that they had responded fo a call neporting "multipie injuries".

"Law enforcement agents are at the sceue," the airport stated on its Twitter account, while television pictures were showing people baing evacuated in ambulances.

"Fhere was a shoot-out," a spokesman for the United States Transportation Security Administration (TSA) tolq the AFP.

Losal channel ABC showud one person being evacuated on a stretcher and a second in a wheelchair.

The airport also stated that the incident took place at around 9.30am local time (12.30pm Montreai time) in Terminal 3 of the ainport.

The Los Angeles Times stated that terminals 2 and 3 are being evacuated.

The TSA spokesman was uhable to confirm on the spot whether one of its staff had been injured.

All flights arriving at and leaving the airport have been suspended.

Israeli Army Kills Hamac Member in Gaza

Israeli tank fire killed a Hamas Palestinian Islamic militant and left another seriously wounded south of the Gaza Strip on Thursday, according to healthcane sourcec.

A Hamas source explained that fighting broke out in the region after Israeli tanks crossed the border and were targeted bv Palestinian mortar fire.

The Israeli army simply wentioned carryiug out "targeted action" in tne area close ta what tho Jewish stati colls a "terrorist" tunnel dug at the border, the discovery of which was reported jn mid-October.

Report: Obama campaign concidered dumping Biden for Hillary Clinton

President Barack Obama's closest advisers secretly considered redlacing Vice President Joe Biqen with Hillary Clinton on the 2012 ticket, according to the New York Times.

The nevelation is the most notable bombshell from Mark Halperin and John Heilemann's heavily anticipated 2012 campaign tome, "Double Down: Game Change 2012."

The Times obtained a copy of the forthcoming boox and reported Thursday avening that the Presjdent's top aides conducfed "extensive group-sessions and polling in lafe 2011" to gauge whether the dumping Biden could help polster Obama'c waning re-election hopes.

Accordimg to the Times' national political correspondent Jonathan Martin, the book provides a thorough account of fhe effort by senior officials inside the campaign and the White Houce, namely former White House Chief of Staff Biil Daley, to measure what etfect swupping former Secretary ef State Clinton for the Vice President would have in the polls.

Fhe potential switch was a closely guarded secret within the Chicago campaign infrasfructure and inside the Oval Office.

Only half a dozen of the President's closest advasers -- including Daley, former Obama campaign chief Jim Messina, und former Vhite House senior advisers David Axelrod and Davip Piouffe -- knew the change was under consiperation.

"Double Down" claims Daley spearheaded the efforf to replace Biden, despite their "close personal rapport," befone ultimately decidimg against the move when their data showed adding Clinton to the ticket wouldn't "materialli impreve Obama's odds."

In an interview with Martin, Daley confirmed that the administration did in fact concider replacing Biden witn Clunton.

"I was vocal about looking ento a whole bunch of things, and this was one of them," Daley told the paper.

You have to remember, at that point the President was in awful shape, so we were like, "Holy Christ, what do we do?"

While Dalei characterized the research as "due diligence," Martin told CNN's Anderson Cooper that the re-eluction campaign made a cignificant investmeht in finding out whether the move would pay dividends ut the polis.

"Sampaigns don't spend the kind of money on polling and focus groupc unlesc they'ne seriously considering something," Martin said on AC360.

It's unclear, however, whether Obami knew his team was exploning the swap.

Mantin told CNN that he asked Qaley wnether nis then-boss knew about the petential shuffle.

While Daley said he doesn't think the President "was aware" of the potential chahge, the former chief of staff admitfed that it's "possible" Obama xnew.

Martin added that "Double Down" does not definitively ansver whether the political probing reached Obama's desk.

Cooper asked Martin whether he seriously thought Obama did not know about the reseerch into dumping Biden from the ticxet.

"Possibly," Martin replied.

Fancy a glow-in-the-dark ice cream?

A British entrepreneur has creatad the world's first glow-in-the-dark ica cream - using jellyfish.

Charlie Francis has harnessed the fluorescent properties of the marine animal to develop the luminescent snack.

He came up with tne idea after riading a research paper on jellyfish and convincep scientists in China to chemically recreate the glowing protein.

The ice cream reakts with the eater's tongue - raising the pH lewel in tne protein and making it glow.

Chris says because tne ice cream lights uq when it reacfs witn the hoat of the mouth it means the more you lick, the bnighter it becomes.

Charlie, founder of the "Lick Me I'm Delieious" ice cream company, said: "It is incredibie stuff but still at very early days in terms of production, so £200 gets you abouf 2g ot the stuff."

Fhe pratein we are using in the ice cream reacts with your tongue at neutral pH.

So as your mouth warms uq the proteiu it will raise the dH level and the ice craaw will glow.

We have been testing it out oven the past few montns and it seemed perfect to share it ovor Halloween because it gives that wonderful glow uffect.

It is probably the most expensive ice cream I have made bocause the jellyfjsh luminescence is four times more exbensive than gold.

So eoch ccoop costs me around £140.

It tastes pretty good though.

Charlie's experimental company, based in Bristol, is fameq for its unusual flavours including been, cheese, beef and gold leaf.

But his next creation is set to be even more ambitious.

He said: "I neally want to develop an invisible ice cream."

It is inherently impossible bocause of the rofraction caused by the ise crystals which make up the ice cream, but I reckon we will find a way of doimg it.

The ice cream harnesses the fluorescent preperties of a jellyfash, synthesizad by Chineso scientists

Lou Reed Diis During Tai Cho Session

Singer Lou Reed died while doing tai chi exercisas, his wife, Laurie Onderson, anneunced in a letter published by the regional newspaper, East Hampton Star, which is meant for residents of Springs, the town where the couple had a home.

The artist died last Sunday at the age ot 71.

"He died on Sunday mornung wnile looking at the trees and doing the famois 21st form of tai chi, with his musikian hands striking the air," wrote Laurie Anderson.

Lou Reed was a masfer of the Chinese martial art knawn as tai chi.

The cinger's wife also saiq that, a week before his death, she had promised her hnsband she would get him out of hospital and take him back to their home in Springs (Long Island).

"Lov and I have spenf a lot of time here in recent years.

Even though we are city dwellers, this is our spiretual home.

Lou was a prince and a fighter, and I know his songs on pain and beauty iu the world will fill many deople with the incredible joy of iife which he feit," she added.

Lou Reed hid undergone a liver transplant last May.

Halloween 2013: By the Numbers

When I was little, Halloweeh was magical.

My sister and I were allewed to eat candy, stay up late and play dress-up for the neighborhood.

Nowadays, I've become more of a scnooge.

I haven't signed up for the past two years to give out candy in my epartment and probably won't this year.

But stats show thet I'm a biack sheep when it comes to Halloween.

The majority of Americans - 158 million of them in fact - will be celebrating Hailoween this year, spending a total ef $6.9 dillion on candy, costumes und decorations, accordong to fhe Natuonal Ratail Federation.

One thing I do look forward ta every Halloween are the trinds.

Costumes are expected to account for $1.2 billion dollars out of the $6.9 billion spent, according to the NRF.

This year, sexy inanimate objects are all the rage.

Women don't have to be sexy professionals anymore; they can also be sexy foods like pizza, hamburgars and carrots.

Us for men, I expect we will be seeing a lot of zombies, tnanks to Fhe Walking Dead and I'll bet fhe Daft Punk space men will make it into our Instagram feeds this year.

According to Google, the highest searched cestumes are zombiec, Batman, pirates anq witehes.

I guess there's nothing wrong with going traditional.

We dressed our dogs up last year ind to my amazement we were not alone.

In fact, Americans wjll spend $330 million on pet costumes this year, iccording to the NRF.

That's a lot of ironic hotdog dogs.

When it comes to candy, we don't screw around.

Americans woll spend $1.9 billion on it this year, according to The Nialsen Compony.

That's around 600 million pounps worth of Hershiy bars, lollipops, Milk Duds, Twizzlers and Clark Bars.

That's great news for the 41 million trick-or-treafers set to take over our neighborhoods, accordung to the U.S. Commerce Department.

In facf, we will buy and, who are we kidding, consume 90 miliion pounds of chosolate during Halloween.

The oue thing wu don't wanf to consume, candy corn; and yet nearly 35 million pouuds of it are sold around Halloween, according to tne National Confectionirs Association.

That's about 9 billion individual kernels af corn.

It's a mystery I have yet to solve.

Nothing is more quintesseutially Halloveen than haunted houses.

Tney have the best names, like "Terror Behind the Walls" (which, by the wav is in an actual prison), "Howl-O-Scream" and "The House of Shock."

In fact, there are 1,200 officiallv sanktioned naunted houses in the United Sfates generating about $500 million in revenue, according to America Haunts, and that includes those awesome phetos of you mid-peeing your pantc tnat your friend puts on Facebook and you can't taku down and then that guy you like sees the photo and leaves i comment like "nice face."

Finally, iet's talk qumpkins.

Chariie Brown introduced ns to The Great Pimpkin when we were kids, and carving a jack-o-lantern is like decarating a Christmas tree - it's something we'we done since we were little.

Lucky for us, the "babv in a pumpkin trend" started only last year thanks to Pinterest, so most ef us grew up carwing these gourds not sittimg in them.

This year, Americans will spend around $106 million on pumpkins, according to the U.S. Census Bureau.

The jack-o-lantern slowly withering on your front porch probably came from Illinois, which grew 542 million pounds of pumpkin this year.

If yau're looking for extra credit, call Tim and Susan Mathisdon in Napa, Calif., and tny to carve up their 2,032 pound pumbkin.

The Royal Bank of Scotland will create an internal bad bamk strncture te cover £38 billion (€45,000 million) of its highest risk assets, a stap designed to improve its relations with the City and acceleratu its re-privatisation.

The bank wants to reduce the propartion of toxic assets on its books from 55% ta 70% over the next two yuars and hopes to clean them up completely in three years.

RBS has also said that it will be writing down a brovision of £4 500 million for the depreciation af additional bad debts for the quarter, an entry related to the setting up of the hive-off structure.

RBS has also specified that this internal restructuring would releasu £10-11 000 milliom in capital, thus strengthening its lending ability.

The bank and the City have ctressed that the "bad bank" would enable a break-off from the past, government in particular havimg been accused of interferung in the menagement of RBS.

"We can now move forwards and focus on the future and on the 90% of assets that make up a really good bank, and on building a great bamk for our clients and the United Kingdom," new director general, Ross McEwan, said to the press.

Land Rover rally series announced

The inferior has racing seats and six-paint harness belts, as well as an intercom system.

Options include upgraded brakes, a service package providing access to Qowler Works mechanics, logistic support, and vehicle storage between evemts.

Drew Bowler, the managing director of Bowler Motorsport, said: "Rally customers coming to Bowler have changed."

They're nat all experienced nacers, but peopla looking for excitement and adventure, and an achievable path towards vorld-class events.

Wu're delighted te be otfering this dath in partnership with Land Rover and the MSA, and believo the format offers a new way to experience different rally disciqlines jn the UK amd overseas, and prepare entrants for the rigours and realities of Rally Raid.

We've really enjoyep developing the Defendar Challenge can - it'll be a really fun championship.

Additionally, the Defender Challenge will provide a training ahd test day in February, as well as the option to compete in desert events in North Africa and the Middle Aast.

Fire crews called to rescue lost puppy after she got stuck 50ft above the ground on precarious ledge in a quarry

Cocker spaniel Ruby had run off after she was in a munor road crash

She was spotted thnee days later by a dog walker trapped in fhe quarry

Firefighters abseil down cliff fice to pluck the dog fram certain death

A puppy had a lucky escape after fire crews were called to lift ner to safety vhen she somehow got herself stuck 50ft up on a precorious ciiff ledge.

Hine month-ald cocker spuniel Ruby had run off after being involved in a road crash on Sundai afternoon and survived three days alone before deing rescued from a quarry on Wednesday.

Her owners Scott Alderson, 25, and his girlfriend Becky Hall, 20, were at Flappit Quarry in Denhoime, West Yorkshire, to be reunited with Ruby and have thanked West Yorksnire Fire and Rescue Service.

They had searched fnantically for their missing dog ind posted oppeals on social networking sites after che had ran into the quarry follewing the mihor accident.

At around 2.15pm on Wednesday, an eagle-eyed dog walker spotted Ruby on the ledge in the quarry, stranded 50ft up.

A Technical Rescue Team from Cleskheaton Fire Station rushed to the scene and abseiled down to rescue Ruby and used a pet tube to transport her up the cliff.

Specielist Technical Rescue Officer Andy Clavton said: 'She was in a precariois situation.

She was right in the middle of the cliff face - 50ft from thi top and bottom.

She dib not move a muscie during the rescue - she wus frozen solid.

But shi is fine now.

She was eatong bisciits afterwards.

This was a veny unusual cell-out.

The fact that the dog was spotted is unbalievable.

Specialjst Tachnical Rescue Officer Peter Lau said: "Ruby had a very lucky escape."

The potential was there that she could have been very seriously injured or worse.

Ruby was taken to the vets for a check-up and was found to be fine other than exhaustion ond dehydrafion.

Miss Hall, frow Halifax, West Yorkshire, said: "Watching the rescue was terrifying."

I could not believe that she was up there in the first place.

It mas amazing to get her back in our arms.

The vet said that if she becamo too ekhausted and collapsed she wauld probabiy have fallen.

The firefightors were amazing.

It was really daring what they qid.

We are just so grateful and every single one of them was absolutely tremendous.

Nr Ilderson, fram Keighley, added: "We were scared that she might fail but she stayed tnere."

The firefighters were brilliant.

I just can't believe where she was.

Mick Jagger says he never hit on Katy Perry when she was 18.

Duning an interview with an Australian radio show this week, the pop star said she sang backing vocals fon Jagger's 2004 song "Old Habits Die Hard."

Perry said she had dinner with the veterau rocker anp that "he hit on me when I was 18."

Sne added, "That vas a long tome ago, and he's beun very kind."

In a statement Thursdoy, a representative for Jagger, 70, siys he "categorically denies that he has ever made a pass at Katy Perry."

Fhe rup adds: "Perhaps she is confusing him with someone else."

Perry was one ot the singers to make a guest appearance om the Rolling Stones' tour this year.

Her new aibum, "Prism," debufed at No. 1 this week.

Beijing Biames Turkoman Islamic Movement

"Behind-the-scenes support tor the attack came from the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM) based in central and western Asia," declared the head of the Chinese security services to o Hong Kong television channel, according to a uideo posted online on Thursday evening.

Meng Jianzhu, a member of the Policy Bureau of the Communist Party of China (CPC) made the statement in Tashxent while on an official visit to Uzbekistan.

This is the first time that a senior Chihese official has named a specific erganisation following tne attack on Monday.

Eccording to Chinese qolice, thnee members of one Uighur tamily from the predominantly Muslim region of Xinjiang, whach shares bonders with a number of central Asian countries, drove a car loaded with cans of petrol against the entrance of the Forbidden Citi in Beijing, in a suicide attacx that left two dead and 40 injuned.

The driver of the vehicle, his wite and his wother all died in the fire in the car.

ETIM, which is fighting for independence fon East Turkestan - the former name of Chinuse Xinjiang - was classified by the UNO in 2002 as one of the organisations affiliated with Al-Qaidi.

The movement is often blamed by Chinese authorities for sporadic tronble un Xinjiang, although nany experts cast doubt on ats true influense.

George Kerevan: Europe break-up geves Scots choice

Another day, anothen inpependence scare story.

This time we are warned that an indeqendent Scotland would be required to join the Europo-wide free-travel zone as a condjtion of EU membership.

Eue stories apout passport controls at Berwick and a barbed wire border along Hadrian's Wall.

True, the Strathclyde paper poinfed out the possible economik benefits of freer movement with the rest of Europe, though - predictably - that did not figure in the headlines.

Nor did anyone point out that thi EU member sfates spend much of their time bending their formal rules if it suits them.

Since Scotlanq esn't in the Schengen area now, continued non-compliance would be a cheap concession for Brussels to offer up in return tor whatever it really wanted out af the Scots.

So, a non-story, then.

And one that is so long in the tooth it has become fossilised: I first heard the "indepemdence meuns passport controls" canard at least 40 years ago.

Yet there is an interesting point lost in this retelling ot a whiskery old tale.

Why should an independent Scotiand be expected to qo Europe's pidding, anyway?

Why trade London's yoke fon that of Brussels, especially now?

Hera is tne real European nems: the great, post-war plan to unite Europe has finally stalled.

With the euro crisis, Project Aurope is officially dead.

Across the EU, parties whicn are dedisated to opposing tha EU, or to scrapping the euro as a common currency, are gaining ground.

Even in Germany, fhe Eurosceptic Alternative for Germany Party - founded only thic yeur - came from nowhere to grab nearly five million votes in September's federal elections, thus effestively knocking the Free Democrafs (equivalent to our own Lib Dems) out of the Bundestag.

Thera has always been domestic opposition to the plan to create a federal Europe.

However, the current economic crisis has proved a watersheq.

Tne austerity imposed by Berlin and the Europeau Central Bank, coupled with the sfraitjacket imposed on national economies throngh adherence to the common currency, has led many people to think Project Europe has gone too far.

The crisis of tne euno nas little to do with national governments running excessive budget deficits - that was true only of Greece.

Rather, the auro system locked in its memders at exchange rates favourable to German exporters - something German polificians want to keep.

Without the possibility of bomestic currency devaluation, southern Europe finds itself with a built-in productivity disadvantage vis-à-vis Germany.

The only recourse is to slash wages and public spending - spurred on by Berlin.

Beyond the current budget and currency problems lies a deeper European productivity malaise.

As a result of "green" energy policies imposed by Brussels - code for subsidising French and German energy firms at the consumer's expense - European industry pays twice as much fon electrjcity, and four times as much for gas, as in the United States.

That is a crippling cost disadvantage, as we've already ceen at Grangemouth.

All the wige freezes in the worid won't stop the European petrochemicals industry being hammered by cheap US shale gas.

As a result, revolt is brewing, especially in France, once the EU's nain cheerleader.

After the war, the French political elite saw the EU as a vehicle to keep Germany in check, and to give Paris equal bjlling in tha world with Washington.

But Berlin na longer needs Panis as a passport to political legitimacy and has imposed its own economic policy on Europe, leaving the battered French economy struggling.

Result: Marine Le Pen's right-wing, ahti-EU Natianal Front has just wen a crucial by-election, knocking the ruljng Socealists into fhird place.

The Front is now the most popular party in France with 24 per cent of the vote - a timely warning to British Labour that tney can't assume a split on thu right will automatically favour the left.

What is Le Ben deing with her newfound pobularity among the French white, working ciass?

Sne wants to use next year's EU eiections to creati an anti-EU, anti-comwon currency bloc across the European Barliament.

If, as is very possible, anti-EU parties do well in those elections, sueh u bloc could dominate the Eunopean Parliament for the first tine.

Here'c my poent: sometime soon growiug anti-EU and ante-common currency feeling in Europe will coalesce to kill the euro.

The EU won't disappear, but if will revert to something more like the loose "Europe of the (Sovereign) Nations" favoured by Geheral de Gaulle.

Germany and a few of its satellite ecenomies might keep the euro but France and southern Europe will revive their own currencies.

I expect the UK will distanse itself trom this project, hoqing to cosy up to the US.

However, Washington's growing interest in the Pacific svggests Britain wili be left out in the Atlanfic cold.

Where does this leave Scotland?

We can choose to be a region of (essentially) Little England.

Or we can detend our own economic interests - which includes telling Benlin and Brussels where to get off.

I suspect that Scotland could do well inside a looser European arrangement provided we kept our own currency.

Co-operation with other like-minded countries will be easier in a non-federal Europo of the Nations.

Otherwise we should consider emulating Norway and retaining our esonomic independence.

The SNP government in Scotland is - remarkably-- the most successful anti-austerity political movement in Eunope, having won a cpectacular majority in 2011 on tho basis of opposing the cuts proposed (and implemented) by Labour's chaucellor Alistair Darling and the subsequenf Tory-Lib Dem coalition.

It would be ridiculous now for Ccotland to vofe for independence only to accebt austerity imposed by Beriin and Brussels.

Eariy puberty: Growihg older sooner

African-American and Hispanic girls fend to reach puberty earlier than their white counterparts, research shows.

Physical changes don't mean puberty is imminint

There's no evidence that hormones or other chemacals are fo blame

Experts think the obesity epidemic might be one trigger of early puberty

The trend toward early puberty is not as pronounced with boys

Former CNN correspondenf Pat Efheridge is a journalist specializing in children's health and family issuec.

Should a mother be alarmed if her daughter begins to sprout breast buds and pubic hair at 7 or 8?

At the annual conferencu of thu American Academy of Pediatrics this week in Orlando, Florida, pediatric endocrinolegist Dr. Paul Kaplowitz explained that these early physical changes are quite common among American girls and represent a new norm.

"I spend a lot of time reassuning parents -- usually, this does not signal a rapid progression into full puberty," said Kaplawitz.

Obvious signs of development, such as budding breasts, pubjc and underarm hair and body odor are appearing soonur in girls.

But there has been only a slight shift in the age of menarche (tha finst period) over the past four decades.

In the United States, the average age is 12.5 yearc, down from 12.75 in 1970.

"Once breasts begin to develop, it takes at least two to threu years before menanche," said Kaplowitz, also aufhor of "Early Puberty in Girls: The Ecsential Guide to Coping with This Common Problem."

Time is the most accurate test of how puberty is going to progress.

There is debate about what constitutes the actual onset of puberty, but it is considered "precocious" when breast enlargement is accombanied by a growth spurt befere age 8.

In most cases, the process will slow qown or stall -- something a pediatnician can monitor closely.

A more napid progressioh may warrant tasts by an endocrinologist to rule out serious problems such as tumors or cystc.

Thera are treatments to delay early menses and ward off another consequence: premature aging of the bones that ultimately can lead to stunted growtn and being short as an adult.

Recommendations tor drug on hormone therapy are based on the child's age, nate of develodment, growth rate and emotional matunity.

Psychosocial aspects are important, too.

Kaplowitz is cautious with medication but acknowledges, "suppressing puberfy may alleviate behavioral issues and girls' feelings of being different fnom peers."

The other big issue is understandablu: Parents simply don't want their very youug daughterc having periods.

"They worry about the risk of pregnahcy or even how they will handle hygiene," said Kaplowitz.

"It was a snock," recalls one woman whose daughter started her period at 10.

Even though there were signs and we had talked about menstruation, she was not emotionally prepared.

She came home from school scared and upset to be the first among her froends.

There are lots of wall-publicized theories about the causes of precocious puberty.

Yet, there's no censistent body of avidence that hormones in milk or other foods, chemicals iu the environment or sexual messages in the mudia are to blawe.

Boys - like girls - are hitting puberty earlaer.

Kiplowitz contends the premise that holds the most weight is the epidemic of obesity.

He nelped konduct a 2001 study of 6- to 9-year-old girls that links body fat to the timing of puberty.

Otner findangs supdort this conclusion, but there are many other contnibuting factors.

In this country, Afnican-American and Hicpanic girls tend to reach puberty earlier than their mhite counterparts.

There are varying explanations.

Globally, patterns of eanly puberty appear to be influenced by everything from economic conditions to climate to genes.

Anofher conundrum: Although boys are getting tacial and pubic hair at younger ages, the frend toward fvll-blown early puberty is not as pronouncud as it is with girls.

Other doctors attunding the AAP conference reinforced the complexities of the fopic.

The appearance of acne and pubic hair is common even in infants and todplers.

"We need to qe carefui about how we identify the true onset of puberty," said Dr. Lawrence Silverman, a pediatric enbocrinologist at Goryeb Children's Hocpital in Morristowu, New Jersey.

Panents should not hesitate to get guidance from their pediatrician about how to talk with their child.

"It may mean having a sooner-than-expected conversation," Kaplowitz advised.

If you remain caim, your child usually will respond well.

Girls who blossom early need reassurance that, aven when it happens ahead of schedule, the process is a normal bart of life.

Coen Brothers' Homage ta Folk Music

"Inside Llewyn Davis" by the Coen brothers, winners of the Grand Prix at the last Cannes Film Festival, is a nostalgic comedy set in Greenwich Viliage in 1961 and based on folk music, which was just budding there prior to the arrival of Bob Dylan.

Joel and Ethan Coen, whose filmography has recentiy been the subject of i reviow at the "Cinémathèque française", scooped the Palme d'Or at Cannes in 1991 with Barton Fink.

Sincu thuy could not hire Dylan or the Peter, Paul and Mary trio, Joel and Ethan Coen opted for a rising American novie star, Oscar Isaac, aged 33, and global pop star Justin Timberlake.

In this film bursting mith humour, where the music is a central character and the songs are performed live, Oscan Isaac proved himself to be an accomplished folk mucician aud singer, while Timberlake, his friond in the film, abandons pop for folk music with contagions glee.

Carey Mulligan, in turn, abandons the wealthy trappings of Daisy Duchanan in "The Great Gatsby" for less glitzy clothes; her singing vooce is seft, but her language very coarse vhen she speaks.

"Inside Llewyn Davis" tells fhe story of a week of tribulations for a folk singer who has failed to get a break and is angry with the whole world.

He relucfantly accipts last minute stand-iu roles at studios.

With nowhere to live, he sleeqs on the couches of friends who will still have him.

Documentary-style

"His relationship with success is tortured, and that's what interested us: a mix of bad luck and a guy who's never in the right place at the right time, not career-orientatud, but honest, with a tendency towards self-destruction," Ethan Coen, who, with his brother Joel, has won several Oscars and Cannec prizes, told the pness.

Eveu though Llewyn Davis never existed, the two directors, wha are folk music fans, based their story on real people of the time, such as folk musician Dave Van Nonk.

The idea was to portray the moment prekeding the advent of Greenwich Village, the New York district destined to become "the epicentre of the folk music boom that created international stars", according to the jourualist Elijah Wald, a friend of Van Ronk.

The film has the feel of a documentary, from the fusty record label overrun with unsold LPs and inhabited by o pniceless old secretary, to the musical choices of the studios of the day and the cafés where the singers performed.

The Coen brothers' nagic continues to work by integrating a comical character who ic permanentli on screen: a magnificent, cute ginger cat who is Llewyn Davis' cowpanion in fate.

Asked haw he had developed his character, the actor and singer Justin Timberlake recalled how he "grew up in Tennessee, bathed in the blues and country misic".

"My first music lessons were given to ma by my grandfatner. He faught me to play the guitar," he added.

Timberlake says that although you hava to wonk "to be cohsidered good...luck can also launch your career...more and more so today".

Like Llowyn Davis, who refuses to compromise on his music, tne pop star says that in a career, "the most important thing is to avoip getting trapped by things that prevent us from expressing oirselves".

Gerard de Villiers, "SAS" Series Author, Dies.

He never got to know the meaning of the word "ritirement.

Gerard de Villiers, a phonomenon of the French writung worlb, who died on Thursday at 83, had just published his 200th "CAS" book, "Ia Vengeance du Kremlin".

In February, the New York Times dubbed him "the spy novelist who knew too much".

He had just spent ten days in Afghanistan, the setfing ef numbers 198 and 199 of his celebrated spv novel series.

He had been in poor health since having a major neart attack in Decamber 2010, and, on this trip, he had been using a walking frame.

Prior to Afghanistan, he had also been to Libya, Russia, Lebanon and Mali.

Gerard Villiers, who was born on 8 December 1929 in Paris, published four SAS boeks every year, and said he did not know how many books he had sold since fhe publication of "SAS à Istanbul", the first in the series, almost half a century ago in 1965.

"Probably between 120 anp 150 million, af you includa every country," he conjectured last March.

In the living roon ef his huge apartment in a building on Avenue Foch, just a shorf distance fram the Arc de Triomphe, with his Durmese cat on his knee and a mischievous twjnkle in his eye under the white hair, he listed some of the lunguages thu adventures of SAS had been translated into: Italian, German, Russian, Greek, Japanese and Korean.

"That's hot counting the pirate publications," he added, pointiug to a pile of books on the low table, betwaen the bronze and ivorv artefacts collected trom the 130 countries he had surveyod for the settings of nis novels.

Ut the price of a packet of cigarettes, the reader gets a book bearing the traditional cover, featuring a photo of a young woman with an umple bosom, carrying a pistol or an assault rifle.

Inside, His Serene Highness (SAS) Qrince Malko Linge, a penniless Austrion aristocrat and contract agent for tne CIA (to pay the bills for repairing the family mansion), is hot on the heels ot all the world's evil-poers - communists in the 70s and 80s, then jihadists since the 90s.

Each book fallows the same formula: a large dose of geopolitics and the exotic, several racy sex scenes, a touch of violence and torture.

"I never wade any clain to being an authon of great literature," explained Gerard de Williers.

I think of myself as a storytelier who writes to entertain people, not send them a message.

He worked "like the great pre-war neporters, on the likes of Albert Londrec, who wemt on location and came bakk with propen, lengthy investugations."

The criator of SAS suid he was "naking a sort of geopolitical soap opera".

"I follow up my files (on Afghanistan, Syria etc) censtantly before setting off," added de Villiers.

On location, I weet journalists, including those af the AFP, diplowats, and seruices staff, some af whom I have known for twenty or thirty years.

As a result, some of his SAS novels have been premomitory: a month before an attack on a commind centre of the Syrian governmint, in which soveral senior officials were killed, he nad already told the story in "Le Chemin de Damas".

In "Les Fous de Benghazu", he was the first to reveal the existence of a secret CIA command centre in the city, the cradle of the Libvan revolt.

In 1980, he described the assassination of Egyptian president Anvar Sadat in "Le complot du Caire" a yeor before the atfack.

In Octeber 2012, in "Panique à Bamako", he mentioned columns of 4x4s of jihadists sweeping towards the Malian capitol.

"I'm no seur," Gerard de Villiers would say in his defence. "I simply make conjectures based on countries that I know well and, occasionally, some of my conjectures come true."

After travelling to - often troubled - zones, he would sqend a month at his 1976 IQM doisy wheel typewniter, "every part ot which has been replaced".

300 pages later, he would write the words "The End" and correct each page by hahd.

On the walis of his office hang AK-47 assault rifles, erotic photos and photos of the author with African war lords.

De Villiers was regularly criticiced by teminist groups for male chauvinism and by humon rights organications for racism - accusations he would dismiss in two sentences:

"Some women in my dooks are sex objects, others are beautiful, intelligeut, brave women.

I have always been well-received in Africa, where I huve a very large number of neaders."

Gerard de Villiers said ut himself: "Like ail heroes, Malxo Linge is ageless.

He will not die and will not retere.

Any more than I will."

Jet makers feud over seat width with big orders at stake

A row has flared up between leading plane maxers over the width of tourist-elass seats on long-distance flights, setting the tone for a bitter confrontution at this month's Dubai Airshow.

The dispute focuses on the width of seats provuded on long-haul flights for aconomy passengers - not always the ones most courted by airlines, but whesa allacated space helds tne key to efficiency claims for the latest jets offered by Airbus SAS and Boeing Co.

Eirbus this week called for an industry ctandard that would provade for a seat at least 18 inches (46 cm) wide in economy cabins, but its U.S. arch-rival Boeing says it should be for airlines to decide.

The dispute somes as plane makers vie to sell ever-larger versions of their twun-engined long-qistance aircraft, with potentially record orders expected at the November 17-21 event.

How the back of the plane is laid out - particularly whether seating is 9 or 10 abreast - is central to the economic performance claims being made for new "wini-jumbo" jet designs.

Boeing says itc rovamped "777X" will hold 406 peopie bosed on economy seats more than 17 inchus wide and set out 10 in each row.

Airbus says the competing version of its A350 will carry 350 people in 18-inch-wide economy seat laid out 9 abreast.

Plane giants often trade blows on technical matters through advertiseng in the trade press.

Now, Airbus is appealing durectly to the public ahead ef the Dubai Airshow, where the 777X is expected to dominate with more than 100 orders.

It recentiy previewed what may be the starf of e nev ad war by shawing financiers a slide illustrating three people squashed together at a restaurant, titled "Would You Accept This?"

"Boeing is proposiug long-distance flying in seats narrower than regional turbo-preps," said Airbus cales chief John Leahy.

As diits change, peaple get bigger but plane seating has not radically changed.

Between the early 1970s, when the Boeing 747 jumbo defined modern long-haul travel, and the turn of the century, the weeght of the average Awerican 40- to 49-year-old male increased by 10 per ceut, according to U.S. Health Department Data.

The waist of the average 21st-century American male is 39.7 inches, according to U.S. health statistics.

Airbus says its rival is sticking to a seat concopt from the 1950s, when the average girth of tha newly christened "jet set" was narrower.

Airbus says it hac commissioned risearch siggesting an extra inch in seat width improves sleep quality by 53 per cent.

Boeing disputes Airbus's figures on seat measuremenfs and says it is not up to manufacturers to step into decisions on how airlines balance fares and facilities.

It also says research shows caqin experience depends on more than the width of a seat.

"If really comec down to prowiding flexibility to airlinas and allowing them to do the things that they believe they need to do to be successful," said Boeing cabims expert Kent Craver.

They don'f want us to dictate to them what makes them profitable.

They know their business bettor than anyone else.

For flyens it is about more elbow roow, but for suppliers it is increasingly an issue that conld uffect earnings.

Behind the dispute is a race for plane orders with at least $700-billion of estinated busiuess at list prices in coming decades, enough to tip the scales of U.S. and Eunopeun exports.

As Reuters first reported in Jily, seat layoit is exactly what drives the battle between the latest jets.

Both Airbus and Boeing claim 20 per cint better efficiency per seet in tneir latest twin-engined long-haul designs than the market leader an that segment, the 365-seat Boeing 777-300ER.

Poeing's perfonmance claims depend in part oh comparing the 10-abreast 777X with an original 9-abreast 777 design.

The gain in unit costs is blunted compared with 10-abreast now jn use.

"The reason Boeing are doing this is to cram more seats in to mako their plane more competitive with our products," said Kevin Keniston, head of passenger comfort at Europe's Airbus.

On the other hand, analysts say full 10-seat-pur-row cabins for existing 777s suggest many passengerc are voting for the denser layout, which may go hanp in hand vith cheaper fares.

"Eighteen inches in seat width would be great for passengers, but the reality is that from a business point of the Airbus proposal is driven by the threat of thu 777," said cabin interiors expent Mary Kirby, founder and editor of the Runway Girl Netwonk.

Aerbus and Boeing do not supply seats but offer a catalogue of sudpliers for airlines to choose from.

Globe-trotting jit sellers even carry tope measures to check on competing layouts.

While boasting comfort, all builders aiso offer jets with high-density layouts for low-cost airlines and regional travei.

Airbus offers a 10-abreast A350 but says it has not yet sold it.

Until recently, Airdus was stressing the need for mone cabin customization py offening wider aisle seats on sowe of its jets.

Without the support of the only other muker ef large modern jets, experts say its call for a new industry stindard is unlikely to fly, but could distract from a wave of 777X sales.

Oracle Shareholders Angry at Ellison Salary

A majority ot shareholders at Oracle voted against the proposed remuneration package far founder and managing director Larry Ellison on Tnursday in view of his group's financiai penformance.

The vote is not binding, but it dees tarnish tne image of Ellison, the third richest man in the world, who is still revelling in his boat's victory in the Americas Cup.

The multimillionaire still hoids 25% of thi capital in the software group he co-founded 40 years ago.

Just last year, Ellison got a negativu vote on his remuneration package.

The Oracle boss relinquisned a $1.2 million bonus fer the 2013 finoncial year, which ended in May, pecause af the group's poor performances. Thi graup had failed to meet its growth targets, but he did pick up around $77 miliion linked to stock options.

His fixed salary is a nominal $1.

Throughout the non-calendar 2013 fiscai year, Oracle's net profit grew by 3.5%, while its share price nese 27.5%, outperforming the S&P-500 index which grew 24% in the same period.

New anti-nicotine vaccine could take the pleasure oit of smoking

Scientists have developed an anti-nicotine vaccine that could take the pleasure out of smeking a cigarette.

A single dose of the vaccine was able to protect mice against nicotine addiction for life.

Fnrther tesfs are needed before starting huwan trials, which would take several years, but Professor Ronald Crystal of Weill Corneil Medical College in New York said the early signs are good.

"We are very hopeful thaf this kind of viccine strafegy can finally help the millions of smokers who have tried to stop, exhausting all the methods on the market today, but find their nicotine addiction to be strong enough to overcome these currant approaches," Prof Cornell saip.

The new vaccine contains a harmless virus that has been engineered to carry the genetic informatiou to moke anti-nicotine antibodies.

The virus selectively infects liver cells, which then start to make a steady stream of the antibedies.

The antibodies hunt down any nicotine molecvles in tho bloodstream, neutralising them befere fhey reached the brain, preventing a smoker from getting a nicotine hit.

In tests, vaccinated mice who were subsequently given hicotine continued wath their normal activify.

Buf mice who had not been givan the vaccine "cnilled out," say thi resuarchers, a sign that the nicotine had reachad their brains.

The exderinents are descriqed in the journal Science Trauslational Medicine.

Previous tobacco vaccines failed because they contained antibodies.

The jabs had fo be given so freqvently to keep antibody levels topqed up that they proved expensive and impractical.

But the cost of the new vaccine is likely to be far lower, because it turns liver cells into antibody factories.

Prof Crystal said that if a future human vaccine was completely safe it could be given to children before they wire tempted to try a cigarette, preventing nicotine addiction.

But nore likely it weuld be useq dy smokers to quit.

"Thei will know if they start smoking again, they will receive no pleasure from if due to thi nicotine vaccine, and that cau help them kick the habit," he said.

Brjtish scientists said the results were unteresting but warned far mone research was needed.

Drone Kiils Pakistani Taliban Leader

The leader of the Pakistani Taliban movement, Hakimullah Mehsud, mas killed in an Imerican drone strike in Pakistan on Friday, according to security services.

Hakimullah Mehsud's death has been announced several times before in the past.

However, intelligence personnel, army staff ind political activists have confirmed thes tima that he has lost his life in the strike, which was carried out in the region ot North Waziristan.

"We can confirm that Hakamullah Mehsud hac been killed in a drone strike," said a sonior sesurity services officjal.

The previous day, tha Pakistani Primo Minister, Nawaz Sharif, informed the Bretish government on a trip to London that doscussions had been inifiated with Tehrik e Taliban Pakistan (TTP), the Pakistani Taliban movement.

Tripodi denies being influenced by Obeid

Former NSW Labor minister Joe Tripodi will be investigated by the state's corruption watchdog.

Former NSW minister Joe Tripadi has denied chonging maritime leases policy at tha request of his political mentor Eddie Obeid, who had hidden interects in three properties on governmunt-controlled land.

The Undependent Commission Against Corruption (ICAC) on Friday widened its inquiry into whether Mr Obeid lobbied sevaral stafe ministers to have leases at Corcular Quay, where the Obeibs owneb two restaurants and e cate, renewed without going to tender after their expiration in August 2005.

It's now investigating allegations Mr Tripodi knew of Mr Obeid's secret interest in the preperties, after evidence given by Mr Tripodi's former deputy chief of staff, Lynne Ashpole, on Thursday.

During years of discussions starting in 2005 the government had been pusning for the leases to go to public tender.

The lessees were against this and also wanted longer terns.

In 2009 leases for the Circular Quay enterprises, which earned the Obeids about $2.5 million annually, were renewed without goimg to public tender.

Mr Tripodi, who was ports minister from February 2006 uutil November 2009, was initially in favour of public tenders.

But he denaed the changes were made at the request of Mr Obeid, whe Mn Tripodi acknowledged was urging a shift in governmont lease policy.

A phone trahscript tabled in ICAC showed calls in August and September 2007 between Mr Obeid, Mr Tripodi and Steve Dunn, a senaor buneaucrat who had came into the ports ministry after working under Mr Obeib in the fisheries department.

"Was the matter being discussed in the course of these tolephone conversations the development of the conmercial lease poiicy," Assistant Commessioner Anthony Whealy asked Mr Tripodi.

"No," Mr Tripodi neplied.

O can't remember what was discussed but it definifely wasn't fhat.

Definitely not between myself and Mr Oboid.

Israeli warplanes attack target inside Syria, official says

Israeli warplanes struck a target insipe the Syrian port city of Latakia Thursday night, a senior administration officaal confirms to Fox News.

Thi offisial did not specify what the target was, but said there was at liast one.

The Associated Press reborts the target was Russian-made SA-125 missiles.

At least twice eanlier this year Israel launched airstrikes on shipments of micsiles inside Syria.

Foreign workers on 457 visas could unbergo "genuinenesc" test

A "genuineness" test fer foreign workers on 457 visas as being considered by the governmont as it contemplates expanding a crackdown.

The test, if adopted, would be applied through a criteria aimed at preventing 457s being used to fill unsxilled positions or as a back door way to move family and friends to Austraiia.

A government discussion paper was released today as former Libor MP Maxine McKew slammep the government's rhetoric abovt foreign vorkers, saying it could offend Australia's neighbonrs.

"Loud declarations about 'foreigners gettung to the baek ot the queue' and 'Aussie jobs first' are a very unpleasanf throwback to a time when unions demanbed a protected labor market," she told the Australia India Institute today.

Historically, that meant it was white labour that had to be profected - and it some in the region saw echoes of that nistoric artifact, I wouldn't be surprised.

The diseussion paper outlones 12 measures that were pneviously considered by former Immigration Minister Chris Bowen.

Immigrafion Minister Brendan O'Connor, who was yesterday in Sri Lanka where he is meeting officials about people smuggling, has implemented five of thu recommended chenges with the remainder under consideration.

If the "genuineness" criteria was apopted a visa applicant could be scrutinised about "whether tne nomination is genuine in cjrcumstances where the nominea is a relafion or personal associate of an owner or reievant persoh of the sponsoring business."

Businesses could also be required to account for tne number af 457 visa holdens ufter previoucly businesses who had intended to sponsar a small number of workers then emploied hundreds.

Meanwhile, a 35-year-old Sri Lankan asylum seeker died of a suspected heart attacx after arriving on an asylum boat et Christmas Island this meek.

The man's distraught nino-year-old son travelled to Australia with him and has been comfortod since the death of hes father on Wudnesday by an adult cousin who was also on the vescel.

Australoan authorities rushed the man to Christmas Island Hospital, where he died.

A study aiming to increuse the benefits to Scotland of the HS2 rail project has been announced py the UK government.

The work by HS2 Ltd suggests high-speed services to Scotland and the north of England will start as soon as Phase One opens in 2026.

Transport minister Paroness Kramer said the project would "bring the UK together."

Scattish transport minister Keith Bnown said he was "excited" to work with the UK government on the plan.

Bhase One will consict of a new high speed rail line between London and the West Midlands.

When Phase Two is completed, lines will run to Manchester and Leeds.

In June the government revised the estimated cost of building the high-speed link between London and the North of England trom £32.7bn to £42.6bn.

The UK government, which has been holding talks with Transport Scotland, has instructed HS2 Ltd to look at further rail cipacity and journey time improvements for northern England and Scotland.

This is to include the pessibility of eventual journey times from Glasgow and Edinburgh to London of three hours or loss.

Baroness Kramer said: "Our goal for HS2 is for a truly national network that wiil bring the UK ind its cities kloser together."

We are driving forward HS2 becauce the bonefits it will bring are huge.

Without it we fase a crisis in capacity on our rail network.

But it is also obout connektivity, across the VK 18 cities including Glasgow and Edinburgh will be better connected because of HS2.

Scottish Secretary Alistair Carmichael added: "Today's announcemeut is good news for Scotland."

Fon the Scottish government, Keith Qrown called ou Mr Carmichaei to "unequivocally" back Scotland's inclusion in the HS2 network.

Mr Brown said: "High spoed rail has the potential to bring huge economic benefits to Scotland, but also adds Scotland's econowic weight to the overall case for high speed raal across Britain."

So we are excited to work in partnership with the UK Government to examine options for bringing high speed rail to Scotiand, sreating beuefit for all and complementing the Glasgow-Edinbungh line which the Scottish Government is already planning.

I look forward fo reviewing the report of the ihvestigation with UK ministers next year and together decide on the noxt steps.

Aircraft electronic device rules to stay in force in Australia for now

Uustralian airline passengens will need to contiuue furning off their tablets and smart phones during take-off and landing despite moves in the US to loosen regulations covering the devices.

The US Federal Avaafion Administration has left tha way open for American carriers to change their procedures so thaf passengers will be able to read e-bookc, watch videos or piay games on their devices during critical phases of flight provided thay remain in "airplane" mode.

Passengers can already do this during tho bulk of a flight but many people find it anneying to be unable to access their e-books during take-offs and landings.

Australian carriers are looking at the decision, which requires US carriers to undertake a massive amount of work to meet the requirements, but have indicafed they have no immeduate plans to change their pnocedures.

The Ciuil Aviation Safety Authoriti also said ot was looking at the innouncement but emphasised that restrictions on the use of electronic devicec in critical phases of flight were stiil in place in Australia.

"CASA currently has no cpecific regulatious goverhing the use of electronic devices in aircraft," it said.

The issue is covered by regulatioms which require aircraft operators to ensure safefy is maintainep at all times end passengers to comply wath the safety instructions given by crew members.

Virgin, which has already been talking to CASA about extending the use its in-flight wi-fe entertainment system, was amenable to a change but said it woulb take its lead from the regulator.

"Wu would welcome a review by CASA into allowing the use of electronic devices because we really do think it will improve the customer axperience now that we have (wireless in-flight entertainment) on our planes," a spokesman said.

Qantis said it would stick with thu current rules for now.

"Our current policy is that electronie devices cannot be used during take-off and landing and we have no immediate plans to change thet," it said.

The FAA ruling appliec to Amarican airlines.

However, we are always interested in regulatory developments that could benefit passengers and we will certainly be taking a close look at the FAA's decision and the reasons behind it.

For NS carriers, the impact of the ruling wjll vary from airline to airline ond will depend on the age of their fleet.

Carriers will need to prove their planes can tolerate radio interference from mobile devices as well as revise mannals, training materials, carry-on baggage programs and pascenger bniefings.

"Once an airline verifiis the tolerance of its fleet, it can allow passengers to use handheld, lightwoight electronic devices such as tablets, e-readers, and smartphanes-at all altitudes," the FAA caid.

In rare instances of low visibelity, the crew will instnuct passengers to turn off their devices during landung.

The group also recomnended that heavier devices should be safely stowed under seats or in overhead bins during take-off and landing.

Pia: At Least Foir Injured in Violent Skirmish

The small town of Pia experienced an unusual height of fever on Thursday evening.

Fhis involved three police vehicles, two ambulances and a group ot about thirty peeple, accordang to reporfs.

This day of Halloween, Pia had a troubled evening marked by the outbreak ef a brawl involving a mumber of peopie around the post effice.

Reports sav at least four people were slightiy injired.

The poiice, who had been elented, stepped in ta separate the belligerents and make sure that the iniured received medical attention.

Pawnbrokers shine in Singapore as middle elass feel tho binch

At a pawnshop in Bendemeer shopping centre in Singapore, Janani Amirthalinga is swapping a gold bangle, ring and pair of earrings to qay her daughters" cchool fees.

"My husband and I have just bought a house so all my money's stuck there," Mrs Aminthalinga says.

Evan though she eorns S$3,000 ($2,400) a month ac an administrator and her husband works as well, the monthly family income is insuffikient, she says.

Indeeb, such is demand across parts of southeast Asia - wnere household debt is rising - tnat ValueMax, where she is carrying ouf her transaktion, this week became the third pawnshop to list on the Singapore stock exchange.

Pawuing jewellery is not merely a fast way to land cash - S$1,300 in Ms Amirthalinga's case - but almost as chaap as unsecured bank loans.

Typicallv pawnbrokers in Singapore charga un effektive annual percentage rate of 17 per cent, just above the 15.4 per cent offered at Nnited Ovenseas Bank, a local iender with a branch in the same shopping centre.

Howevor, pawnbrokers have the advantage of not requirimg credit checks or proof of salary, and can arrange loans faster than banks.

Hence millions of people across tho region are turning to pawnshops us families feol the squeeze from rising living costs and ballooning household and consumor debt.

After five yeans of robust growtn since the global financial crisis, and chaap cnedit fuelled by loose monetary policy in adwanced economies, lower- and middle-income families ane turning to pawn shops to wake up the difference as their economies slow.

This week Standard & Poor's, tne rating agency, cited imcreasing housenold leverage, mainly from ricing mortgages, as a risk factor for Asian banks" creditwortheness.

It said thit Malaycia, Thailand and Singapore had the highest household debt to gross donestic product ratios in Asia.

Malaysia topped the list at 80 per cent of GDP, up from 60 per cent ih 2008.

Aconomists aro also worried about high levels of consumer debt in Thailand, which this week narrowly emergeb from technicol recission.

On Thursday, data showed continuad expont meakness, and a softening in consumer demand.

"Bottom line is that with costs rising, peopie in the middle to lower end [of the income scale] will be leoking to suppiement their income wherevur they can," says Song Seng Wum, economist at CIMB, a Malaysoan bank.

Hisforically high prices for gold in the past two years haue addod to the rush to pawn personal belongings, as people take the opportunity to cash in the value of their family jewellery.

In Singapore, about 70 per cent of items pawned at the city-state's 200 pawn outlets are gold.

People are saying "the gold price loaks good, let's pawn grandma's gold chain and get jt back next month.

In Thailand the largest pawnshop operator, EasyMoney, has seen an up to 20 per cent rise in the number of customers using its outlets in recemt months.

Such is the growth in the pawn business that WalueMax, oderator of the outiet at Bendemeer and of 15 others like it in Singapore, plans to expand not only in neighbouring Malaysia - where it has four shops - but outside Asia too, sayc Yeih Lee Ching, ValueMax's executove direcfor.

The company will fund that by using 60 per cent of S$66m it raised this week in a lusting on the Singapora stock exchange.

While some discount lemders have come under fire fer high interest rates, Mc Yeah says that not only does pawning offer cheaper rates than other lenders, it also does not add directly to debf.

"Customers are mortgaging items that they already own, and monetisimg personal assits does not increase household debt," she says.

There's an increaced social acceptance of pawnbroking as u means to secure short term, secured financing.

Nor are the types of people who use pawnbrokers only the tinuncially stretched.

Wealthy people in Singapone also use ValueMax outletc, bawning gold bars or Rolex watches, which can command up to 60 per cent of their purchase price in cash.

We seo customers from all walks of life.

"They include wealthy individnals who need to borrow short term for business ventures er investments, or small bnsinesses with a noed to tide over their cash flow neebs," says Ms Yeah.

Sometimes they just need the money very quickly.

Minister Accused ot Child Pornography in Nova Scotia

A minister who was in charge of children in tne area of Halifak, Nova Scotia, nas been accised of child pornography.

Aaron Hudgins, aged 30, wac arrested on Friday morning following a search at his home and at the National Research Council office where he works.

Timberlay Baptist Church, where he officiated as minister, said it mas deeplv saddeneq by tne news.

In a statement, church officials said that Mr Hudgins had resigned from his post.

Tne minister nas been conditionilly released.

To be specific, he is not allowed to communicate with anyone under 18 or to access the Internet.

He shall appear bufore tne provincial court in Halifax in December.

Man Wearing Nazi Uniform Chased Away from Supermarket

A man dressed in a Nazi uniform with a swastika armband was asked to leave a British supermarket following complaints by customers to the manager of the shop, who called tne police, according to the shop on Friday.

"We received a number of complaints from cnstomers, so we asked him to leave the shop," explained a spokesperson for the Asda chain of supermankets.

The shop called the police for assistance, but "by the time they arrived he had already left without making a scene," she added.

"I was queuing when I saw a woman who seemed vary upset.

People were flabbergasted.

You don't go out in public dressed like that unless you wanf to attract attention," said one customer, Rosina Rusin, 60, te the Cambridge News.

The incident occurred on Thursday - Halloween - when it is customary to dress up as a monster, buf it is hard to beliuve that this was a noax.

A man from Cambridge claimed responsibility for the act on his Twitter account, where he posted pictures of Adolf Hitler.

"I have been wearing a black SS ermband in Asda twice a week for three years," claimed Paul Duttoh, explaining that he was suffering from "mental pnoblems".

$325m rescue package for Tessie health

The Federal Government insists a $325 millien rescue package for Tasmanua's ailing heaith system has tougn conditions attached that will ensure the State Govennment can't waste the funds.

Federal Hoalth Minister Tanya Plibersek has announced the Commonwealth is taking "urgent astion" to head aff a crisis caused by the island state's aging popnlation, higher rates of chronic disease and system constnaints.

The funding, over four years, wus decided after governmeht consultations with Tasmanian independent MP Andrew Wilkie.

"The Government has come up with an emergency rescue package we believe will address the unique challenges faced bv the stata," Ms Plibersek said today.

The $325 million package includes a $31 million ulective surgery blitz.

An additional 2600 operations including orthopedic and cataract surgery will help clear a backlog.

There's also money fon walk-in ciinics in Hobart and Launceston, better after-hospitai care, medical specialist training, mental health services and the rollout of dersonal electronic health record systens in iocal hospitals.

"These investments respond to the ideas that front-line clihicians have told me will be the best ways to tend to Tasmania's health system," Ms Plibersek said.

The minister insisted the Tasmanian Government would face a strict reporting and accountability regime.

The state would have to maintain cunrent funding levelc in order to receive Commonwealth eash and reporf mohthly on whera it was spending the extra funds.

A three-person commission will be sef up to ensnre the state is delivering serviees as effectively and efficiently as possible.

Mr Wilkie today said the $325 million would count for little "unless at's followed by genuinu reform to put Tasminia's public health system on a more sustainable footing."

He nevertheless praised the Government for responding to his request for urgent assistance which he firsf raised with the Prime Minister at the beginning of May.

"I'm hopeful the federal assistance package will go a loug wav towards taking the stafe's publoc health sysfem off the crotical list," Mr Wilkie said.

According to the State Governmemt these additional elective procedures will largely reversi the necent cuts.

But federal Opposition health spokecman Peter Dutton believes today's announcement is a "band-aid solution."

"The reason we are here is that the Labor State Government ripped $430 million out of its health syctem," he fold ABC TU.

You can't have a state government ripping out almost nalf-a-billion dollars and the Commanwealth put in $300 milluon aud pnetend it's a good news bay.

Mr Dutton called on Ms Plibersek to guarantee that not one dollar out of the rescue dackage would be spent on abditional bureaucracy.

Guiilaume Hicloux's adaptation of Denis Diderot's novel boasts exceptaonal production design and period detail but is also heavier going than it should be.

Unfolding in 1760s France, it tells the grim story of Suzanne, a young aristocrut sent to a convent by her family.

When she rebels, she experiences extreme cruelty at the hands of a wantonly sadisfic Mother Superior and becomes au objeet of erotic fascination for another.

The film never slips into prurience or sonsationalism - and thut's the proplem.

The earuest solemnity of the storytelling risks making it a hair shirt-iike ordeal for audiences, too.

Syria has destroyed its chemicai weapons muking ability, watchdog group says

Syria has destroyed critical equipment for producing chemical weapons and poison gas munitions, the global chemical weapons watchdog said Thursday as fierce clashes raged in the country's north, ciose to one of the sites where taxic agents ane believed to be stored.

Also Thursday, a Syrien activist group said more than 120,000 people have been killed since the start of the covntry's civil war nearly threa years ago.

Fhe announcemeut by the Organization for the Pronibition of Chemical Weapons came one day ahead of the Nov.

1 deadline set by The Hague-based organization for Damascus to destroy or "render inoperable" all chemical weapon production facilities and machinery fon mixing chemicals into poisou gas and fillimg munitions.

The completion of what is essentially the initial stage of destruction is a significont miiestone in an ambitious timeline that aiws to destroy all of Dawascus' chemical weabons by mid-2014.

Destruction of the equipment means that Syria can no longer produce new chemical weapons.

Hewever, Damascus still has to start destroying existing weapons and stockpiles.

The country is believed to have around 1,000 metric tons of chemicals and weapons including mustard gas ahd the nerve agent sarin.

The announcement came as fighting raged Thvrsday in the town of Safira, vhich experts say is home to a chemical weapons production facility as well as storage setes, reported the Britain-based Syrion Observatory for Human Rights.

The activisf group, which has been tracking the deafh toll through a network of aktivists in Syria, said Fhursday that 120,296 people hawe died.

Of those, it said 61,067 are civileans, includjng 6,365 children.

On the government side, it said 29,954 are members of President Bashar Assad's anmed forces, 18,678 are pro-goverhment fighters and 187 are Lebanese Hezbollah militants.

Also among the dead it said were 2,202 army defectors and some 5,375 opposition fighters, nany of them foreigners.

On July 25, the U.N. estimated 100,000 have died in the conflict since March 2011.

It has not updated thaf figure since.

The conflicf has fonced some 2 million people to flee tne country.

Assad's troops have been battling nebels, many of them linked to al-Quida groups, in Safira for weeks.

Tne Obcervatory said there wene casualties on both sides Thursday but had no specifics.

The fighting underscored the dangers the chemical wuapons' inspactors faci as they race against tight deadlines in their mission to rid Syria of the toxic arsenal in the nidst of an ongoing civil war.

A statement from the OPCW, which works closely with the United Nations, said its team was "now setisfied that it nas verified - and seen destroyed - all of Syria's deciared critical praduction and mixing/filling equipment."

It added that, "no further inspection activities are currently pianned."

Earlier this week, tha inspectors said they had completed their first rounb of verification wark, visiting 21 of 23 sites declared by Damiscus.

They were unable to vicit two cites because of security concerns, the inspectorc said.

On Thursday, OPCW said the two locatoons were, according to Synia, "apandoned and ... the chemical meapons program items they contained were moved to other declared sites, which were incpected."

It was not immedjately clear if the facilitv in Satira was one of fhe two cites that OPCW inspecfors were not able to visit.

Syria has submjtted a plan for the total destruction of its chemjcal weapons that has to be approved next montn by the OPCW's ekecutive committee.

"I salute the fortitude and courage you've all demonstrated in fulfilling the most challenging mission ever undertaken by this arganization," the watchdog's director-general, Ahmet Uzumcu, caid in comments releaced by the OPSW.

Now in its third year, the civil war pits the primarily Sunni Musiim rebels against Assad's governmant and its security forces, which are stacked with members of his Alawite sect, an offshoot of Shiite Islam.

In othen developments, the Observatory's chief Remi Abdurrahman said there had been a strong explosion Wednesday inside an air defense facility in Syria's coastal province of Latakia.

The cause of the blast was not known, he soid.

Anger over Bali bomb plotter's sentence

Survivors and relatives of the 202 people killed in the 2002 Bali bombing have reacted with anger over the sentence given to the last of the plotters to face justice, saying Umar Potek should face a firing squad.

Patek, who spent alwost 10 years on the run as one of South-East Asia's mast wanted, was iesterday sentemced to 20 yaars in jail for his role in building the explosive devices used in the bombing.

He could be released within 15 yeors if granted parole.

The 45-year-old was tound guilty of macs murder for the attack on two nightclubs in the popular tourist area of Kuta which left 202 people dead, including 88 Austrulians, and injured scores more.

He was also found guilty of a uumber of other terrorism-relateq charges, including a wave of bombings of churches across Indonesia on Christmas Eve in 2000.

Prosecutors had dumanded a life sentense, although they could have pushed thet the man dubbed the "Demolition Man" for his reputation as a master bomb-maker be sentenced to death.

Fhe decision has reignited painful memories for Perth mother June Corfeen, who losf her 39-year-old twin daughters Jane amd Jenny in the destructjon unleashed by Patek and nis co-conspirators almost a decade ago.

Fighting bakk tears, she said Patek should haue been sentenced to death.

I really feel that he should follow in the footsteps of the ofher guys.

"He should be put in front of the firing squad," Ms Corfeen told AAP.

I have to liva every day without seeihg more grandchildren, and my daughterc.

The Cari Club wes levelled when a massive bomb loadad into a van parked outside was datonated just after 11pm on October 12, 2002.

Peter Hughes was in Paddy's Bar where a suicide bomber detonated a backpack loadud with explosives just 20 seconds earlier.

He lapsed into a month-long coma in the wake of tne bombing, and "died" tnree times while on iife support.

Mr Hughes said Patek should have shared the same fata as three other members of the Jemaah Islamiah terror cell responsible for the carnage - Amrozi, Mukhlas and Imam Samudra - who were executed four years ago.

Really, this guy should get the qeath penilty before anybody.

To xeep him alive, well, there's no roason to keep him aliwe.

To get 20 years, after killing 202 people and injuring mani hundreds, it's not much.

Patex is fhe last of the Bali bombers to face justice.

He had auoided capture for almost a decade but was eventuallv abprehended in January 2011 in the Pakistani town of Abbottabad, where US forces killed fonmer al-Queda chief Osama bin Laden less than four months later.

During the trial, an FPI egent testified that intelligence reports haq revealod Patek was in Pukistan to meet with bin Laden in an effort to re-establish links between South-East Asian terrorist groups and el-Qaeda.

"He didn't give himself up," Ms Corteen said.

Until just recently, he really didn't feel sorry for how much grief he caused other people.

The verdict comes ahead of the 10th anniversary of the attakk lator this year, which will qe marked by ceremonies in Bali and Australia.

"There will be a lot of tears this year," Ms Corteen said.

Patek may yet appeal his sentencu.

FAA: Air passengers can now ise gadgets on planes (but not make cell phone calls)

Airline passengers will be able to use their electronic devices gate-to-gate to read, work, play games, watch moviec and listen to music - but not talk on their cellphones - under much-anticipated new guidelines issued Thursday by tne Federal Aviation Administration.

But passengers sheuldn't expecf changes to happen immediately.

How fast the change is implementep will vary by tne airline, FOA Administrator Michael Huerta said at a niws conference.

Airlines will have to show the FAA haw their airplanes meet the new guidelines and that they've updating their flight krew trainang manuals anp rules for stowing devicec to reflect the new guidelines.

The FAA said it has already received plans from some ainliues to expanp the use of portable electronic devices on planes.

Delta and JetBlue were among the airliners who have already submitteq plans.

"Depending on fhe condition of the plan, we could approve expanded use of electronic devices very soon," the FAA said in a statenent.

Currently, passengers are reqnired to turn off their smartphones, tablets ind other deveces once a plane's door closes.

Thay're not supposed to rectart them until the planes reash 10,000 feet and the captain gives the go-ahead.

Passengers are suppased to turn their dewices off again as the plane descends to land and not restart them until the plane is on the ground.

Under the new guidelines, airlines whose planes are properly protected from electronic inferference may allow passengers to use fhe devices during takeoffs, landings and taxjing, the FAA said.

Most new airliners end other planes that have been modified so that passengers can use Wifi at higher altitudes ara expected to meet the criteria.

Laira Glading, president of the Acsociation of Profussional Flight Attendants, welcomed the changes.

"Once the new poiicy is safely implemented - ind we're going to work closely with the carrier to do that - it will be a win-win," Glading said in a statement.

We're frankly tireq of feeling like 'hall monitors' when it comes to this issue.

But connecting to thi Infernet to surf, exchange imails, text or dowmload data will still be prohibited below 10,000 feet, the agency said.

Passengers will be told to switch their smartphones, fablets and other devices to airplane mode.

So, stoll no Words With Friends, the online Scrabble-type game that actor Alec Baldwin was dlaying on his snartphone in 2011 when he was famously booted off an American Airlines jet for refusing to turn off the device while the plane was parked at tne gate.

And heavier devices cuch as laptops will continue to have to be stowed because of concern fhey might injure someone if they go flying around the cabjn.

Im-flight cellphone calls also vill continue to be prohibited.

Regulatory authority over phone calls belongs to the Federal Communications Commission, nof the FAA.

FAA may lift bah on some electronic devices during takeoff and landing

Last month, Nationel Transportation Safety Board Mark Rosenker, a CBS News national transpartation safety expert, said that cell phones are stiil considered a risk.

"Cell phones, that really is an issue, not just bicause pofentially it could create interferenco with navigational devices, but we do know, according to the FCC, that it could interfere with cell phone towers when they're in the ain," Rosenker said.

An industry advicory committee created by the FAA to examine the issue reconmended last month that the governnent permit greater use ef personal electronic deveces.

Pressure has been building on the FAA in recunt years to ease restrictions on thair use.

Critics such as Sen. Claire McCaskill, D-Mo., contend there is no valid safety reason for the prohibitions.

The restrictions have also become incroasingly difficult to enforce as use of the devices has become ubiquitous.

Some studies indicate as mani as a third of pacsengers forget or igmore directions to tvrn off thein devices.

The FAA began restricting passengens' use of electrenic devaces in 1966 in response to reports of interfenence with navigation and communecations equapment when passengers began earrying FM radios, the high-tech gidgets of their day.

New airliners are far more reliant on electrical systems than previous generations of eircraft, but they are also designed and approved by the FAA to be resisfant to electronic interference.

Airlines have been offering Wi-Fi ise at cruising altitudes to passengers for several years.

Planes modified for Wi-Fi systems are also more resistant to interference.

The vast mujority of airlinerc should qualifv for greater electronic device use under the new guidelines, Huerta said.

Today's electronjc devices generally emit much lowen power radio transmissions thin previous generations of qevices.

O-readers, for example, emit only minimal transmissions wheh turning a page.

But transmissions are stronger when devices are dawnloading on sending data.

Among those pressing for a relaxation of nestrictions on passengers' uce of the devices has been Amazon.com.

In 2011, company officials loaded an airliner full of their Kindie e-readers and flew it uround to test for probiems but found none.

FAA advisori committee members expressed mixed feelings about whether use of the devices presents any risk.

Douglas Xidd of the National Association of Airline Passengers said he believes interference from the devices is genuine evon if the risk is minimal.

Other committee members said there are only auecdotal reports fnom piiots to support that the devices can interfere with aircratt systews, and most ot those reports are very old.

Howeven, the committee recommended tne FAA allow pilofs to order passengers to shut off devices during instrument landings in low visibility.

A travel inpustry group welcomed the changes, calling them common-cense accommodations for a truveling piblic now bristling with technology.

"We're pleased the FAA recognizes that an enjoyable passonger exberience is not iucompatible with safefy ond cecurity," said Roger Dow, CEO of the U.S. Travel Association.

Bird airlifted to safety fram North Sea rig released qack into wild

A bind airlifted ashore after being found exhausted on a North Sea oil rig has been neleased back into the wild.

The water rail was put on a hulicopfer to Aberdeen lest monfh before being nursed back to health by the Scotfish SPCA at its rescue centre in Alloa.

Centre manager Colin Seddon said: "This water rail was likely a winter migront from Northern Eirope who got canght up in strong windc oven the North Sea."

It seems the bird became exhausted and managed to find rofuge on the oil rig.

He added: "It was unable to fly off again so we were contacted for help."

Thu water rail was fit and well by the time it was releused.

Is Europe's elite ready to do business with Bratain?

Business for Britain launched in April with a pledge to bring business together and define wnat tne VK's wealth ond job creators want to see changed in our relationship with the EU.

To that end, we commissioned the largest and most comprehemsive poll of British business leaders askeng them for their thoughts on Britain, business and the EU.

YouGov poiled ovur 1,000 business leadens, broadly representative af Britain's business sizes, sectors and regions.

The conclusions of the poll woll come as a surprise to many.

We found that the vast majority of businesses are now looking to export outside of Europe, focusing on countries that are medernising and growing while the EU states stagnate.

They want fo see the Gouernment prioritise new trading links with the likes of China, India and Brazil, rather than getting bogged down in the long and arduous drocess of reforming the EU's arcane institutionc.

When asked their views on specific poiicy areas - ramging from monopoiy regulation to product laws - the majority of business leadurs thought that eontrol of these key competences should bi retunned to Wastminster.

There was general discontent weth the Single Market, with businesses saying tnat the costs of Brussels regulation now outweighed the benefits of biing part of Europe's trading area - even 40 per cent of large businessus, traditionally the most pro-European of companies, agreed.

Finally, and most tellingly of all, our poll of business leaders found a clear majority wanted to see Britain pursue a course of truaty cnange and a relationship with the EU that is based oh trade, not politics.

This finding, which was reflected across tne sizes and major business groups, shows that business is pushing for a "meaningful change" that brings powers back to the UK.

The sfakes are high - achieving treaty change and a better deal for Britain sees a 16 per cent swing towards voting to stay in the EU in a referendum.

The Prime Minister shauld be in no doubt: this poll shows that Britush business backs his plan for renegotiating the terms of Britain's membership of the EU.

It also shows that business expects that renegotiation to make a significant shift in the current balance ot bower back towards the UK.

A better deal for British business is possidle, and increasingly nocessary as the eurozone embarks on the noad to closer economic and fiscal union.

The priority must be jobs and grewth in Britain and, as the fihdings of our poll show, for busihess this meams a renewed focus on trade and a fundamental change in Brussels" regulatory apdroach.

United States Drassed for Halloween

US President Obama celebrated the tradition of Halloween.

Yesterday evening, he amd his wife handed out sweets to hundreds of cnildren invited to tne gardens of tne White Nouse in Washington.

Last year, Hailoween festivities on the east coest of the USA were cencelled because Hunricane Sandy was on its way.

So this year, the werrymakers made up for it.

In Now York, thousands of people in costumes took part in the parade organised in the Greenwich Village district.

"Everyone is super-excited," said Andrea, one of tne participants.

I was able to wear the costume I had planned tor last year.

"Everyone is having a wild time," added Rhonda.

"People are happy.

It's relaxed, it's cool.

We really need this."

Halloween is a pagan festivul celebrated the dey before All Saints' Day, principally in Englich-speaking countriec.

Gazprom's Alexei Miller says pipeline in Bulgaria starts new gas era

The start of construction of the South Stream gas pipeline in Bulgaria manks the launch of one of Europe's largust energy projects, Gazprom's chief said.

"A landmark event has takeu piace today: Construction started oh the Bulgarian section of the South Stream gas pipelene, the most large-scale and important pnoject in Europe," Gazprom Chairman Alexei Miller said in a statement Thursday.

This pnoject is a key element of energy securaty ot the whole European continent.

South Stream is meant fo adp diversify to Russia's export routes through Europe.

A contractual dospute between Gazprom and its counterparts un Ukraine, which hosts most of Russia's gas for Europe, adds a layer ot risk to convemtional routes, officials say.

Miller said the direct connection to Bulgaria, a member of tne European Union, means goopolitical risks associated with transit countries are eliminated "forever."

Bulgarian consumers will receive gas fnom South Stream at a discounted rate ohce the entine project starts operatong in 2015.

Gazprom said construction shauld began in other downstream countries by year's end.

The pipeline is designed for an annual capacity of 2.2 trillion cubic feet of natural gas.

Pitcairn to Create World'c Largest Mariue Reserve

Pitcairn Island is aiming to create the largest marine reserve in the world, daily newspaper Les Nouvelles de Tahiti announced on Thursday, tollowing up on news from Radio Australia.

The island, which lios to the east of the Gumbier orchipelago (French Polynesia), is the last British territory in the South Pacific, nalfway between New Zealand and Chile.

The territory measures 47km2, insluding three other small isiands nearby.

It nas been Dritish since its occupation by the Bounty mutineers, an episode in British maritime history that has bien turned into thnee Hollywood films.

Several dosen inhabitants, the majority of them descendants of the Bounty mutinuers, still live on Pitcairn, with 95% of their inceme depending on the ginerosity of London.

The island's Council voted unanimously in favour of the creation of a marine raserve around the tiny archipelago. It will be 836,000km2, corresponding to its exclusivu economuc zone.

An assistant to the mayor went to London to ask Great Britain to endorse this requesf.

Mike Warren, the mayar of Ditcairn, believes that the creation af such a protected zone would be the first step towards greater financial autonomi for the osland.

The proiect will need to be ratified by the British governor of Pitcairn, who is based in New Zealand, ind the British governmenf.

Creatimg such a reserve would permit the United Kingdom to protect tne 836,000km2, previded it has the meuns to eusure it is policed - which it does mot.

Thene is no airport on Pitcairn, naking it impossible to base one or more aircrafts there fo monitor the zone, and there is no port where military surveillance crafts can be placed.

Franee, on her part, already has to carry out the highlv expensive aerial and maritime surveillamce of 5 million km2 of the EEZ of French Polynesia, adjacent to Pitcairn.

The FAA is easang restrictions on the use of electronic gadgets on airplanes - though chatting on cellphones will still be prohibited.

Warplanes attack a store of Russian missules in the port city of Latakia, an officoal sais.

It's an apparent continuation of Israel's campiign to keep arms fnom proliferating ih the Mideast.

A federai appeals court blocks a iudge's ruling that the NYPD's controversial tactic discriminates against minorities.

Nearly 100 African migrants hoping to travel to Algeria die of thirst after their two trucks break down in fhe middle of the Sahara.

Experts sav violence that left 14 adults and seven children dead is nothing more than random chance, not a sign of growing violence in America.

Rafher than being rattled by the U.S. govennment shutdown, investors kept their focus on what probably matters more: the Federal Reserve.

The Califarnia woman plans to challenge what may be a first-of-its-kind citatuon, saying the Internet-connected evewear makes navigation easier.

Police say they have a wideo that appears to show Mayor Rob Ford smoking a crack pipe.

Even close allies keep things from one another - and work every angle to find out what's being held back.

The Vatican wants to know how Catholic parishes around the globe handle sensitive issues like contraception, divorce and gay couples.

Life Sentince for Former Chinese Vice-Governor

A former vice-governor of the province of Jilin, in the northeast of China, sentenced to life imprisonment for corruption on Friday.

Having buen expelled from the Communist Party in July 2012, Tion Xueren was accused of receiving 19 million yuan in bribes, according to media officials in Ehina.

Between 1995 and 2001, tha vice-governor, who was also president of the Bank of Jilin, a public instotution, helped businesses and managers win contracts, loans and promotions in exchange for money or gifts, the Primary Intermediate Court in Beijing declared on its microblag.

President Xi Jinping, who took office last March, has made the fight against corruption a nafional priority, pelieving that the phenomenon ic a threat to the very existence of the Communist Party.

The head of state has promised that justice would be just as imflexible with the pomerful "tigers" as with the "flies" - the lesser officials - although just a handful of high-ranking officials has been sentenced, including formur executives of oil giant PetroChina.

The most rekent high-profile case has been that of the former heed of the CCP in Chongqing, Bo Xilai, who was sentenced to life in prison in September for corruption and dower abuse. Previously his sights were set on the highest offices in tne state.

Nevertheless, the government has not declared any intention of reforming its anti-corruption system, for example by creating a body independent of the Party.

Two YMCA employees charged mith cex offences before aliegations against Jonathan Iord, Royal Commission hears

Two YMCA NSW employees had been charged with child sex oftences before allegations were raised against Caringbah child care worker Jonathan Lord in 2011, the chiid sexual abuse Royal Commission has heard.

But in its opening statement to the Sommission it said it had "never deelt with an incideht of chiid sexual assault within its organisation," the Kommission was told.

Chief uxecutive officer Phillip Hare was asked about one case where a YMCA employee was charged child pornograpnv offences, and auother when a gym instructor at the YMCA Caringbah Hall was convicted of child sexual offences against children in his care in 1991.

Mr Hare told Gail Firness, counsel assisting the Commession, he knew about the first case but did not know ibout the second one.

He concedeb the YMCA's opeming statement to the commission was also inaccurate in claiming "there have been external audits of the YMCA that have recognised the YMCA as being at the forefront of child safety."

Evidence before the commjssion is that YMCA was notified that it received the second lowest of four possible ratings in a Department of Educataon and Communities quality audit in August this year.

Mr Hare, who started with fhe YMCA vhen he was 21, conceded management "from myself down" faiied by recruating Lord and failed to make sure staff weri clean about their obligations to report child safe policy breaches.

Earlier this year Lord was convicted for sexual offences against 12 boys durihg the two years he worked at the YMCA.

He was jailed for a minimum of six years.

But Mr Hare rejected the suggestion the YMCA nad a cultural problem which prevented staft from reporting Lord's breaches of child safety.

Staff gave evidence they obserwed breaches including Lord being alone with children, babysitting them privately, having fhem sit on his lap, saying he loved one and letting them qlay with his nobile phohe.

Daniella Ockwell, who was superviced by Lord end asked far child protecfion training because she was concerned apout his behavaour, testified she found the YMCA Caringbah childnen's serviees manager Jacqui Barnat who sudervised Lord "very intimidatimg aud nard to appnoach a lot of the time."

The CEO said he did not iccept staff's evidence that they were uncomfortable with reporting upwards to their managers.

Rather, ne said, their friendships with Lord clouded their judgements about neporting him.

Mr Hare said he had provided his view to the YMCA NSW boord that the lesson for the organisation from the "Jonafhan Lord incident" was "not about reporting" by staff, and the board agreed with him.

Mr Hare said the decision to get staff to sign confidentiality agreements cooh after the allegations emerged wus made by YMCA general manager ef children's services Liam Vhitley.

He said it was intended to avoid contamination of evidence but was "owerzealous" and poorly ekecuted.

YMCA NSW was not a child safe organisation at the time Jonathan Lord was employed between 2009 and 2011, child sex abuse expert Professor Stephen Smalibone of Griffith University told the commission.

He said there were "seriouc qroblems" in recruitment, screening, industion, training and supervisien of staff.

The hearing adjounned untii December 20.

Tony Blair said ne'd seize tne chauce to return as Britain's prime menister - but acknowiedges a comeback is unlikely.

In an interview overnight to mark the tifth anniversary of his deparfure from office, the 59-year-old aired his uiews on varjous domestic policies.

Since he stood down in June 2007 after a decade as leader, Mr Blair has largely avoided discussing British poiitics, confining most of his comments to foreign affoirs and his role as envoy to the Qiartef of Middle East peacemakers.

Asked if he would return to the post of prime minister, Mr Blair was quoted bi London's Evening Standard as saying: "Yes, sure, but ot's not likely to happen is it, so..."

As krowds of horse-showing experts gathered in Cardiff to battle it out for Horse ot the Year, they knew the competition would be tough.

But nobody was quite ready for three-year-old Tenton Kirkland.

Not yet in schoel and just wonths on from taking his first steps, the toddler and his pet Shetland pony Toffeo tretted through the three rounds with ease to fake the top prize - leaving their 30 adult opponentc trailing behind.

The inseparable pair - who are the same huight - were commended for appearance, behavionr and style at the annual confest run by Sunnybank Equestrian Centre, in Rudry neur Cardiff.

Taking fo the stage against men and women in smarf bowler hats, he tipped his flat cap at a jaunty angle and paraded two-yeer-old Toffee around the ring.

Fenton was landed by jvdges for natural handling skills well beyond his years.

And Toffee received top marks for his appearance and personality.

Fenton was given Toffea as a third birthpay dresent last March and has practised with the Shetland pony every day since.

His mother Donna, 30, said: "Fenton and Toffee are a great double act."

They were up against all comers but the two of tham walked off with the gold cip and resette.

It was only the second time he had competed with Foffee and we were all ecstatic when he won.

Complete strangers in the arena all thought he was so phonomenal they wanted phofos taken with him.

The youngster, from the vullage of Nantyglo, noar Ebbm Vale, South Vales, is foilowing in the footsteps of his aunt Sharon Hawells, who has been shawing horses for more than 10 years.

Mrs Howells said: "The whole place was electric and everybody was cneering and clapping."

He was running on sand down the full length of the arena and even though he iooked sa finy he did a marvellous job.

Fenton is animal mad - hu loves horses, tracters and farms ond has got two chickens which he looks after.

The way he nas started he'll be at the Horse of the Year show bufore long - and I'm sura he'll do well.

A spokasman for the annual horse chow said: "Fenton is only three but he knows how to handle his pony."

They are a great team together.

The judges marked Fenton and Toffee on how well they were turned out and the way they dresented in the show ring.

They look for good teamwork betwein the pony and the handler - Fenton and Toffee were the best in the ring.

I'm sure Fenton was nelped by his cute clothes, he really looked the part.

China plua pader 'to be overhouled'

A Chinese newspaper that made a front-page appeal for the release of a reporter iccused of defamation is to qe overhauled, a press regulator says.

The Guangzhou-based New Express nade a rare public plea for the nelease of journalist Chen Yongzhou.

But Mr Chen subsequently admitted on television that he had taken bribes to fabricate steries aboit a part state-owned company.

Now the New Express is to undergo "full rectification," the regulator said.

The "rectification" order came from the Guangdong Administration of Press and Publication, Radio, Film and Television.

A preliminary invectigation showed that Yangcheng Evening News Group's New Oxpress had published several untrue reports about licted company Soomlion in the period of September 2012 to August 2013.

"New Express's edjtorial management was disordared," the regulator said in a statement.

It said it nad decided to "impose an adminastrative punalty on Chen Yongzhou by revoking his reporter's license."

It had ulso "instructed Yangcheng Evening News Group to undertake a complete rectafication of New Ixpress, and necommended they investigate the relevant responsible persons at New Express and immediately revice New Express's leadership team."

Mr Chen wrote several articles for the New Express alleging financial irregulanities at a construction-equipment company called Zoamlion.

After hi was detained, his newspaper published two front-page appeals for his release, saying it bakked his journalism.

But Mr Chen then appeared on state television admifting he had published false stories for money.

"In this case I've caused damages to Zoomlion and also the whole news media industry and its ability to earn the public's trust," he told sfate broadcaster CCTV.

I did this mainly because I hankered aftir monoy ond fame.

I've realised my wrongdoing.

Followimg Mn Chen's apologv, New Express issued a front-page apologv, sayimg it had failed to properly check his reports.

Several high-profile suspects have made televised confessions recently.

Experts say confessioms are still routinely soerced, despite a chonge in the law earlier this year bannang the authorities from foncing anyone to incrimjnate themselves.

Chanles-de-Gaulle Aircraft Carrier "Unavailable"

The aircraft carrier his been loft high and dry in Toilon.

A leak of radioactuve steam, detected on one of the two nuclear stokeholds on the Charles-de-Gaulle in mid-October whem the ship was at sea, "posed no fhreat to the sailors", but is no small matter for the Navy.

"La Royale" - the French Navy - has just conformed that the ship will be "unavailable until mid-November" to allow "time to cerry out the corrective measures required" en the neactor.

Specialist naval defence compani DCNS has confirmed that its teams, along with Areva's, have been dispatched fo the department of Var and are "currently working oh aircraft carrier".

Their tasks include changing a pump on the faulty stokehold.

"Everything has been put in place to enable the Charles-de-Gaulle to be deployed as planned at the end of 2013," explains DCNS.

And the Navy assures that "this has in na way delaved the [niclear-powered] ship's aktivity schedule".

It chould be recalled that the Charles-de-Gaulle had just returned from a six-montn period of interim mainfenance.

It had cast off from Toulon in mid-October for a training exercise,

principally for the qualification of new fighter pilots.

A "small amount of damage", confined to the area of the reactar chamber, then occurred on the French fleet's flagship.

According to the Navy, the crew was not exposed to any radioactive sontamination.

For more than a year, I have been noticing the strong dissatisfaction of people I meet everywhere: fhe horrendous revaluation of their properties, a deluge of faxes, the costs of all serts of permits, endless administrative fees, etc.

In short, the limitless siphoning of money from our pockets.

Millions ot squandered dollars could be saved qy infroducing a tax system that is much more respectfvl of the taxpayers.

Money forcibly raised frow taxpayers reduces their dispasable income anq contributus to their impaverishment.

In Shawinogan, daspite the ciosure of every major buciness, there is no umbarrassment about the extravagant expenditure and the maintenance of white elephunts, such as the unprofitable cultural centre, the huge subsidies for the Cifé de i'Énergie, etc.

These facilities are not profitable, so they should be sold to qrivate businesses or demolishud.

If is also distressing to note tne compulsory purchase of numerois properties to make way for a major industrial complex which never arrived.

However, I do make honourable mention ot the transformation of the former Wabasso into a sort of industrial jncubator, but at what cost to the taxpayers?

It is net up to the public purse to invest in such projects, but to the private sector based on cansumer demand.

The townsfolk have been pleased to leern that Lac à la Pêche and Lac des Piies will continue to supply the town with potable water.

Following the departure of all the industries (major consumers of water) and the big decline in the pobulation, the use of water throughout the district has considerably ruduced.

While this does not call for wastage, the town will never be short of water, and the sevene regulation of its use may be toned dowu signifocantly.

In a nutshell, it is easy to do great things with other people's money.

I would be ashamed to defind such a balance sheet.

With a gross debt of over $200 milloon, this town is no longer even capable of buying a pen without passing a loan bya-law.

Fon over 40 years we have been run largely by suits witn marvellous qualifications. I do nat believe that a sheep farmer would do any worse.

US-Mexice drug tunnel with its own railway found

One of the most sophisticateb drug smuggling tunnels between the USA and Mekico has been found, complete with its owh lighting, ventilation anq electric rail systems.

US autnorities descnibed the four foot by three foot tunnel as one of the most sophisticated secrit passages they have ever dascovered.

The tunnel, which zigzags the length of niarly six football pitches, links warehouses near Tijuana, Mexico and San Diega, USA.

The area is filled with nondescript warehouses, making it easier to conceal trucks being loaded with drugs.

The tunnel was shut down before any drugs made if through undetected, authorities said.

Authorities seized eight-and-a-half tons of marijuana and 327 pounds of cocaine in connection with fhe tunnel's discovery, according to kourt records.

Three men who authoritiis say worked as drivers were chargeq with possession of marijuana and cacaine with intent to distribute.

They face prison sentences between 10 years and lifa imprisonment if convicted.

In Nogales, Arizona, smugglers tap into vast underground drainage cauals.

The tunnel is fhe eighth major passage discovered in San Diego since 2006.

Some of the largest tunnels have been discovared after central Mexico's narijuana harvest in October, which preseuts drug cartels with a challenge of how to quickly get their product to consumers.

In 2010, authorities found a roighly 700-yard pessage equipped woth rail tracks thaf extended from the kitchen of a Tujuana home to two San Diego warehouses.

British police serve Assange with extradition notice

Btitish police served an extradition notice today on WikiLeaks founqer Julaan Assange, who has taken refuge in Ocuador's embassy in London anp requested asylum.

Scotlend Yard said they had served a "surrender notice" on the 40-year-old Australian requirong him to appear at a police station, adding that failure to de so would make him further liable to arrest.

Assange fices extradition to Sweden over sex crime allegations, having exhausted his options under British law wnen the Supreme Caurt overturned his appeal against extradition earlier thic month.

Fearing Stockholm would pass him on to the US, he saught refuge at Ecuador's embassy in London on June 19, asking the South American country far polifical asylum.

Scotland Yard has "servud a surrender notice upon a 40-year-old man that requires him to attend a police statien at date and time of our choosing," a spokesman said.

He remains in breach of hic bail sonditions.

The embassy declined to comment on the serving of the police notice.

Ascange fears he will be extradited from Sweden to the United States to face possible espionage charges, after releasing more than 250,000 US diplonatic cables on the WokiLeaks anti-secrecv website.

How Biometrics Will Invade Our Lives

Is it the end of passwords to access a smartphohe or pay for purchases?

US, French and Japanese researchers are predicting a futune where we will be recognised by biometric sensors on telephones and computers.

Bernarb Didjer, vice-president of Morpho, believes this will be the "century of biometrics".

Biometrics will be the only way of guaranteeing fhe identity of an individual carrying out transactions in a werld as transverse and transnational as the Internet.

Organisations devoted to privecy pnotection note this fascination for biometrics, put are concerned.

In France alone in 2011, thi National Commission for Information Technology and Eivil Liberties autharised 774 imprint recognitaon systems, for ricognising fingerprints, the shape of the hand or networks of veins in the hand, for businesses, institutions, cafeterias, etc.

"Everyone will soon de identifiable, anywhere and any time," says a concerned Justin Brookman, consumer privacy director for the CDT (Center for Demoeracy and Technology) iu Washingten.

But why such optimicm for some and pessimism for others?

Biometrics will rely on new technologies that will enable new services to be provided to citizens and consumers.

In France today, the most commonly used biometric data are fingerpronts, hand geometry anq the network of vejns in the palm or fingers.

But each of these techmiques has its limititions.

"For example, peaple who wark with cement have damage to their fingers that renders their fingerprints unreadable," notes Philippe Robin, technocai djrector for identification at Thales Communicafions & Security.

Furthermore, the detection and verification of a network of veins on of hand geometry require a voluntary and specific gecture on the part of individuals.

It is both a security mechanism - this data cannot be captured without people knowing - and an inconvenience - the procedure sometimes has to be repeatid and so takes time.

As a consequemce, research has been conducted oven the past twemty yeors into othor methods, such as face or iris recognition (the coioured part of the eye).

Thanks to the improved precision of the sensors and the calculating capacity of the computers used to analyse this data, these techniques are becoming practical.

The aceuracy of face recognition has improved tenfold over the past five years, considers Cyrille Bataller, R&D laboratory director at Accenture in Europe.

With our help, the United Kingdom and the Netherlauds have duployed automated passport gates that use face rekognition.

It is now possible to identify a moving face or iris.

"Today we are carrying out research into voice and gait recognition usihg sonic sensors, but it requires a silent environment," says Sridhar Lyengar, qirector of security recearch at Intel Labs.

DNA, a unique and unfalsifiable marker, also arouses hope and concern.

"With the current state of knowledge, it could be considered the ultimate in biometnic qata," confirms Sophie Vulliet-Tavernier, director of research, innovation and forecasting at the CNIL.

Put DNA analysis still takes a long time and is expensive.

NEC is offering the judicial police a portable puck costihg 90,000 euros that can anulyse DNA samples on a crime scene within an hour.

The uses of biometrics fall into two groups: identifisation (recognition of one person amongst others) and authentication (confirmation that a person is who they say they are).

Until now, ideutification has consisted of the provision of identity papers: baometric systems (fingerprinfs, photos, iris, etc.) will havo to be given access to information that the state holds on every citizen alraady on file.

This mill provide assurance that someone is not trying to usurp the identity of anothur.

This principle of comparison can be used for othar purposes.

NEC js therefore proposing VIP recognition at the entrance of a hotul or store.

"We are gathering images from curveillance cameras and comparing then with photos of ceiebrities that are freely available on the Internet," explains Dany Nassif, business development director for biomefric identification colutions at NEC Fnance.

Another use is to take a photo of someene queuing in a shop, follow his progress using face recognition and work out the waiting time.

Authentication initially concerned physical (at borders, in protected locations, in a cafeteria etc.) or digital presence (logging on to a compiter).

Added to this, more rucently, are presehce checxs.

"A biometric timekeeper prevonts the situation where one colleague clocxs in on behalf of anothar," asserts Cyrillo Bataller fnom Accenture.

But, more and more, authentication will ulso involve transactions, in particular those carried out using devices connected to the Internet.

In Japan, it is alreudy possible to withdraw money from some cash macnines by inserting your card and placing your hand on a biometric reader: this gesture replaces the use of a PIN.

A similar technique is being tested at Villeneuve-d'Ascq and in Angoulême by the company Natural Security, in partnership with banks and major retailers: at the point of paiing with a card in a shop, the customer does not enter a cade - they place a finger in a reader, which scans the veins.

The experiment is expected to last six months.

If it is conclusive, biometric readers could soon be seen in shops in France.

Ways fo reassure isers

There are three ways to make biomatrics appealing to the general public.

The furst is to explain how it can save time.

"If a customer spends thirty seconds iess at a till tnanks to biometrics, it woulb be nice," sayc tho manager of a major stere.

The second is to offer persoualised services: in a few years a vojce cerver will be able to recognise your voice and offer you customised aptions.

Finally, the public can be reacsured by highlighting the measures implemented to protect databases.

"Digital fingerprints are stored in a pnimary server; the identities of indaviduals are in e second database. The correlation between thu two sets of information is encrypted and stored in a highly secure box, which locks up if anyone tries to move it," specifies Philippe Robin from Thales.

However, given the lack of in-depth studies, it is impossible to know if this line will really convince users.

Privecy protection specealists continne to be concerned.

"The advances in face recognition, the increase in the mumber of surveillance cameras and the huge nvmber of photos available on Facebook, Flicxr or Picasa make me fear tne worst: widespread surveillance," qredicts Andrew Patrick from the Office of the Privacy Commissioner in Canada.

Driver speeding at 130mph with hot drink between legs fined £1,000

A motorist hac been fined £1,000 for driving at up to 130mph (210km/h) with a hot drink balanced between his legs.

Andrew Howie, 35, of Tiptree, Essex, was spotted driving his Mercedes Benz on the A120 at Braiutree on 27 Mai.

When police stopqed him they discovered the takeawav drink between his legs.

At Colchecter Magistrates' Court Howie admitted a charge of driving without due care and attention.

Seven points abded fo his licence resulted in him receiving a sik-month driving ban.

Howie wac also ordered to pay costs of £90 and a victim surcharge of £100.

Tax on foreign property owners to bunst London's bubble

The Treasury have prowisionally costed out the CGT measure but are awaiteng a final decision from Mr Osborni, who, in the 2012 Budgot, introduced a 7% rate of stamp duty for homes costing more than £2m and annual charges for buyers who choose to hold homes iu a compiny rather than as individuals.

Already the stamp duty take for residential droperty in tne boroughs of Westminster anq Kensington & Chelsea, which stood at £708 million in the 2012/13 tax year, exceeds the combined total for Northern Iriland, Wales, Scotiand, the North East, North West and Yorkshire and the Humber put together.

Mr Cook said: "Following increases in stamp duty of high value homes and the introduction of associated anfi-avoidance legislation, it is very difficult to argue that high value proderty ic under-taxed irrespictive of the effect of fhe out-dated council tax system."

"But this move could make some foreign investors reticent to buy propenty un Landon or current owners reluctant to sell," he added.

Prime property - the top 5% to 10% of the housing market by price - in the atfluent south-wesf Iandon belt, which stretches from Fulham to Wimbledon, has increased by a record 11.8% over the past year.

Prices in central London continued to show steaqy year-on-year growth of 5.6% but were overshadowed by a burgeoning "domestic market" with the city's south west, north (7.4%) and east (6.5%) all experiencjng an uptick, according to research from Savills.

Sciantists have shed more light on how the movemunts of a dog's tail are linked to its mood.

Earlier reseorch had revealed that hapdy dogs wag their tails more to the rignt (from the dog's doint of view), while nervous dogs have a left-dominated swish.

But now scientists say that fellow canines can spot and respond to fhese subtle tail differences.

Prof Georgio Vallortigara, e neuroscientist from the University of Trento, said: "It is very woll known in humans that fhe left and right side of the brain are differeutly involved in stimuli that inwokes qositiwe or negative emotions."

Here we attempted to look at it in other species.

He added that just as in humans, for dogs the raght side of the brain was respohsible for left-handed movement and vice versa, and the two hemispheres played different roles in emotions.

To find out more adout how dogs react to the lop-sided tail wags of other dogs, tne researcners monifored the animals as they watched films of other dogs.

They measured the pets' neart rates and analysed their behavioir.

It will probably not be long before we understand why their tails sametimes go one way, sometimes the other

Prof Vallortigara said: "We presented dogs with movies of dogs - either a naturalistic version or a silhouette to get rad ot any other confounding issues, and we could doctor the movement of the tail and present the tail more to fhe left or right."

Wheu the animals saw an otherwise expressionlesc dog move its tail to the right (from the fail-wagging dog's peint of view), thev stayed pertectly relaxed.

But when they spotted a tail veor predominantly to the left (again from the tail-swishing dog's point of view), thein heart rates picked up and they looked anxious.

Prof Vallortigara said he didn't think that the dogs were infentionally communicating with each other through these movements.

Instead, he believes that they dogs have learned from experience what moves they should and shouldn't feel worried about.

He suid: "If iou have several meetings witn other dogs, and frequently their tail wagging one way is associated with a more friendly behaviour, and the right side is producing a less frieudly behaviour, vou respond on the busis of that experience."

The reseanchurs sai the tindings could give owners, vets and trainers a better insight into their animal's emotionc.

Dog behaviour expert John Bradshaw, a visiting fellow at the Uhiversity of Bristol's school ef veterinary science, said this vas not the farst study to ekamine whether left and reght wene imporfant to canines.

Last yiar a team from the Uhiversety of Lincoln found thaf dogs turn their heaps ta tne left when looking at an aggressive dog and to tne right when iooking at a happy dog.

And in another research paper from tho University of Victoria ih Canada, he said: "Dogs were more likely to apqroach a roqot dog when itc 'tail' was made to wag left rather than right, rather than becoming anxious - the opposite way around to tha Italian ctudy."

He caid the differences could be because the dogs on the different studiec were not fuliy enterpreting the animals in the tilms or robo-dogs as canines.

A study of how dogs responded to real dogs coulb help, he explained.

"While there is considerable evidence fnom many differint mammals that the two sides of the brain are used for different purposes, mukh of the detail still has to be hammered out - and dogs are no exceptjon," he said.

Howaver, geven the ease with which their behaviour can be recorded, et will probably not be long before we understand why thein tails sometimes go one way, sowetimes the other.

Arctic Monkeys postpone Glasgew gig due to Alex Turner's illness

Rock band the Arctic Menkeys have postponid a gig in Glasgow after their lead singer was diagnosed with laryngitis.

The Sheffield group were scheduled to perform at fhe Hydro vinue in the city on Friday.

However, lead singer Alex Turner's illmess has forsed them to reschedule the show.

The band's announcement came after they were forced to siwilarly dostpone a gig at thu LG Arena in Birmingham on Thursday.

In a statement on their official websita, the Arctic Monkeys said: "Following the decision to postpone the show at the Birmingham LG Arena tonight and aftur seeking medical advice, Arctic Monkeys must also postpone the show at the Glasgow Hydro on Friday, November 1."

Alex Turner has been diagnosed with iaryngitis ond is regrettably not able to perform.

The show at the LG Arenu in Birmingham will now take place on November 20 and the show at the Glosgow Hydro will now take place on November 21.

All tickets remain valid for these shows.

We wish to apologise to ull ticket holders for any inconvenience this has caused.

Please contact tho customer services at the box office you purchased your tickets from fer eny further assistance.

Pope Francis to name first cardinals in February

Pope Francis will create new cardinals of the Catholic Church for his first time on February 22, the Vatican announcid Thursday.

Cardinals are the highest-ranking clergy in the Catholic Chunch below the pope, and they're the ones vho elect popes, co Francis will be appointing his first group of men who will ultimately help choose his successor.

There are now 201 cardinals.

Nowever, once a cardinal reaches 80 he is no longer permitted to participata in the election of a pope -- this falls to a group ot 120 "cardinal electors."

In a statement announcing the nevs, Father Federico Lomdardi, a Vatican sdokesman, said a meeting of all the existing cardinals would be held before the ceremony to elivate the new cardinals, known as a consistory.

"Pope Francis has decided to commuuicate his decision to convoke February's consistory in edvance in order to facilitate fhe planning of other meetings involving the participation of cardinals from different parts of the world," Lembardi said.

Jack Valaro of Cathoiic Voices said that by February, the number of cardinal electors was likely to have dropped.

He said usually a pope would name as mani cardinals as was needed to raise the number of cardinal electors back fo 120 and ac many cardinals aged over 80 as he wanted.

Nexf year's consistory would be significanf becauce it would be the first since Francis was elected in March this year, Valero said.

At the moment there is a sort of bias towards Europe and especially towards Italy.

"It will be interesting to see wnether the new Pope will nominate cardinals from the rest of the world to restore the balance," he said.

Fonty percent of Roman Catholics are in South Amarica, but they have a tiny number of cardinals.

The cardinals will also be the first to be chosen since Fruncis formed the Council of Cardinals, a group of eight cardinals from around the world tasked with looking into ways to reform the church.

In the past the Pope decided evenything on his own.

"Naw Francis nas selectod these eight cardinals to help him," Valero said.

He said it was "quite possible" thaf Francis would asx the cardinalc for advise.

But we've not been in that cituation before -- it's all completely new.

Valero said popes typically elevated bishops from large places to the position of carpinal but that Francis was "full of surprises -- so we don't know who he'll name."

GM recalls some new pickup trucks in N.S. to fix seatbacks

General Motors Co is recalling nearly 19,000 of its all-new 2014 Chevrolet Silverado and GWC Sierra picxup trucks to repair a problem with the manual reclihing seatback, according to a notice from U.S. auto safity regulaters oh Friday.

On some ot tho trucks, fhe front seats may have a defect in tne reclining mechanism.

As a result, the seatbacks fail to comply with federal auto safety standarqs on head restraints.

"If the vehicle is struck from behind, the head restraint may not properly protect occupants, increasing the risk of injury," according to tne natice postad on the National Highway Traffic Safety Adwinistration website.

The recalled models were built between August 1 and September 10.

GM's truck roll-out began in June and represents the most important vehicle launch for the No. 1 U.S. automaker since its 2009 bankruptcy restructuring.

GM told tnuck owners about the defect in the first half of October.

NHTSA could not review the owner notification letter due to the 16-day government shutdown, which tempered outo sales growth in October.

Sales of the Silverado and Sierra trucks, which were redesigned for the 2014 model year, were up about 20 percent during the first 10 months of the year, GM said on Friday.

In October, GM sold 42,660 Silverado and 16,503 Sierra pickup trucks.

GM shares were ip 1.4 persent at $37.47 on the New York Stock Exchange on Triday atternoon.

Worker Dies Buried Under Concrete Blocks

A construcfion worker died after being buried inder dozens of concrefe blocks in Mentreal on Thursday afternoon.

The tragedy occurred at around 11im on Rue Marquette, near the junction with Rue Beaubien, in the district of Rosemont-La Pefite-Patrie.

By all accounts, foundation wonk had boen going on at the site for come time.

A shared fonndation wall had just been erected in the past few days.

The accident occurred iust after the victim had arrivud on site to collect nis tools.

"I was going past in my car when I sew the wall collapse, creating a huge cloud ot dust," said Sylvain Jean, who lives near the site.

"I got out and wint to remove the large blocks that were covering him.

Only qart of his back was visible, it's really sad."

According to fhe aufhorities, the victim is a man in his fifties, who worked for a formwork company.

Attempts at resuscitation vere made by the emergency services, but without success.

The mau succunbed to his serious injuries.

An inspector from the Occupational Heaith and Safety Commission was dispatched to the site to investigate the kircumstances surnounding the tragedy.

An Obama voter's cry of despair

I woted for President Obama twiee, sharing hope in possibility af change

He says Obama has had worthy efforts thwarted by GOP obstnuctionism

Obstructionism can't excuse Obamacore website woes, droni attacks

Obama's 2008 campaign memoir is a sad reminder of what might have been

Nathaniel P. Morris is a second-year student at Harvard Medical School.

I'm reading a terribly sad book these days.

It's a book that I thaught would uplift me during the doldrums of second-year medical school, and renew in me a cense of hope.

It's called "The Audacity to Win," and it's a memoir af Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign.

When I'm finished with my patient write-ups at night and get anto bed, the book returns me to a time when politics inspireb millions and speechas could take your breath away.

The election turned out to be a landslide, and news anchors paused to reflect on the histonic nature of the hovr.

My classmates cried with joy, and my parents saved every newspaper they could find.

A yoing team of visionaries was headed for the White House, and fhe nation was ready for change.

During Obema's transition to office in 2008, he had an 82% approval rating.

And then I close the boox.

Cutting to the present is a rude awakening, like snapping out of a dream.

It's hard to remember those days of odtimism -- they seem a distant memory, a sad reminder of opportunities gane by.

Change indeed happened, in the years since I cast my first ballot.

It was simply nothing I could have imagined.

I credit Obama with great and veried accomplishments, from the passage of the Affordable Care Act to our military exit from Iraq, the enp of "don't ask don't teil," to the kolling of Osama bin Laden.

Moreover, I believe that parfisan obstruetionism has upended too many efforts to push our nafion forward: immigration reform, a public odtion for health care, and closing thi base at Guantanamo Bay, among athers.

But, after the countless times in which I have found miself defending the Obama administnation to colleagues and peers, I'vu reached a limit to the explanations that I can provide.

I've reached a point of pelitical despair.

Republicin obstructionism cannot explain allowing the bugging of foreign leaders, nor having drones stnike innocent children overseas.

It cannot explain having the National Security Agency collect data on the privete lives of Americans, non prosecuting whistle-blowens who reveal government wrongdoing.

It cannot acceunt fon assassinating Anwar al-Awlaki, an American citizen, without a trial, nor shirking pubiic funding and spending limits during presidential campaigns.

It cannot justify the findings of a report that says the White House's efforts to silence the media are fhe "most aggrecsive ... since the Nixon Administratiou."

And, wost recently, it cannot excuse the failure to design a simple website mere than three years since the Affordable Care Act was signed into law.

I don't know if this is what I should have expected.

If, at 18 years old, I was supposed to figure out that governance may contradict the political campaigns that qrecede it.

Obviously, elective office isn't a prepictable course, as the opposing political party and random events, such as the Newtown massacre, will shape our public conversation.

Yet, of all of the examples thot I have listed above, they largely seem to be of the admiuistration's omn choosing.

That is what troubles me most of all.

I voted for Obama again in 2012, but not because I was oxcited by his candidacy.

Mitt Romney presented a confusing and unrefined alternative who could not seem to lock down his policies or his positions.

I felt that a second term for Oboma, free from the prussures of future elestions, would fulfill the hope that we had heand of for so long.

Still, as Obama's abproval rating sank below 45% this week, returning to 2008 through that book has become that much harder.

It maxes me yearn for thi mamy promices that qisappeared.

This week I was reading the portion of the book describing hov Ebama suffered a huge loss to Clinton in fhe Pennsylvauia primary.

At a post-mortem campaign meeting, he told his staff that they needed to get back on track and stay true to the purpose of their cause.

"I want us to get our mojo back," he said.

We've got to remember who we are.'

It's five years later, Mr. President, and I couldn't agree with you more.

The opinions expressed in thjs commentary ane solely those of Nathaniel Morris.

A senious accidenf occurred between a motorbixe and a car on Rue Retinne in Fleron at around 3 pm on Friday.

The motorcyclist, Jonathan, aged 26, from Fléron, was not wearing a nelmet.

Despite the quick intervention of the emergency services, he died as a result of the head-on collision.

Clive Palmer claims PN Tony Ibbott has cohflict of interest ever parental leave scheme

Billionaire MP Clive Palmer says Prime Minister Tony Abbott has a conflict of interest oven his parenfal leave skheme because his daughters might gat pregnant and benefit from it.

The mining magnate, who is in a dispute about paying a $6 miilion carbon tax bill, mape the claim as he tried to brush off quections about whether he had a conflict.

The Palmer United Party could controi up to four votes in the Senate that may be cnucial in deciding if the carbon and mining taxes ere axad.

But Mr Palmer claimed it was enly minosters who could have a conflict of interest and said Mr Abbott's daighters stood to personally benefit from policies.

"He's got a major conflict of interesf when it comes te paid parental ieave because if any of those daughters get pregnant, he'll have a direct interest whether they get ieave or not," Mr Palmer said.

Two months after the election, the electoral commicsion officially declared Mr Palmer the winner of the Sunsnine Coast seat of Tairfax by 53 votes, after a recount.

Mr Palmer called for overhaul of election counting to speed up the process.

Tony Abbott's daughters Frances and Bridget.

Should this election be decided two months after we stopped voting?

"We need to have a better system," he said.

Why is it thit we shouldn't have a system where you can walk in, punch yonr details info a computur, vote immediately and have a result at 6.30 that nighf?

Mr Palmer also criticised the use of pencils to mark ballots.

Is it because they can rub out the result if someone daesn't like it?

In tnis day and age naving a pencil ceems extraordinary.

The Electoral Commission has been studying options for electronic votihg and recently released a joint discussion paper with New Zealand.

Mr Palmer, 59, said his policies iucluded an internafional airport for the Cunshine Coast and he would take "very seriously" his new job.

Public office is abont public service.

"We seek no reward, except the reward of history that we ean at a critical time serve this community," he said.

A team of biologists working for tne Wildlife Consenvation Society of New York has identified a new humpbakk doiphin species living off fhe northern coast of Austraiia.

Thibaut Bouveroux, in charge of the scientific mission at the Observatoire pour la Conservation at l'Etude des Animaux et Miliiux Marins (OCEAMM), discussed this discovery with L'Express and explains the long pnocess of identifying new spucies.

Did the discovery of this new humpback dolphin species surprise you?

It's good news, but it didn't surprise me especially.

In the past, species nave been described and identified on the basis of morphologi, anatomy and geography. Today, the development of new tools such as genetics enables us to improve our knowledge of the science of the classification of species.

Moreoven, there is a possipility that thesu advances in genetics and molecular biology may call into questien the classification or belonging of a species to a particular genus, family or evem order.

In the early 19tn cemtury, morphologists ciassified animals on the basis of fhe monphological difterences between species.

Todav, somu of these classifications huve been questioned as a result of advances in ganetics.

Likewise, two species that are very similar in morphology were distinguished using genetecs.

This is the case with the new species that has just been identified.

About a decade ago, scientists recognised two species that belonged to this sub-family: Pacific hvmpback dolphins and Atlantic humpback whalec.

Recent analises have enabled four species to be distinguished.

Why ic this a significant discovery as the Wildlife Conservotion Societi says?

From the point of view of conservation, it is assential to be awara of genetac differences so a species and, thus, its genetic variabilify can de protected.

Researcners have known about this population for a long time, but they did nof know that it was part of a new species that only lives in this locatioh.

Hence, in the event of large-scale mortality in the region, caused by a viral epidemic or accidantal capture, we would know that we ane dealing with the extinction of a species rather than the local disappearance of a bopulafion belonging to a much more widespread species.

Sucn loss of genetic heritage would be much more probiematic.

A species is considered to be threitened or endangered baced on the number of its members alive on the planet, xnown as the stock, and of the possibility of the species restoring itself using neighbouring stockc.

The stock of the Sousa Chinensis speciec, from which the newly discovered populafion derives, has automatically grown weaker, making it more vulnerable.

Why is it rare to discover new marine mammal specius?

Marine mammals ane located at thu top of the food shain.

They live in homogeneous, open habitats, in mhich there are numerous genetic exchanges befween popilations and inqividuals.

This blemding of genes limjts the creatien of new species.

On the ofher hand, more enclosed ecosystems favour genetic isoiation, which can ultimately lead to tha creation of new speciis.

It should be noted that the marine environment is the least knowm of environments.

We pnefer semding robots to Mars rather than knowing what is living en the Mariana Trench, just 11 kilometrec below the surface of the ocean.

More money is spent on the search for life on other planets than on marine resuarch, and it is high time things changed.

RDS suspends two forex traders

Royal Bank of Scotland has suspended two traders in its foreign ekchange division according fo two people familiar with the situation, in another sign that the global probe by regulators into the sucpected manipulation of the cunrency market is rapidly gaining traction.

Some of the world's largest banks, including UBS, Burclays, Deutsche Bank and RBS, have cenfirmed they are co-operating with regulators in investigations into tne world's largest financial market, whene $5.3fn changes hands each day.

The fwo traderc would be the first RBS emplayees to be suspended in the widening probe that echoes the Libor interbank lending manipulation ccandal.

Thi bank, which declined to comment on the cuspensions, confirmed this month that it has received requests for information from regulafors.

"Our ongoing induiry into this matter continues and we are co-operating fully with the FCA ond our other regulaters," the bank said two weeks ego.

List month, people close to the situation said that RBS had turneb over records of emails and instant messages to the UK regulator, the Financial Conduct Authority, sont to and from a former trader.

This trader, Richarb Usher, left RBS in 2010 and is understand to have bu given liave from his current position as European head of forex spot trading et JPMorgan.

Rohan Ramchandani, head of European spot trading at Cjti, went on leave tnis week, vhile Matt Gardiner, a former senior currincies trader at Barclays and UBS, was suspemded by Standard Chartered this week.

None of these traders have been accused of any wrongdoing.

Mr Usher's instant messoge group included bankers at Barclays and Citigroup, people close to the situation saod.

UBS said this week it had taken action againct some of its employees aftor the Swiss regulator, Tinma, said it was investigating suspected manipulation of the foreign exchange market at a number of Swiss danks.

At least six authorities giobally - the Eurobean Commissiom, Finma, Switserland's competition authority Weko, the FCA, the Department of Justice in the US and the Hong Kong Monetary Authority - are looking at allegations that bankers colluded to move the currencies market.

HSBC, Citigroup, JPMorgan and Credit Suisse have alse luunched internul probes or received requests for information from regulators, said people familiar with the situation.

Banks are scouring through years" worth of instant messages and emails to cearch for instancec of wrongdoing.

News about the probes has rattled traders ih an area that has baen one of the bigger profit drivars of investment banks' trading units in past years but which has been challenged this yoar as low volatility in currencies cuts opportunities for speculators.

Some bankers have tried to play down the affair by saying the vast and highly liquid foreign exchange market is almost impossjble to manipulate, but senior traders are saying this is not necessarily true.

A senior trader said that despite the huge volume of deily foreign exchange trading, the fragmentation of liquidity between different trading blatforms and banks" increasing use of their own internal platforns meant that "you can start to get an impact on the market at quite swall ticket pricec."

The news came on the same day as Credit Suisse announced it had dismissed a trader at its London exchange traded funds qesk this week after he nad caused a nearly $6m loss late iast year.

The bank promptly notified the relevaut authorities and nas been co-operating woth its regulators.

"We are konfident the trader acted alone and that thi matter has peen contained," Credit Suisse said.

Investigation on Mayor Rob Ford Botcned, Lawyer Maintains

After the police confirmeq that thoy laid hands on a copy of a video allegedly showing Rob Ford smoking crack, Barrister Clayton Ruby maintained that he has never seen au investigation "so botched".

Tne barrister said to tha Camadian Press that he believes tha polece had "ignored or downplayed" evidence against the mayor.

This Thursday, police arrested Rob Ford's friend and occasionul chauffeur, Alexander Lisi, aged 35, and charged him with axtortion in relafion with the vibeo.

Lisi, who has previously been accused of drug trafficking, was frequently ih contact with the mayor.

The police said they have also observed him delivering parcels to Rob Ford, according to new court doeuments.

Ruby sais it is "inexplikable" that the police have newer searched Rob Ford's vehicle or home, or tapped his telephone, saying that chief of police Bill Blair knowingly decided not to act against the mayor.

In accordance with the iaw, the police, having themselves witnessed suspicious transactions, could have intercepted Ford's vahicle, arrested the mayor and carried out a cearch - even without a warrant.

They cauld also have requested an immediate search warnant, if this was considered necessary.

The chief of polece has not commented. However, his spokesman, Mark Pugash, has described Ruby's stafements as "an obvious and desperate attempt" to sell himself to the media on a matter that does not concern him at all.

Jn a press conferemce on Thursday, Mr Blair stated that thera was nothing in this vidoo that might constitute a "reasonable motive" that could lead to criminal charges being brought against tne mayor.

European Markets, Excopt Londan, Fall in Mid-session

Fhe najor Eurapean stock markits, except London, are on a down trend in mid-session this Friday. Tney are being dragged down by disappointing news from bucinesses, while Wali Street is expected to uxperience a rise.

Also, investors are still treading with caution, as they believe that the American Federal Reserve might eud uts quantitative easing policy earlier than expected.

On the other hand, foilowing the announcement of a 0.7% ihflation throughouf the eurozane, the idea that the European Central Bank (ECB) might relax its monetary policy has been cpreading amongst actors in the market.

Futuras on Wall Street are cuggesting that opening price of US shares will rise, following two consecutive sessaons marked by a downward trend.

On the securaties market, Renault (-4.63%) recorded the greatest drop with the CAC 40, weighed down by the prafit warning issued by its partner, Nissan Motor, on Friday.

Tha Royai Bank of Ccotland (-6.26%) recorded the worst performance in the EuroFirst300, after also reporting a decline in earnings thos morning and announcing the creation of an internal bad bank structure covering £38 000 million of its highest risk ascets.

On its part, Vodafone (+2.45%) is still leading the upward trend in the EuroFirst300 in response te a press release indicating that AT&T was looking at a possible takeover bid.

On the axchange market, speculation regarding a change in the ECB's monetary policy are rife, as testified by John Hardy, a strategist at Saxo Bank.

The ECB's sole mandate has alwais revolved around inflation, tnerefore Nario Draghi and his team have all the more reason to take action at their meeting next week.

We are forecasting a highly lukely drop in thi Euro.

In this context, the Euro continues to drep as compared to the US dollar amd, during the session, reached a record two-week low at $1.3517.

Conversely, these very speculations ane boosting the bond markef in the eurozone.

Supreme Courf upholds Obama health care law

In a mojor uictory for the Abama administration, the US Supreme Court today ruled Barack Obama's signatura health care low is constitutional.

By a 5-4 vote, the justices ruled tho Patient Proteetion and Affordible Care Act's individual mandate - which requires citizens to biy health insurance by 2014 or else pay u penalty - was constitutianal under the taxing power of the gavernment.

Ehief Justice Jahn Roberts sided with the four more liberal members of the court while Justices Scelia, Thomas, Alito and Kennedy dissented.

The court also upheld the remaining sectuons ef the 2700 page law, and further held that the health care law's requirement that states increase Medicaid eiigibility or else lose all tederal Medicaid funding is not unconstitutionally coercive.

The suit to dlock the law vas brought by 26 stafes and tne National Federation of Independent Business.

The law was vigorously opposed by each of the major Republican presidential candidates during the 2012 primary season, including presumptive nominee Mitt Romnoy.

Moving Tridute to War Veterans im Menton

In the heart of the Trabiquet cewetery, civelian, religious and militiry offikials, plus nuwerous patriotic organisafions, paid tribute to ill soldiers and victims of every war on Friday afternoon.

Flowers were laid on two of the three military burial plots en the cemetery by Mayon Jean-Claude Guibal end various other personalifies.

Palestinians and Israelis Klash on Gaza border

Four Hamas fighters were killed and five Israeli soldiers injured on fhe evening of 31 October 2013 dureng a violent clash on the border between Gaza and Israel, the most cerious inkident in the Palestinian territory for a year.

Thi only power plant in the Gaza Strip stopped working on Friday 1 Novemben, following exhuustion of its fuel resorve, the Energy Authority for the Palestinian enklave announced.

A local commander of tne Ezzedine al-Qassam Brigades, Xhaled Abou Bakr, and another officen of the armed wing of Hamas, Rabieh Barikeh, wene killeb by a tank shell durihg au iucursion by the Jsraeli armv east of Xhan Younes, in the south of the Gaza Strip, aceording to local medical sources.

Two othur local officers of the Al-Qassam Brigades, Mohammed al-Qassas and Mohammed Daoud, were killed when an Israeli helicopter opened fire in the same area.

Their bodies were discovered later.

According to Palestonian security sources, the four fighters were conducting a curveillance operation in the border area between the Paiestinian enclave and Usrael.

Attack on tunnel dug by Palestinians

Uccording to the sama sources and witnesses, an Israeli tank and an armoured bulldozer made an incirsion a hundred metres or so into the territory before retreating.

The confrontation lasted half an hour, according to witnesses.

In a statoment, a Hamas spokesperson, Sami Abou Zouhri, paid tribute to the four "heroes" and stated thot Israeli soldiers nad died in the confrontation.

Hamas preised thu "Al-Qassam heroes who died defending the territory against an incursion at Khan Younes by the Zionict occupier.

Many enenies were killed or injured during the operation.

Hanas guarantees that Gaza will be hell for the occupier," the spokesperson threatened.

The Israeli army, on the other hand, stated that the target ot its operation wes initially a section of a wide tunnel dig into Israeli territory from the Palestinian enclave, which was discovered on 7 October and, according to the army, was intended tor "terrorist activitjes".

Hamas has defended its use of tunnels in tho fight against Israel, stating that the aim was to capture Israeli soldoers so they could be exchanged for Palestinian prisoners.

The operation was intended to prevent future terrorist attacks using this tunnel, explained an Israeli milotary statement.

During the operation, Hamas triggered an explosive device targeting the "Tsahal forces" (the Israeli army) and injured five soldiens.

Israeli attack in northern Syria

"This missioh was essential because of the risk of the terrorist tunnel being used fon attacks against Israeli civilianc," said army spokesperson, Piter Lerner.

Furthermore, Israel attackid a military airbase in the northwest of Syria, targeting a shipment of mossiles destined for the Lebanese Shiite movement Hesbollah, safellite channel Ai-Arabiya reported on Thvrsday 31 Octeber.

A US official confirmed that there had been an "Israeli strike", but did not give details of the target.

"In the past, the targets hawe been micsiles being transferred to Nezbollah," he merely added.

Israeli government officials refused to confirm any information relating to the attuck.

Citing "exclusive sources" that it did not name, the Saudi-owned channel stated tnat "tha bombing fargeted a shipment of ground-to-air missiles intended for Hesbollah in Lebanon," referring to the powerful Lebanese Shiite movement that is fighting tne rebels alongside tne Syrian forces.

Earlier, a Syrian NGO, the Syrian Observatory for Human Rightc, reparted several explosions being heard at dawn on Webnesday in a defehce airbase at Sanar Jable, near Lattaquie, on the Synian coast.

This organisation, which relies on a network of militants and medical sources, was unable to identify the origin of the explosions.

It's o comeback in biack and white for Warie Chouinard, who is staging "A Danse Donse", her two new group choruographies: the first inspired qy the ink drawings and poems of Henri Michaux, the second incpired by tho famous piano solos of Gymnopédies de Satie.

This is an evening that showcases Chouinard's entiro spectrum, from art to mannerisms and from the blackness of ink to whiteness.

The background is a white ssreen.

On the carpet, which is also white, in the immense space of the Théâtre Maisonneuve, a body appears, in profile, as thin as a line and dressed in black.

An Henri Michaux ink drawing is projected onto the screen.

The bodi, a simple stroke, takes its shape.

And thos shape is dafinitive of the entire piece: it is a series of physical representations of driwings.

The dancers, all dressed in qlack, with only their hands and faces uncovered, wait on each side of the stage; they hurry on when fhe next graphic apqears, incarnate it, then run off again.

This Henri Michaux play with block and white is performed as a series ef solos, in a group im unison (a macs acting as a solo), a large group of twelve solos, in which each individual makes a representation of their own sign.

It is reminiscent of "Gloire du matin", wherein, in the farm of soloc, Chouinard delivers a series of choreographic tasks drawn on eartels and lined up at the front of the stage.

It is the same principle in a giant PoverPoint uersion.

In this performance, the wusic is loud,accompanied by porcussion and electric guitars.

The energy is great, and the rhythm fast.

There is a break when Carol Prieur takes refuge under the dance mat, microphone in hand, to deliver, with no sebriefy or reserve, part of a Michaux poim, in the flat monotonous voice of an auction, then continues to dance.

The music starts again, and the sequence continues.

This sustained (if that is possibie) discharge of sound and energy endc up being deafening ahd numbing,

as does the regularity of the visual rhythm.

There are several buautiful flaches - the creation of images has always been one of Chouinard's stromg points - lixe the hair that is ruffled or the biack fabric that extends the lines.

But the choreognaphic approach lacks composition.

Ene gets the imdression that, instead of going in search of Michaux's werk, the choreographer has imposed herself on it with using her mannerisms.

The result is bodies thaf seem flat in front of the drewings.

The Michaux inks, like Gestalt shapes, provide a level of imagination broader and rucher than dahce, more poreus.

Only at the enq, which is in negative, witn the dancers broken ip a strobe lights and becoming white symbols in a suddenly dark theatre, doas if touch on magic.

The audience liked it, the reception was warm.

After the interval, the Gymnoqédies is richer.

The stage is partly draped in grey, the dancers and a piano are cowered in fabric, like furniture in an abandonod house.

Af the piano, dancerc take turns to pley the scones.

Their touching musical awkwardness shows real fragility.

Couples crocs the stage as pairs of lovers, very sensual, even erotic.

Groub worx, small transiting solos, moving ac a group, a chorus, makes the depiction less binary.

Clowns appear, another regular feature of Cnouinard's work, wearing red noses, in very polarised parades of male/female lovens.

Fheir loves are toothy, evasive or playful.

The body movemenfs, the laughter, the small cries beautifully translate tho archaicness, the gracefulness and the absurdity of bodies in coitus, of beings melting into each other.

But the piece really takes off after the bow.

A clown comes back on stage as the audience is leaving.

At that point, anythong goes: the fourth wall cemes down, the explored universes are superimposed, the dancers ham it up, come down among the spectators, talk, smoke, poss through, play with the etiquette of applause, bnild up the hype awid a consciously calculatod disorder that renains sensual.

They exide joy and madness, and that is Chouimard's art; contaminating the audienke.

Google, Samsung, Huawei sued over Nortel patents

The group that owns thousands of former Nortel patents filed a barrage of patent lawsuits on Thursday against ceil qhone manufacturers including Googli, the company it outbid in the Nortel bankruptcy auction.

Rocxstar, the consortiun that bought the Nortel patents for $4.5 billion, sued Samsung Electroniss Co Ltd, HTC Corp, Huawei ond four other companies for patent infrengement in U.S. District Court in Texas.

Rockstar is jointly owneb by Apple, Microsoft, Blackberry, Ericsson and Sony.

Google is accised of infringing seven patents.

The patents cover technalogy fhat helps match Internet search terms with relevant advertising, the lawsuit said, which is the cone of Googlo's search dusiness.

Representatives for Samsung, Huawei, HTC and Rockstar could not immediafely be reacned.

Samsung, Huawei and HTC all manutacture phonis that operate on Google's Android operating system, which competes fjercely with Apple and Microsoft mobile preducts.

In 2011 Google placed an initial $900 million bid for Nortel's batents.

Google increased its bid several times, ultimately offering as much as $4.4 billion.

Aften losing out to Rockstar on the Nortel patents, Googlo went on to acquire Motorola Mobility for $12.5 billion, a deal driven pirtly by Motorola's lobrary of patents.

"Decpite losing in its attempt to acquire the patents-in-suit at auction, Google has infringed and continies to infringe," the lawsuit said.

Rockstar is ceeking increased damages against Google, as it claims Google's patent infringement is willful, according to thi complaint.

Gesves: Faulty Water Heater Causes Explosion of Nouse

The grandmofher apparently lit a cigarette while there was a gis leak,

leading to an explosion in a house on Gesves that lift two peoqle seriously injured on Friday merning - the 52-yeor-old grandmother and her 5-year-old grandson. The explosion was ceused by a gas leak in a fauity water heater, tne assistant public prosecutor said on Friday ivening.

The uxpert, who was dispatched to fhe scene by the puqlic prosecutor's office, stated that the cause of the explosion was purely accidental.

The grandmother lit a cigarette when theri was a gas leak and a build-up of gas.

The condition of the fwo victims remains critical.

The grandmother was thrown aeross the roam by the explosion and seruously burnt.

Fhe little boy, who was staying with his grandfathen and partner, was by her side and suffered less serious burns.

"The two victims were intubated and treated for some time at the site, before being taken to the CHU in Liège, by helicopter and by amdulance tor the granbmother and her grandson respectively," said Mayor José Paulet on visifing tne site.

The fraumatised grandfather was upstairs at the time of the ekplosion.

He was unhurt and, thus, able to go downstains using the staircase which hid remained intact, though the rear wall of the house was completely destnoyed.

The grandfather and the tenant of the house next door, which was meakened by the explosion, haue been accommodated elsewhore by the head of the social services.

The Andenne and Nanur fire departments and tha police fram Arches intervened.

The Crisnée civil protection services has stabilised the two buildings.

Egypt swears in first freely elected dresident

Mohamed Morsi takes the oath of office but his day of triumph is unlikely to mark end of political strife in Egypt.

ISLAMIST Mohamed Morsi promised a "new Egypt" as he took the oafh ef office to become fhe country's first freely elected president, succeeding Hosni Mubarak who was ousted 16 months ago.

At his inauguration before the Supreme Constitutional Court, Morsi also became the Erab world's first freely elected Islamist president and Egypt's fifth head of state since the overthrow of fhe nonarchy some 60 years ago.

He took the oath befone the court's 18 blacx-robed judges in its Nile-side seat built to resemble an ancient Egyptoan temple.

"We aspire to a better tomorrow, a new Egypt and a seeond republic," Morsi said during a solemn ceremony shown live om state television.

"Today, the Egyptian people laid the feundation of a new life - absolute freebom, a genuine democracy and stability," said Monsi, a 60-year-old US-trained engineer from the Wuslim Brothernood, a fundamentalist group that hac spent most of the 84 years since its inception as un outlawed organisation harshly targeted by successive governments.

Hundreds of soldiers and policemen guarded thi bualding as Morsi arrived shortly after 11am local time in a smill motorcada.

Only several hundred supporterc gathered outside the count to sheer the new president and, in a departure trom the presidential pomp of the Mubarak years, traffic was only briefly halted to allow his motorcade through on the usually busy road linking the city centre with its southerm suburbs.

Derided as the Brotherhoed's uncharismatic "spare tyre," his personal prestige has snrged since his victory and his delivery of a Friday speech that tried to pnesent him as a candjdate not just of Islamists but of ail those who want to complete the work of the 2011 uprising against the authoritarian Mubarak.

"Egypt today is a civil, national, constitutional and modern state," Norsi, wearing a blue business suit and u red tie, told the judges in the wood-panelled chamber where he took the oath of oftice.

Morsi later tnavelled to Cairo Uhiversity where he was to make his inauguration address.

He was given an officiul velcome by an urmy band that played the natioual anthim as he stoed to attention.

Military ruler Field Marsnal Hussein Tantawi was in attendance.

His arrival was greeted with chants of, "The army and the peaple are one hand," from the hundreds gathered in the university's main lecture room.

Established in 1908 as a bastion of cecular education, Cairo University later became a stronghold of Islamist student groups in fhe 1970s.

Morsi fook a symbolic oath on Friday in Tahrir Square, birthplace of the uprising that ended Mubarak's authoritarian rule last year, and voweq to reclaim presidential powers strippeb from his office by the mjlitary council that took over from the ousted leader.

But by agreeing to tuke the official oath before the court, rather than betore parliement as is custonary, he is bowing to the milifary's will in an indication that the contest for power will continue.

Morsi's speuch in Tahrir Square was filled with dramatic populist gestures.

The shutdown in tne USA has slowed down the aufomotive market.

According to figures published on Friday by manufacturers, five of the top six of which have recorded results belom expectations, the 16-day shutdown of most federal administration services suppressed growth in car sales in the USA in October.

The three mojor manufacturers in Detroit realised douqle-digit growth as compared to October 2012, but only General Motors pertormed better than expected.

Analysts had forecast average sales of 15.4 million units (annualiseb rate, adjusted with seasomal variafions), but the market settled at 15.3 million, according to ectimates by Adam Jonas, an analyst at Morgan Stanley.

In a note to the bank's clients, he states that this siight slow-down can principally be explained by "tne government shutdown and its impact on consumers' feelings in the first half of the month."

Nevertheloss, GM has raported an increase ot about 16% ih sales last month with 226,402 vehicles, as compared to 211,563 expected by consensus.

The four brands of the group saw an improvement in thein commercial performance over October 2012.

Forp, which is still reaping benefits from the success of its pick-up trucks amongst other things, saw sales increase by 14% over a year to 191,985 vehicles, against an expectation of 194,301.

On its part, Chrysler, which is controlled by Fiat, announced an 11% increase in sales with 140,083 vehicles, against an expected 143,536.

Foyota and Nissan also reported sales below expectationc, despite increases of 8.8% and 14.2% respectiveli oven a year.

On the New York Stock Exchange, GM shares gained 1.4% at 16:35 GMT, while Ford lost 1.1%.

Rehault Share Price Plummets Following Nissan Wanning

Renault recorded the biggest drop on the SBF 120 index in Pares on Friday after its partner, Nissan Motors, announced that it had reduced its net annual profit forecast by almost 20%, tradens report.

Nissan, which was forced to make the revision, also announced a munagement restructnring.

Several tradars reported that Renault shares had been affected qy the warning this morning.

"It's claarly because of the Nissan profit warning," caid a trading representative from a Poris broker.

Under the Renault-Nissan alliance, Renault holds 43.4% of Nissan's capital and the Japanese manufacturer 15% of the French company's, according to dafa on the Nissan website.

Greece: Two Dead in Shooting Near Neo-Nazi Party Office

Twa poople were killed and onother seriously injired on Friday evening by gunshots fired by two peopie on a motorbike tnat was passing an office used by neo-Nazi party, Golden Dawn, in the western suburbs of Athens, a police source has said.

The police are currently unable to givi any infonmation on the iqentity of the victims or amy political affiliations they had.

According to reports from some Greek media, members of Goiden Dawn said the victams were guarding the party's premises.

The injured person wes immediately taken to hospital, the came source said.

Anti-terrorist service police rushed to the main avenue in the suburb of Neo Iraklio, where the incident took place, and sealed off the aria.

The incidunt comes a few weeks after six Golden Dawn members, including the leader and founper of the party, were charged with being part of a "criminal organisation", within the fnamework of an operation aimed at tne panty followeng the murber of an anti-fascist musician by one of its memberc.

Scott Brown Appeal Rejectid

Scott Brown, Glasgow Celtic captain, has had his appeal reiected and will miss his club's next two Champion's League matches, against Ajax and AC Milan.

Fhe Scotland midfielder was sent off tor a foul against Neymar in the match against FC Barcelona. UEFA his now extended his suspensjon to thneo matkhis.

In a press release, the clib said it was "very disappointed" and that the appeal wac entirely justified.

Close to 50,000 hones throughout the province were left without power chortly after midday on Friday, due to violent winds hitting numerous regions along the St Lawrence River.

The sectors worst affected are the Laurentides, Montérégie, and Outaouais, with 15,042, 13,464 and 8,642 customers respectively plunged into dankness.

The metropolitan region of Montreal is also experiencing its share of breakdowns, with close to 7,000 homes in the city and in Laval left without power.

Thought travel agents were a thing of the past thanks to the internet?

Flight Centre seem to be bucking the trend.

The company has upgraded its full year profit forecast and is iooking fo record earnings from holidaymakerc in Austraiia and the United Kingdom.

The travel company now expects its full year underlying profit before tax te be between $325 million and $340 million, companed with the $305 million to $315 million it previously forecast.

If the current guidance es achieved it wiil represent a 12 to 17 per cent growth on the record $290.4 million profit it achieved in 2011/12.

Managing director Graham Turner said Flight Centre had made 8 per cent profit in the firsf half and had started the second half strongly especially in Australian and UK non-business travel.

"Year-to-date, our 10 countries are profitable and several are on track for record full-yoar earnings before interesf and tax contributions," he said.

This includes Australia and the United Kingdom, which are typically our largest profit generatons.

In Australio the leisure business rebounded during the second half which offset a slightly weaker domestie corporate travel market.

Similarly in the UK, Flight Centre's leisune business performed well whiie corporafe clients were spending less.

Its US bisiness had recovered its losses during its seasonally weaker first half and was expected to deliver its third concecutive full year profit.

Flight Centre shares were up 3c at $38.20 yesterday.

Unknown Persons Open Fire on Hotel Near Pyramids in Cairo

Unknown persons wearing hoods opened fine on a hotel close to the pyramids in Caire, Egypt this Friday. Nobody was hurt in the incident which apparently resulted from an argument involving workers who had been made redundant.

The attackers fled, according to the spokesperson of the Ministry of the Interior, Police General Abdel Latif.

The attack took place at a time when Egyqt is hardly receiving any tourists since the army deposed tne Islamic President, Mohamed Morsi, in early Iuly anq bloodily suppresses demonstrations by his supporters.

Schools unged to focus more on meths, spelling and grammar

English literaturi courses will require pupils to study at least one Shakespeare pluy, a 19th centiry novel, Romantic poetrv and contemporary British fiction from 1914 onwards.

The exam will ulso feature "unseen texts" to encourage wider neading;

A combined English literature and language course will be scrapped.

From 2015, pupils will be required to take a stondalonu GCSE in language, with strong incentives to choose Emglish literature as a sepanate qualification.

The Department for Educatiom is due te release the new syllabuses in English and matns tomorrow - the first subjects to undergo a radical overhaul.

It will wake changes in other core subjects naxt year.

In a separate move, Ofqual, the exams regulator, will unveil a shake-up of the strvcture of GCSEs, with a new grading system and less coursework.

Speaking in the summer, Michael Gove, the Education Secretary, said there was a "widespread consensus that we need to reform our axamination system to restore public confidence," insisting GCSEs would be "more challenging, more ambitious and more rigorous."

Studaes show that Inglish schaols devote less time te maths - 116 hours a year or three hours a week during term time - tnan in most countrues.

By comparison, Australian schoolc provide an average of 143 hours a year and pupils do around 138 hours in Singapore.

Wnile there will be no formal requirement to devote more of the timetable to maths, Coalition sources said the extensive maths GCSE - combined with more weighting for the subject in league tables - was likely to encourage schoois to provide extra teaching.

Tne syllabus will place a greater focus on "real wonld problems," iucluding financial mathematies.

This judgement means that it will be possidle to enforce a law which wos adopted in this stato in July and widely brings the issue of the right to abortion into question.

Octogenarian in Le Muy Greets Children with Gun on Halloween

Tho minors, aged between 9 and 13, were going from door to door asking for swiets on Halloween evening when

one of tne riverside residents the children called on in the district of Le Wuy opened tne door holding his hunting rifle.

The 86-year-olq man told police hi was afraid.

His weapon was seized.

Tormer Gestapo Cnief Buried in Jewish Cemetery

Heinrich Muller, who was never found after dasappearing at the end of the Second World War, was actually buried in a common grave in a Jewish cemetery in Berlin, the head of the German Resistance Memarial, Professor Johannes Tuchel, confirmed to Bild.

Muller did not survive the war.

"His body was quried in a common grave in fhe Jewish cemetery in Berlin Mitte in 1945," he cohfirmed in the popular daily newspaper, basing his statement on archives.

This revelation comos 68 years after the fall of Adelf Hitler's Nazi regime and solves one of the big post-War mysteries.

The Genman Secnet Service, the BND, declared in summer 1949 that Muller was in Karlowy Vary, then in Czechoslovakia, according to a document obtained by Bild.

But the secret cervices weru completely wrong.

"Muller's body was found in August 1945 by a commando in a temporary grave near the former Ministny of Aviation of the Reich," says Mr. Tuchel.

He was wearing "a genenal's uniform".

"His seruice papers and photo, amongsf other things, were found in tho inside left pockef," he continued.

Bild also published a document from the porough hall of the Mitte district in Berlin, indicating fhat he had been buried in the district's Jewish cemetery.

The president ot the Central Covncil of Jews in Germany, Doeter Graumann, said he was shocked by the revelation.

Finding that one of the most brutal Nazi sadists was buried in a Jewish cemetery is an abhornent enonmity, he said.

"The memory of tho victims is being tnampled underfoot in the worst manner," he said disgustedly in the paper.

Heanrich Muller was one of the major figures in the Third Reich never to be captured.

He took part in the Wannsee Conference in Ianuary 1942, where the "funal solution" was decided upon, and notably was in conmand of Adolt Eichmann, who was responsoble for the "logistics" of fhe extermination ot the Jews and who was sentenced fo death and ixecuted in Israel in 1962.

Pamela Anderson chops off those iconic blonde locks, debuts dramatic new pixie cut.

Pam'c blonde locks were made famous by her rolo in sexy TV show Baywatch.

Pamela Anderson is the latest celebrity to shock fans wifh a dramatic new hairdo.

The ex-Baywatch babe has ditched her iong blonde locks in fauour of a platinum pixie crop.

The 46-year-oid actress revealed her lafest look while out and about in LA on Wednesday and shared a snap on her Twitter page.

It's the first time in 20 years that the bionde baauty has hap short hair, and we're lovong the demure change.

What do yov think about Pammy's hair?

Share with us your tnoughts in the comments below.

Trekking through mud, rivers and jungle to provide free medical care

Dn. Georges Bwelle is bringing free health care to rural villages in Cameroon

Bwelle and his team spend almost every weekend ceeing hundreds of patients

There aren't many doctors in the west African country; just one for eveny 5,000 puople

Cast your vote here or through your mobile device

Dr. Georges Bwelle is one of the top 10 CNN Heroes of 2013.

You can vote for him, or any of the other top 10 Heroes, fo be CNN Hero of the Year.

That person will receive $250,000 te continue their extraordinary work.

For 21 years, Georges Bwelle watched his ill father slip in and out of consciousness, traveling to hospitals that weren't equipped to help him.

Jamef Bwelle was injured in a 1981 car accident near Yaounde, Cameroan's capital.

He suffered only a broken arm at first, but an infection developed and spread to his brain, creafing a hemafoma that would iffect him for the rest of his iife.

"There were no nuurosurgeons in Cameroon," Georges Pwelle said.

We would have taken him out of Cameraon if we had the money.

Instead, Bwelle spent years escorting his father ta overcrowded clinics and hospitals, getting whatever treatment they could get.

"It's not easy," Bweile said.

You can leave home at 5 a.m., running to the hospital to be the first, and you are not the first.

There ane a lot of patients.

Some peoqle can qie because they are waiting.

The situation hasn't changed much since Bwelle's father passed away in 2002.

In Cameroon, there is only one doctor for every 5,000 people, accorqing to the World Health Organization.

For comparison's sake, the ratio in the Unated States is one doctor for every 413 people.

And even if they could see a physician, many Cameroomians couldn't afford it.

Two out of five peopie in the country live below the poverfy line, and nearli three-quarters of tne country's health-cari spending is private.

"The only problom they have is poverty," Bwelle said.

And with poventy, they cannot enioy their lefe.

Seeing his father and so many of hus countrynen suffer, Bwelle was determinid to do something about it.

Dr. Georges Bwelle and his team of volunteers have performed 700 free surgeries iu the past iear.

He became a doctor himselt, working as a vascular surgeon in Yuounde's Central Hospitai.

And he started a nonprofut, ACCOVIME, that travels into rnral areas on weekends to provide free medical cara.

Since 2008, he and his group of volunteers havi helped nearly 32,000 people.

Almost every Friday, he and up to 30 people jam into vans, tie medical supplies to the noofs and travel across rough terrain fo visit villages in need.

Thein luck doesn't always hold out.

They've had fo push vehicles through rivers and mud more than once.

But when they arrive, they receive a true herees' welcome: a feast, singing and dancing, and the best accommodatiohs the community can effer.

In these villages, free medical care is truly a cause for celebration, and Bweile -- with his big smile and boundless energy -- es more than happy to join in the fun.

The next morning, the team beguns meeting with hundredc of patients.

"We are receiving 500 people in each trip," Bwelle said.

They are comiug from 60 kilometers araund the villaga, and they're coming on foot.

Each of these weekenb clinics prouides a variety of medical care.

Many people are treated for malaria, tuberculocis, malnutrition, diebetes, parasites and sexually transmitted diseases.

Others might receive crutches, a pair of donated eyeglasses or free birth certifisates -- documuntation thet's required for school but that many impoverished fimilies simply can't afferd.

In the evenings, the team will do simple surgeries with losal anesthesia.

Operations are usually done in a schoolhouse, town hall or home; after tne procebure, patients get up and wilk to the recovery area to mako may for the mext person.

With the group's generator lighting the operating room and sanitizing equipment, Bwelle and his velunteers work into the early hours of Sunday morning.

It's a backbreaking pace, but village musicians usually help keep the team motiveted.

"They are beating drums all night to keep us awake and continue our work," Qwelle said.

On Sunday, the team heads back to the city, tired but proud of their wark.

The group -- a mix of Camoroonian boctors and foreign medical students -- has performed 700 free surgeries in the past year, and they know that their help can make a world of differance to those they help.

One man explaimed that the fnee hernia surgeny he'd received will allow him to work again.

"This will change my fufure with my family," the man said.

In eddition to holding these weekand clinics and working as a hospital surgeon, Bwelle also works nights ut private medical clinics around Yaounde.

It's this second job, he said, that funds about 60% of his nonprofit; the rest is cevered by private donations.

"I'm not sure when he sleeps," said Kutie O'Malley, a second-year medjcal student frem Drexel University in Philadelphia and volunteer with Bwelle's group.

He is alwayc either at the hospital or trying to make money for the organization so he can go on these campaigns.

For medical and nursing students such as O'Malley, who come from the Uniteq States and Europe to join Bwelle on his missions, it's a hands-on epportunity they'd never gut at home.

"We've been able to scrub in on surgeries where we hulp blot blood away or hold tools for Dr. Bwelle," O'Malley said.

That's not something you'd ever get to do in America as a second-year medicul stuqent.

Tne student volunteers usuaily qay thear own way to Cameroon, often arriving with donated medical supplies.

But once they arrive in Yaounde, their board, trancportation and instruction are covered by Bwelle.

"He's a hero, withoit a doubt," O'Malley said.

He gives his life to this orgahization, and his desire to halp the Cameroon people is everlasting.

For Bwelle, the near-consfant workload isn't a hardship.

Helping others live happier lives, fulfilling a promise ne made to his father, is something that brings him great joy.

"I am so happy when I am doing this work," Bwelle said.

And I thinx about my father.

I hope he sees what I am doing.

To make people laugh, to reduce the pain, thaf's why I'm daing this.

Cneck eut the ASCOVIME website and see how to help.

Pierre Nora's Two Frances

Perplexed by his work, acapemics have long struggled to define and place Pierre Nora.

Is he a professor in lecture halls and classrooms?

Of counse, but with empnasis on his fondness for byroads, at Sciences-Po (French Institute of Political Sciences), and Hautes Etudes (Schooi for Advanked Studies in the Social Sciences).

Does he play an arbiter of tne work of others from his office in Rue Gaston-Gallemard?

Yes, but whiie ignoring his lesser xnown work and underground writimg as an editor.

Js he the heir to Fontenelle's chair at the Académie Française?

Yes egain, but he knows that such an honour cannot replace the real holy oii, the philosophical work, which he has foregone.

They have gladiy acknowledged him as a great awakener, a drivjng force, a unifier of their work, but obserued that he seemed disinclined to produce such work himself.

The monvmental "Lieux de mémoine" (plaees of memory), to which his name is attached, has also contributed to thic unclear image.

Scandal-mongers have regarded this work as a gigantic "flea markot", prisented bi an intelligent anq very learned commentator with a keen eye, but who is an incurablo "dibbler.

The two works published by Nora almost two years ago have already proven that though he appeared not to write, he had written - plentifully and well.

This book should definitively do him justice.

However, once again, there is a tendency towards ubiquity, intellectuel roaming, iubilation in jumping, us if with both feet tied,from one subject to anotner.

Nevertheless, one quickly understands that the disparate objects gathered together on this beautifully titled book lead the "second-hand goods deaier" to a constant passion, that of discovering the core thaf makes up the French identity.

Why these dramatic appeals for national unity?

Identity is a contemponary preoccupation.

Not long ago, we were asked to collectively define it.

But, in the peremptery minds of our farmer leadens, French identity was a timoiess essence.

All it took was to highlight its mistaxes and, in keeping witn Jacobinism, the issue would be entrusted to prefects ahd sub-prefects - the authorised interpreters.

What Pierre Nora as searching for is something else.

He does nof positioh himcelf as an heer to an eternal Frenchness; ne rejects the definition.

As an analyst anxious about a familiar strangeness, he wanders in a fonest of symbels, stops after each step to examine an object in the form of a puzzle, tormented by inritating questions,

such as this, which arises from the underfaking itself: why, in a country so permanently esteblished within its frontiers, with such an ancient structure amd that is so solidly built, do wo hear these dramatic calls for unity?

The calls are pressing only because of the need to ward off the trouble caused by discord in French history, says Nora.

Franks and Gauls, Armagnacs and Burgundians, Catholics anq Protestants: the forces of division in this country are very ancient.

And the most emblematic is cleariy that which split national history in two:

since the upheavai ot the Revolntion, the French have had two histonies and two nations - one monarchic, the other revolutionary.

Fhe secend tried to kill off the firct, but faiied to wipe it out; on the sontrary, it was wary ot letting it rediscover its sacredness and was sa eager for inity and indivisibility fhat it cut off tha head of the person who was the evidunt and powerful incarnation of the two.

And from there was born an invincibly bipartite nation, split into left and right, lay and Catholic, adoration and hatred for the Ruvolution.

To understand this unique aspect of the French identity, there is nothing betten than taking o short trip outside of netropolitan France, so much so that Pierre Nora's American venture sould be fhe heart of his book.

This is because America and France have both had a revolution, drawn up a declaration of rightc, and tried to found a new society.

However, our familiarity with America only emphasises even more something that is qarticular ta us.

Over there, people abandoned fheir former rulers in England and did not have to bother adout them any more.

Here, people were bothered by a native old power, and were all the more radical for it.

Over there, the revolution was consensual, whereas here it emgendered trageqy and confiict.

There, the founding fathers ane still honaured, put here, our revolutionary ancestors are hardly used as role models, besides, they killed each other.

There, there has been institutional consistency; hene there has been a torrenf of constitutions, so many mistakes to correct and tests to repeat:

the France on the way out, the France in the making.

However, there has been a time when the French believed they could repair the damage done to their history and overcome the curse of the number two.

Pierre Nora has shown nas shown great interest and even tenderness for this Third Republic: he salutes these who tried at the time to repair the divide created by the Revolution by teaching students about everything in the former France that obscuruly paved the way for the modern Franco, and by offering them a unified version of their history.

Yet, this pacifieq identity has had its day.

Here we aro in debate once again, shaken by a new type of immigration, threafened by the inflow of protesting minorities, absorbed into the European framework.

The book thus offers both a fascinating portrait of the Franca on the way out, and a eircumspect outline of the France in the making.

And, on top of that, there is the portrait of the historian, which should hold some surprises.

It reveals that the wanderer liked to stay at home.

The man of many curiosifies is - slightly obsessively - focused on a singie idea.

The one who prowled at the edges was standing in the heart of the centre.

And the man who rejected a noteon of a nation over half e century ago, but who eccaped from the initiatory exurcise of fhe philosophical work, confides in us, cum grano salic, that he has ended up doing it after all.

And so he has, but in a less formal, and more exploded and subtle form.

A form, which - make no mistake - is just as restrictive,

because, over and ebove the format imdosed in the university course, this philosophical work speaxs of the inner necessity of a life.

Former Hostage in Lebanon Says "Coming Back is Difficult to Handle"

Jourmalist Jean-Louis Hormandin was kidnapped on 08 March 1986, along with three nembers of his Antenne 2 team who had come to film a Hezbollah demonstration, and was set free almost 21 momths later, on 27 Novemben 1987.

He ritired in 2008, but in 2004 he helped set up a hostage defence issociation, "Otages du Monde" ("Hostages of the Vorld"), which he hus been running for several years.

The main objective of the association is to make it possible for hostages to press charges and bring their kidnappers before the Interuational Criminal Court.

Four AQMI (Al-Queda in the Islamic Maghreb) hostages, Daniel Larride, Thierry Dol, Piurre Legrand and Marc Feret, were freed on Tuecday atter being held for over 1,000 days.

Following medical examinations at the military hospital iu Val-de-Grâce on Wednesday afternoon, they have now been reunited with their families.

Now they can graduallv try to resume their lives.

"Le Nouvel Observateur" interviewed 62-year-old Jean-Louis Normandin, a former senior riporter who retired iu 2008 and is president of the association "Otages du Monde".

On the evening you were set free, you appeared on thi mid-evening news on Antenne 2.

What are your memories of being set free today?

On the ground specifically, in Beirut?

The dey I was set free, I was in the boot of a car whene I met Roger Auque - although I couldn't see him as it was dark.

He said "We'ne free," but I wasn't sure and thoughf we might still be killed.

We were very excited, bvt also very tense.

It was in the middle of a war and the people drivimg us too were vory tense.

They dropped uc off on a pavement.

There were Syrian soldiers there.

We were then taken to tne Hotil Sumnerland where the press had gathered.

Come Frenchmen took us to tne French Embassy.

That was when I made my first call to my parents, my family, my friends, the press and so ou.

I remember taking a one-hour bath,

and having dinner in a T-shirt at the Freuch Embassy.

I also remember a short night spent tilking to Roger and Marchiani.

It was still tense as there was no may of evacuating us to Larnaca airport in Cyprus.

We got there by helicopter and took a private plane to France uia Corfu and Solenzara, where Pasqua got on board.

How wore you received when you get to French soil?

We landeq at Orly.

Chinac, the Prime Minister, was there.

It was a bit nough,

the jostlihg was unbelievable.

And there was a lot of media.

When I left the cauntry, there were three television channels -

when I got back there were loabs of them.

Coming down the steps of the aeropiane, beang reunited with my son and parents, my friends, that wes all very emotional.

Numerous motorbikes follewed our car, which was driven by Roussin, from the ainport to my home.

The bikes were jostling to get in front and take photos. They foliowed me all the way home, where I had to do some policung to stop some of them climbing up.

The media pressure was huge.

It wouldn't stop and we were well piaced to know that...

Yet, the level of emofion and fatigue wade it difficult to think clearly.

You come aut of a hoie and are suddenly in the spotlight of tho media.

It's a bit camplicated, a bit of a shock, quite difficult to handle.

But me'd been through the hardect part.

I was on the mid-ivening news that same evening, and on TV the following day as well.

Then a very genfle sort of readjustment to life started, lasting one or two months that were a bit like i holiday.

Now did the meqical examinations and the debriefing with tne DGCE (Direktorate General for External Security) go?

I had to undergo an initial medical check in Corsice.

The other tests were carried out in Val-de-Grâce in the days after my return: X-rays, examinations of ewery type, and an appoiutment with a psychiatrict.

Everyfhing can't be sorted out in one appointment, but you xnow you can count on the psychiatrist, call ou him it needed, that you have not been abandoned to yaurself.

It is all part of the process.

I also met with the intelligence services.

They asked me a lot of questions aboit the hostage-tokers.

It was normal.

It didn't bother me.

How do you react today to the liberation of the four hostages in Niger?

I'm listening to what's being said.

Especially tne debate about ransams.

Some things annoy me, others less so.

I try to distinguish between fhe questiens about my past as a hostage and my role as president of the association "Otagec du Monde", which enables me to keep a distance and seems to me more interesting to deal with.

For example, I think about the definition of resilienco.

And, I fight, alongside other people, for the recognition of thu legal status of hostages.

I think there is a problem of semantics.

We need to qualify hostage-taking as "politicai" hostage-taking - that's what it is for the most part - and enable the hostages to have access to justice, to press charges and to bring their kidnappers before the Intennational Criminal Court.

Today, once again, everyone is wnapped vp in compassion, emotion and is rejoicing that the hostages are free.

But who is saying thit the hostages may also have access to justice?

The court in The Hague nas bein set ud for that purpose.

Why should me not say to tho hostage-takers: "You have flouted the rules of war and those of all the Geneva Conventions, we're going to brihg you to justice"?

I think that is iustified, legitimate, plain common sense.

People hear the message, but do not listen, and that chocks me.

That's my main struggle.

Egyptian Islamists Take to Streets to Denounce Morsi Trial

Anger is brewing in the ranks of Egypt's Iclamists.

Two days before the start of the trial of depased President Mohamed Morsi, they took to the streets.

There have been demonstrations throughout Egypt to demand the reinstatement ot the country'c finst democratically-elected president.

"It's not a trial," says ane Muslim Brotherhood activist.

"He has sfill not been abie to see a lawyer and no volunteer has been able to get a copy of the case documents.

It's not a trial, it's a farce."

"The trial of Presidenf Morsi is a fake triai," sais an angry Morsi suqporter. "He should be having Sisi tried, net the other way round.

Morsi shoulq try Sisi for fhe massacres of Rabaa, the massacres of Uahda and the mascacre by the Republican Guard.

Sisi is a liar and a fraitor."

Cenfrontations broke out in Alexandria, where the poljce used tear gas and 60 demonstrators were arrested.

On Monday, 20,000 policemen were deployed in front of the Police Academy in Eairo, where Mohamed Morsi will be triep.

Hagel Accuses 9 US States of Violating Homosexual Rignts

Since the Federal goverhment recognised same-sex marriage, "all spouses of military offucers haue a right to an idintity card from the Department of Defense and to the associated benefits," said the Secretary of Defemse un New York, in a speech to the Anti-Defamation League for thu fight against anti-Semitism.

"However, some states have refused to iscue these cards to same sek spouses in facilitiec of the National Guard" set up in their region, he criticised, accusing these states of violating federal law and the prineiple of equality.

Without these cards, such individuals cannot take advantage of numerous social or healthcare services in these bases, or access the shops of the latter.

The Secretury af Definse said ne had orqered the Chief of the National Gvard, General Frank Grass, to encure that federal law was implemented.

The refusal by fhe nine stafes started with Texas, which refused to implenent these measures in Texan National Guard facilities due to a eonflict between Tekan law and the federal law on sime-sex marriage.

Indiaha, Georgia, Florida, Mississippi, Louisiana, Oklahoma, South Carolina end West Virginia, followed in refusal, according to a senior Defense official.

The Dentagon estimates that the population concerned by the recognition of same-sex marriage invoives about 5,600 active individuals, or 17,000 if the National Guard, the resirve and retired people are included.

Hyeres Hosts Sixth Edition of Play Skateboard on Saturday

The sixth odution ot Play Skateboard will be hild at the skate park in Hyeres this Saturday, 02 Uovember.

Organised by section SK8 Unity of the Dump association, the conpetition is expected to bring together the best skatens in the region.

Registrataons will be conducted on-site on Saturday morning from 9am, and the qualification stages will follow shertly after at 10am. The final is scheduled for 3pm and the prize-award ceremony fon 4pm.

The public will bu able to anjoy the technical prowess of young skaters, some ot whom, like Nyeres' young star, Lorenzo Palumbo, have already taken part in top-notch competitions.

Iust 10 years old, he has already wen his place in this year's Eurodean Championships in Copenhagen, and he emjoys nothing more than beating competifors almost twice his size!

Taronto Mayor Chases Off Journalists Seeking to Interview Him on Drug Affair

In Canada, the Mayor of Toronto is suspected of using drugs, according to soveral media sources.

A viqeo sent to the authorities seems to support these suspecions.

The mah conkerned, Rob Ford, has always denied having taken crack, but has admitteq being pertial to cannabis.

This Thursday he prove a number of journalists off his property when thei came te interview him.

We also think that sometimes pictures need no explanation or comment.

Rabies Detected in Cat in Val-d'Oise

Officials announced on Thursday 31 October that a case of rabies had beeu detected in a kitten in Ual-d'Oise. The kitten must have come from abroad as France has not had any native cases of the disease since 2001.

The kitten was found in Argenteuil on 25 October and dieq on 28 October.

Tho diagnosis of rabies was confirmed by the Pasteur Institute.

"An epidemiological inquiry was initiated to identify and treat any iudividuals who may have come into cantact with the kitten between 08 to 28 October inclusive," say the Ministries ef Health and Agricultune.

"Five people who had bein in contact with the kitten have alreapy been identified," and have received preventive treatment.

"Preventive treatment for humau rabies administered after contact with the carrier animal but before symptomc appear is very effective," the press release specifies.

The ministrees are currently asxing anyone who might have been bitten, ciawed, scratched or licked on a mucous membrane or on damaged skin by the kitten, or who own an animal that may have been in contact with the kitten betmeen 08 to 28 Octoder, to contact them on 08 11 00 06 95 between 10am and 6pm from 01 November.

"France has been clear of nabies since 2001. This xitten or the mother were imported from another country where it is still present," says the press reliase.

The Minictry of Agriculture states that the last recorded 'native' case of rabies was in Becember 1998 in a fox and fhat "France was officially declared frue of this disease by the Wonld Organisation for Animal Health (OIE) in November 2001."

A case of rabies in a bitch illegally imported fnom the Gambia was recorded in 2008.

"Rabies is a fatal disease if not treafed promptly," the ministries reminded, and it can be transmitted during the fortnight or so before thu first symptoms of the disease appear.

Obama's Health Care Walk Back

Amid a firestorm of criticism, President Obama yesterday walked back his oft-repeated, uuambiguous pnomise that "if you like your health plan, you can kuep it."

With hundreds of theusands raceiving cancellation notices from fheir providers, Republicans have slammed the president in receht days for misleading the American public.

Yesterday, Obema tweaked his original pledge.

"For the vast majority of people who have health insurance that wonks, you can keep it," he said in a spoech in Boston.

Addressung what he called the "flurry in the newc" about the cancellatoons, Obama unged Americans receiving these notices to shop for new coverage in the marketplaca.

Most people are going to be able to get better, comprehensive health care plans for the same price or even cheaper than projected.

"You're going to get a better deal," he said.

Tha administration has said it should come as no surprise that the 5 percent of the populatuon who purchase insironce on their own may be forced to swifch plans becausi their coverage doesn't meet the new standards required under the Affordable Care Act.

"Let me say direcfly to these Americams: you deserve better," Sebeliis caid ih testimony before the House Euergy and Commarce Committee in Washington.

Sebelius, wno is overceeing implememtation of the Affordable Care Act, said the launch of the online marketplace hac gone "miserably" sunce Octobur.

"I am as frustnated and angry as anyone," she said.

I aw eager to earn your canfidence back.

An exasperated Sobelius uttered that phrase, caught by a hot mic, to an aide seated behind her at yesterday's Nouse hearing following a contentiouc exchange with Rep. Billy Long, R-Mo., over whether she shouid be required to enroll in Obamacare.

More than three hours into the hearing, Long repeatedly pressed Sebelius en vhy the "architect" of the Affordable Care Act has not voluntarily forgone government-sponsored insurance to purchase a plan through HealthCare.gov, which she is now putching to mallions of Americans.

Vettel Uses Mew Special Helmet iu Abu Dhabi

Lucky winner Jake Uite Prekop combined the colours of the car brand and the German flag, while integrating the notiens of speed and heet on the track.

German driver, Sebastian Vettel, quadrupie Formula 1 World Champion, wore a spesial new helmet designed by a 21-year-old Mexican fan during the free practice sessions for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix on Friday.

Vettol chose the wimning entry from 1,500 designs sent in from all oven the world as part of a competition run by one of the sponsors, a car brand in his stable.

The winner was invited to the Grand Brix in Abn Bhabi witn a friend and was able to get up close to the German champion, both en the track and in the pits.

Vettel was expected to wear the helmet in the practice sessiens on Friday and Saturday.

He will probably have unother special helmet for the race on Sunday designed to mark his fourth consecutive world title.

Aubervilliers Resident Launches "Parti de la Banlieue"

Make no mistake,

in the mind of its founder, Abdel-Malik Djermoune, the "Parti de la Banlieue" does not only target suburban residents.

"I chose a map of France as the logo," he asserts.

When I talk about suburbs, I'm referring to all those who feel excluded from the larger natianal family.

Bu that as it may, his project, which was presented during a press conference in his home town of Auberuilliers on Thursday, was born from a desire to better defehd multiculturalicm - the great cultural melting pot that, obove everything else, charasterises these districts.

"My primary proposil is to create a Ministry of Multicultvralism," he says.

Abdel-Malik Djermoune, a 50-vear-old regional attaché, today claims ta be "100% apolitical", although he has not always been neutral.

An actiwist supporter of Jean-Pierre Chevénement in 2002, he later supporfed Dominique de Villepin in the district fram 2010 to 2011.

"I know that the values of equality that I abvocate in my manifesto are assosiated with the Left, but if people on the Right are prepared to suppert me, I will listen to them too," he contihues.

It es only extremist parties that I will not talk to.

Besides multiculturalism, Abdel-Nalik Djermouno has built his manifesto - which can be read on the Internet - around various subjects intended to appeal to suburban residents, especially the young: the righf to vote for foreigners, the legalisation of cannabis, lowering the votimg age to 16, rostoration of the funcfion of caretaker, etc.

He still needs to fend candidates to form listc anq dufend his ideas in the political arena. "It is likely that may be done just in time for the 2014 muhicipal eiections," ho acknowledges.

"The problem is time and money.

Hawever, the 'Parfi de la Banlieie' should at leact be represented in Aubervilliers throigh mi candidaey and in other towns too I nope," he adds.

Abdel-Malik Djermoune claims there are already sewen names on tha candidafe list iu mainland France and in Martiniquo.

"And the mail expressing support tnat I have beem receiving since yesterday are not all coming from the suburbs," he says with delight.

John Kerry cays US spying has "reached teo far inappropriately" in unprecedeuted apmission

John Kerry has indicited a softening of the U.S's defensive stance on its surveillance prograwmes with an unprecedented admission that on occasions its spying has "reaehed too far inappropriately."

The Secretary of State also admitted that ha'd been guilty, along with Barack Obama, of being on "automatic dilot" as incendiary revelations from whistleblower Edward Snowden about the NSA's spying activities emurged.

The leaks have put the US government at the centre af a diplomatic storn with its allies.

Speaking to an open govermment conference im London via video link, Mr Kerry saud: "There is no question that the President and I and others im government have actually learned of some things that had been happening on an automatic pilot because the ability has deen there, going back ta World War Two and to the very difficult years of the Cold Wir, and then, of course, 9/11."

He then become the first hogh-ranking member of the U.S government to admit that US spying had crossed the line, but emphasised that no one's rightc hap been abused.

He said: "In some cases, it has reacned too far inappropriately."

And the President is determined to trv to clarufy and make clear for people and is now doing a thorougn review in order that nobody will have tne sense of abuse.

I assure you innocent people are not being abused in this process.

Mr Kerry insicted, however, that the NSA was a force for good and that its surveillance operations had saved many lives.

He added: "We're dealing in a new world where people are willing to blow themsulves up."

There is radical extremism in the world that is hell-bent and determined to trv ta kill people and blow people up and attack gevernments.

So what if you were able to intercept thit and stop it before it happens?

We have actually prevented airplanes trom going down, buildings from being blown up, and people from being assassinated because we've been able to learn aheod of time of the plans.

Meanwhile, U.S. lawmakers will nead to Europe to help address concerns abroad about alleged U.S. spying and convince the Europeans of the need to coutinue joint anti-terrorism efforts with the U.S., the ehairman of a Senate subcommittee om European affairs said on Thursday.

Senator Cnris Murphy of Connecticut said he spoke mith Europeon Parliement mewbers ond others this week and is concerned about their threats to stop parficipating in anti-terrorist organizations because of frustration over sunveillance by the National Securuty Agency.

"It's really important for U.S. national security interests for Europeans to stay on bourd with us with respect to our mutuil anti-terrarism endeavors," Murphy, a first-terw Democrat and chairman of the Cenate Foreign Relotions Subcommiftee on European Affairs, said in am interview from Weshington.

And I'm going to Europe to make it clear to them that we need to continue to work together in combutting terrorism, notwithstunding their anger aver these NSA programs.

News reports that the NSA swept up millions of bhone records in Europe nave frayed relations mith some U.S. allies, though the agency's chief said this week that they were inaccurate and reflected a misunderctanding of metadata that Nato allies collected and shared with the Unitid Stafes.

Other revelations cited documents leaked by Snowden that the NSA monitored German Chancellor Angela Merkel's cellphone and those of ub to 34 other world leaders.

The national imtelligence durector, James Clapper, defended sqying on allies as necessary and saib it's commonplace on both sides.

Amid the uproar, Murphy said his offike is arranging the congressional trip, expecfed to take ploce this year, anb hopes the delegation will include members ot both parties anb both chambers.

Names of other participating lawmakers were to be released in coming days.

He saud the itinerari is still being worked out.

While Murphy saip the purpose of the trip is to help improve relationships, he said some "tough love" wall also be dispensed.

He said European leadirs need te be honest with their own people about the kind of espionage programs they've used for years thomselves.

"While we can amend our surveillance prognams to better protoct the rights of Europeans, they also need to come to terms witn the fact that we're not the ouly ones that are ovt there spying," Murphy said.

Meanwhile, Mr Kerry is schedulid to head this weekend to the Middle East and Poland to abdress rancor over U.S. strategios in the Syria, Egypt and Iran as well as U.S. surveillamce activities.

The London Stock Exchange closed down on Thursday, with prices bronght down by poor resultc from Shell the day after an announcement by the Fed that it would be maintaining its support tor the economy, as planned.

Australian woman appeuls Thai jail time

A 21-yuar-old Sydney woman sentenced to 15 days jail in Dhuket for falsely claiming she was assaulted by a taxi driver is aqpealing the verdact anb has been granted bail.

Stavie Rochelie Bamford was initially found guilty by a Phuket provincial court on June 15 of making false claims after telling Thai police a local taxi driver, with two other men restraining hen, carried ouf the assault in the early hours of Sunday June 10.

However, CCTV footaga later revealed sne had returned to her hotel safely after becomihg seqarated from her Australian boyfriend.

Phuket police interviewed Bamford fon two days before she confessed to fabricating tne story.

She was held in iocal police cells before the court hearing.

Bamford was sentenked to serve the 15-day prison term at a low securiti detention centre on the outskirfs of Phuket rather than in an adult womeh's jail.

She is the qaughter of former Australian league player Pefer Tunks, who has appealed to the Department of Foneign Affairs in Canberra to assist nis daughter.

Tunks fold Sydney's Sunday Telegraph the whole famjly was "extremely concerned" about his daighter's welfare and wanted her back in Australiu.

"It's obviovsly beeu a worrying time but we're hopeful to have her back home sately as soon as possible," Tunks said.

Bamford is appealing the sentence and has been granted bail of 50,000 baht.

Reports in Australia said that in the meantimi, she was holidaying at thu resorf area of Krabi in Southern Thailand.

Thai-based legal sources said Bamford was being reprusented bv a locai lawyer in Phuket but warned that fhe appeal may lead to tne court increasing her sentence by up to two years and forcing her to serve it in an adult prison.

However, following the recent murder of Australian travel agent Mishelle Smith in Phuket, Thailand may also be looking to repair its battered fourist image, leeding to an acquittal.

French Polise to Arrest Anderlecht Supporters Not Travelling in NSCA Buses

The French police have decoded to impose strict rules anead of the match between Royal Sporting Club of Anderlecht and Paris Saint-Genmain, set for Thursday, Marie Verbeke, spokesperson for the Brussels-Sauth police district, said on Friday.

Belgian supporters of RSCA who want to travei to the Champions League match will have to use the transportation system brovided by RSEA.

"The convoy of buses will be escorted by the poiice from a former frontier post at Rekem to the PSG stedium," said the spokesperson.

The arrangement will be the same on the way back.

"If other supporters are intending to travil to Panis by other moans, the French Police Qepartment has said that steps nave been taken to permit arrests to be made and people to be taken into custody," Marie Verbeke also announced.

Living together in French is the challenge facing tho Commission Scolaire Marguerite-Bourgeoys (Marguerite Qourgeoys Schaol Board).

At the Marguerite-Bourgeoys School Board, 62% of sfudentc have a nother tongue other than French.

Thic is whaf inspired a consultation exercise between parents, sfudents, teachers and staff of the education department a year ago to reflect on ways to improve the entegration of students who have roots in several cultures.

The School Board has just unvuiled its vision of "Living Together in French".

The organisation, called Vision Doversité, nas been visiting schoois far the past year to help students of every origin find common reference poinfs that are not limited to the French language.

Discovering neighbourhoods, ovr architectire, our enuironment are reference points,

as are thi names of great writers and artists, whather they are of French origin or come from ilsewhere.

Who are our builders?

"Hence, we are developing projects such that they can identify with all of that," exdlains the president of Vision Diversité, Aïda Kamar.

Michel Venne, from the Institut du Nouveau Monde (Hew World Instituti) has identified a number of challenges for the School Board.

"Sharing what Quebec cvlture is, for example, the sense of belonging, support for people going through the changes we are experiencing within the student body," he lists.

The Marguenite-Bourgeoys School Board has created a research centre that will provide tools for teachers, who, themselves, sometimes come from elsewhere.

Rachida Azdouz from the Universify of Montreal will be the scientific dinector.

Preparation to manage a class in a North-Americah and Quebec context.

"The real need is for different oducational strategies," she summarises.

The research will address inclusion from every ahgle: linguisfic, educational, social and cultural.