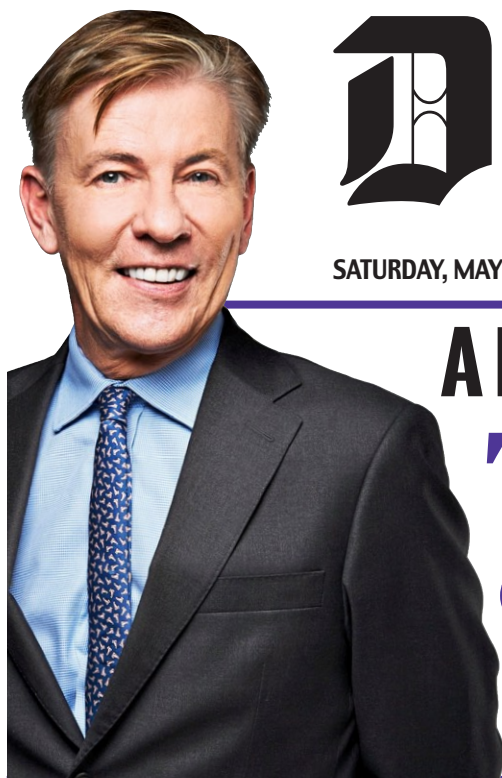


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ECONOMY'S GOING GANGBUSTERS!

**Not the verdict of a Tory, but the Chief Economist at
the ONS as Britain outpaces US, France and Germany**

By **Jessica Clark**
and **David Churchill**

THE UK economy is 'going gangbusters' after growing at the fastest rate in two years in a major boost for families ahead of the general election.

After the 'shortest and shallowest' recession on record, official figures beat forecasts to show GDP rose by 0.6 per cent in the first quarter of the year – the fastest rate of growth since late 2021.

Britain's economy outpaced France, Germany and the United States in the first three months of the year, Office for National Statistics (ONS) figures show. The UK is the third-best performing country in the G7 since the 2016 Brexit referendum, falling behind only the US and Canada and beating European rivals Germany, Italy and France.

ONS Chief Economist Grant Fitzner said: 'To paraphrase former Australian prime minister Paul Keating, you could say the economy is going gangbusters.' Rishi Sunak said the 'plan

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**Charles's friends
reveal the
REAL reason
he didn't
meet Harry**

PAGES 8&9

