Man Utd 'will net Glazers £1.8bn'

The Glazers, the American family who provoked rage among Manchester United fans when they bought the football club and loaded it with debt, believe they are on course to net themselves £1.82 billion when they float the Premier League champions on an Asian stock market.

The Florida clan expect to generate more than six times their original investment. It would be a triumphant reversal of fortune for Malcolm Glazer and his sons — although hardly likely to endear them to fans at Old Trafford tomorrow night for a match against Spurs. The family’s takeover in 2005 left the club with a crippling £1.2 billion of debt.

Shell had oil rig safety warning

An internal investigation by Shell eight years ago raised serious concerns about safety in the Gannet oilfield, where the company has been battling to contain the worst spill in British waters for a decade.

Documents obtained by The Sunday Times reveal that forms, Brent Charlie, a Health and Safety Executive (HSE) inspector, warned Shell last month there was a risk of injury from plant equipment. It also found that redundant plant equipment was not properly secure.
A Libyan rebel tries to flush out Gaddafi loyalist snipers in the town of Zawiya. Rebels claimed last night to control both Zawiya, 30 miles west of Tripoli, and Zilatan to the east of the Libyan capital, as they tightened their stranglehold around the shrinking territory controlled by the dictator. Preparations for an advance on the capital were under way, said rebel leaders, with units including a "Tripoli brigade" establishing forward positions.

Jeffrey Feldman, US assistant secretary of state, said after visiting rebel headquarters in Benghazi that Gaddafi's days were numbered. The dictator's former No 2, Abdel-Salam Jalloud, was said to have defected and be ready to urge his tribe to desert the regime.

Olsught on oil town, pages 26-27

30,000 rioters hunted by police

David Leppard

As many as 30,000 people were involved in looting, arson and criminal damage during the London riots, Scotland Yard now believes.

Metropolitan police figures released today show 5,395 crimes were committed during four days of rioting in the capital.

With between five and 10 people linked on average with each crime, police estimate they have between 15,000 and 30,000 suspects.

"There were a lot of people out on the street engaged in criminality. There were thousands and thousands of people committing crimes," an insider said. "It was the true definition of mob violence and the Met is keen to find out whose all these people are.

As it emerged that a gunman had fired shots at a police helicopter during the riots in Birmingham, the huge numbers of suspects will add to fears about a logjam in the courts and violence breaking out in overcrowded prisons.

On Friday the prison population swelled to record numbers, for the first time surpassing 86,000 inmates in England and Wales. Prison governors have been warned to take steps to ensure the safety of inmates — especially those who have been remanded in custody for the first time.

"It's a lot of people," said one man. "They're all on the streets."

"There was a lot of violence and a lot of damage," another said.

As police hunted for the suspects, they released 68 people on bail after a night of rioting in south London.

Challengeto 'unlawful' university fees

Jason Allardyce

Scotland's university funding system faces a legal challenge from a leading human rights lawyer, who claims it is unlawful to charge fees to English students studying north of the border.

Phil Shiner, who has already embarrassed the British government by winning the right to a judicial review of its decision to let English universities triple their fees, now intends to end what critics term anti-English discrimination in Scotland.

More than 20,000 English students in Scotland pay up to £2,800 a year, which will rise to up to £9,000 next year, while Scots and other European Union students do not pay.

The Scottish government contends that under the European Convention on Human Rights it is permissible to discriminate within a member state such as Britain.

However, Mr Shiner believes the policy is in breach of the convention, which prohibits discrimination on grounds that include national origin and of the first protocol to the convention, which gives everybody in the EU a right to education. It may also breach Britain's Equality Act, implemented last year.

Challenge to 'unlawful' university fees
**Business**
America's tech raid: how a Silicon Valley giant snatched our brightest and biggest software company

**Politics**
Politicians volunteer to adopt ‘hard-core workless families’

*Margarete Driscoll and Marie Woolf*

Some of David Cameron’s ministers and closest advisers will “adopt” workless families to help the long-term unemployed off benefits and into work.

A group of ministers, MPs and special advisers will set about becoming “family champions” as part of a scheme devised by Emma Harrison, the social entrepreneur whose training company manages £300m of government training contracts.

Chris Grayling, the employment minister, Tim Loughton, the children and families minister, and Jane Ellison, Tory MP for Battersea, who was hit by looting during the recent riots, have each volunteered to mentor a workless family. Rohan Silva, one of Cameron’s senior policy advisers, has also volunteered to help a family.

Emma Harrison wants the middle classes to follow their example to help families in which two or three generations have never worked. The mentors will introduce the families to their contacts, help them manage their housekeeping money, guide them through bureaucracy and give advice on keeping regular hours.

“This isn’t a gimmick, this is me seriously looking in the eye and saying: come on them. Let’s get after this and tackle this thing,” Harrison said.

“Standing beside a workless family and saying: I will make myself responsible for making this a working family, is really daunting. The thought scares a lot of politicians because they don’t know how to do it, but I will say: I will show you and for all how this is done. And they are very enthusiastic. They keep saying: have you found my family yet? This is a simple idea, it’s not the big society, it’s people helping people,” she added.

“If you’ve got a job you can get a job for somebody else. There are so many jobs out there, but to get because of who you know and all I want to do is drag some people who are outside of that in…"

“An MP might ask an employer to pop in and say to him: ‘I’ve got a family that needs work, mate, how are you fixed?’ The families we’re talking about don’t know anybody who knows anybody, and that’s why they’re stuck where they’re at,” Harrison, who chairs Action for employment (Action for employment) is gathering her idea in Hurlingham, with the help of Westminster and Aston on her own money.

The government estimates there are 120,000 families in Britain locked into generations of welfare, costing the exchequer £16 billion a year. Loughton said there are 30,000 “hard-core families” with multiple problems and 70,000 “second-tier” problem families. He said he planned to help his “adopted” families with their financial planning — to make sure they can live within their means.

A rioter points a gun at a police helicopter in Birmingham at the scene, petrol bombs were thrown at a marked police car. When riot police were called in, CCTV caught the first gunman taking aim with a hand-gun, firing and then fleeting the scene. Another looter was then filmed aiming his weapon at the helicopter. The group of rioters dispersed only when armed police finally arrived. No one was injured during the incident.

Police said that at least four separate firearms had been identified from the footage. Spent bullet casings were found at the scene.

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**Politics**
**Politicians volunteer to adopt ‘hard-core workless families’**

Margarete Driscoll and Marie Woolf

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**Calls to expand oil disaster threat inquiry**

**continued from page 1**

Safety. More than 90% of installations in the North Sea were found to require improvements during inspections over the past three years, with 20% showing 'major failures'.

Ministers have pledged to hold an inquiry into the Gannet spill but environment Secretary said the remit should be expanded.

It is important that the inquiry examines the management of the incident both by Shell and the various public agencies," said Stuart Housden, from RSPS Scotland.

He added: "The inquiry should also investigate the reaction of both an imported and Scottish agencies to predict, monitor and minimise any environmental impacts."

Conservationists have warned that the oil leak poses a threat to seabirds, including Kittiwakes, puffins, guillemots and razorbills. An operation to lay concrete mats on the pipeline where the leak occurred in order to secure it to the seabed is continuing.

Shell said safety was a "foremost priority" and that the company had invested more than £600m in recent years to upgrade North Sea facilities.

A company spokeswoman said: "We constantly inspect, monitor and review all our assets. At present we do not know what caused the leak from the Gannet Alpha flowline. This will be the subject of an investigation together with the authorities."

"Work continues to progress on the Brent Delta platform about which Shell is in regular liaison with the regulatory authorities, including the HSE."

The Gannet Alpha leak was spotted during a routine North Sea helicopter flight.

**Armed rioters shot at police and helicopter**

**Riot suspects**

**continued from page 1**

and Perry Sutcliffe-Keenan were jailed for four years at Chester Crown Court for posting messages on Facebook trying to stir up riots in their neighbourhood.

Lord Justice, the lord chief justice, is understood to be clearing his diary to hear the first of what is expected to be a wave of appeals against the long sentences being handed down by some judges.

Sentences handed out by magistrates for the first 1,000 riot-related crimes were on average 25% longer than those awarded in normal circumstances.

Judge is understood to recognise the urgent need for clarity and the procedure for hearing the first Court of Appeal case is likely to be fast-tracked.

A spokeswoman for the judge said: "If any of these appeals are lodged, the Court of Appeal will deal with them in a position, if appropriate, to do so quickly."

In its first detailed breakdown of the violence which swept London between August 6 and August 9, the Met said today there had been 2012 Olympics, said the army will remain to help secure the Games.

How police got tough

NewsReview, page 5
Gannet leaked hundreds of tons of oil into the environment. So how serious is the North Sea drilling industry about updating its rigs — and how long before another disaster, ask Gillian Bowditch and Mark Macaskill.

It was a routine flight from Aberdeen, but as the Bristow helicopter ferried oil workers across the North Sea, one passenger noticed something unusual. On the surface of the water, just a few miles from the Gannet Alpha platform, was a large oily sheen.

The alarm was raised with air traffic control. Within the hour, Shell, the rig's owner, warned the Department of Environment and Climate Change that a leak had been detected more than 100 miles off Scotland's northeast coast.

Despite its size and profitability, Shell's safety record is by no means exemplary. The North Sea spill came just weeks after the company admitted liability for a massive oil spillage in Ogoniland, Nigeria. Shell says the vast majority of spills in the Niger Delta are due to sabotage, but it faces substantial legal claims.

Closer to home, Shell's North Sea Brent field platforms — Alpha, Bravo, Charlie and Delta — were temporarily shut down in January after "metal fatigue" led to a chunk of protective railing falling into the sea. Just days before the Gannet spill, leaked HSE documents showed that the government agency feared "catastrophic consequences" on Shell's ageing Brent Charlie platform. The scale of a long-running series of gas leaks meant that ignition was "almost inevitable," according to the document, leading to fears of another disaster on the scale of Occidental's Piper Alpha, when 168 men were killed in an explosion in 1988.

One report, dated July 18, revealed that Shell was facing a 15,000-hour maintenance backlog on mechanical equipment. This is on top of extensive work being carried out to overcome leaks of hydrocarbon gas and hydrogen sulphide, known as "glugs", that have led to the shutdown of Brent Charlie and the loss of the output of 30,000 barrels of oil a day. According to Upstream, the July 18 document, sent by the HSE to Shell after an inspection on May 30 and 31, also reveals that inspectors found that areas of the platform were corroding.

Corrosion is a sensitive issue for Shell. A 2006 report into the deaths of...
The company's problems, however, were under control. Within days, the spill was far more serious than was just another one of the hundreds of minor spills that are reported in the North Sea every year. It gave assurances that the situation was under control. Within days, however, it became apparent that the spill was far more serious than Shell wanted to publicly admit.

Privately, department officials were forced to concede that the leak was "substantial," as Shell sought to minimize negative coverage by strangling the flow of information to the national media and environmental bodies.

Last night, Shell confirmed that 10 days after it was first detected, the leak had been completely stopped. The company's problems, however, will not stop with the release of oil into the North Sea.

Ever since BP's Deepwater Horizon spill in April last year, which killed 11 and resulted in 4.9 million barrels of oil flooding into the Gulf of Mexico - the biggest disaster in the history of the industry - environmental campaigners have stepped up their targeting of the oil sector.

In the aftermath of Deepwater, Shell's chief executive Peter Voser claimed the BP blowout could never have happened to his company. The risk-management practices of some companies in the Gulf of Mexico do lie behind the standards set by other companies," Vosertold analysts in February. "We at Shell have been applying the best of the North Sea standards to our worldwide operations for many years.

It is a quote that may come back to haunt him.

The company estimates that during the Gannet leak, 1.600 barrels of oil or 218 tons - more than triple the amount of oil discharged into UK waters in the whole of 2009 - has spilled into the North Sea from a pipe 3900 ft below the surface.

The leak could not have come at a worse time for Shell, as it attempts to persuade regulators to allow it to carry out drilling in the sensitive waters around the Arctic.

But the questions it raises go far beyond Shell and the safety of its drilling activities. Conservationists want to know how safe is the North Sea oil industry? Is it a large-scale environmental disaster lurking around the corner? Is the Scottish government too close to the industry for Scotland's good?

It was only on Friday August 12, the oil industry journal Upstream ran a short article on the leak based on its own sources that shell issued a press release stating that it had stemmed the leak "significantly." Partly because the company was unable to provide information on the size and cause of the leak. Early last week, a second leak was discovered.

It wasn't until Friday, nine days after oil was first found, that Shell was finally able to close off the vital valves. The task of removing the residual 660 tons of oil in the depressurized flow-line would take some time the company said.

The drip, drip, of negative information has been every bit as corrosive to the company's reputation as the oil leaking from its pipe. It was not until a week after the leak was first spotted that the company apologized.

Glen Cayley, a technical director of Shell's exploration and production activities in Europe, said: "This is a significant spill in the context of annual amounts of oil spilled in the North Sea. We care about the environment and we regret that the spill happened. We have taken it very seriously and responded promptly to it.

The oil sector is arguably Scotland's most important industry. Tax revenues from oil and gas production were £9.3 billion in 2010/11 and are expected to rise to £13.4 billion in 2013/14. There is a constant battle to keep platforms profitable in the face of declining asset integrity.

As a result, many North Sea oil platforms are working way beyond their envisaged lifespan. When they were built, most were expected to last 20 years, but according to figures from the oil specialist Det Norske Veritas and the Energy Department, 44 North Sea platforms - more than 15% of the total - are more than 40 years old. According to the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), it is "evident that this proportion is steadily increasing, particu-