

TODAY ON A PAGE

weather



TONIGHT Dry but mostly cloudy. Mist patches. A light southwesterly wind.
Low 4-7C (39-45F)



TOMORROW Overcast with a chance of drizzle. Moderate winds.
High 9-12C (48-54F)
Five-day London forecast

Four new nuclear plants to be built

FOUR sites in the South of England were today expected to be named as locations for a new generation of nuclear power stations. British Energy is understood to have identified Dungeness in Kent, Bradwell in Essex, Sizewell in Suffolk and Hinkley in Somerset as the most likely areas for the new plants. All will be built close to densely populated areas where electricity demand from the National Grid is high. British Energy already operates nuclear reactors at Dungeness, Hinkley and Sizewell. Bradwell was shut down in 2003 and is now controlled by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority but British Energy — which has been criticised over its ageing power plants

WHERE THE HOTSPOTS ARE



— owns land next to the old reactor. PM Gordon Brown yesterday signalled his support for the nuclear industry's role in Britain by claiming it would meet our energy needs in the face of global

warming and concerns over oil and gas supplies from Russia and the Middle East. In his speech to the CBI, he said: "New nuclear power stations potentially have a role to play in tackling climate change and improving energy security." Meanwhile, major building projects such as power stations, airport terminals and wind farms could be fast-tracked within a year under a shake-up of planning laws announced today. The changes, contained in the Planning Bill, will also take around 90,000 homeowners out of the planning system by allowing them to build some extensions and loft conversions without council permission. The proposals follow the 14-year delay over Heathrow's Terminal Five.

Darling defends rescue of Rock

ALISTAIR DARLING today mounted an impassioned defence of his handling of the Northern Rock crisis. The embattled Chancellor insisted he was right to use billions of pounds of taxpayers' money to guarantee savings and avert a major crash. Mr Darling, right, will tell business leaders at the CBI conference: "Far worse would have been to have done nothing and to have allowed that

bank to have gone under. I believe this would have had very serious consequences for the banking system and for the British economy." The Chancellor's speech comes after claims that £24 billion or more of public funds could be lost if the bank goes under. He was braced for a hostile reception from some over his decision to raise capital gains tax on small firms and entrepreneurs from 10 to 18 per cent.



Paddy's slap-down for Huhne

PADDY ASHDOWN rounded on Liberal Democrat leadership contender Chris Huhne today for running a negative and "divisive" campaign. Former Lib-Dem leader Lord Ashdown said Mr Huhne's campaign had been too personalised and praised rival Nick Clegg for his "positive" message.

He said of Mr Huhne's campaign: "I'm not going to criticise but some elements of it have been unfortunate. I don't think the membership is welcoming of this personalised campaign." Mr Huhne's camp had drawn up a document called Calamity Clegg listing his opponent's weaknesses.

Eco-home takes root in Square

A PROTOTYPE of an eco-friendly house is being built in Trafalgar Square for an exhibition on tackling climate change in the home. Featuring interactive displays, the glass and steel building, 1 Lower Carbon Drive, will be built by next Tuesday.

