



# THE SCOTSMAN

SCOTLAND'S NATIONAL NEWSPAPER SINCE 1817



**Big in Japan:** Designer leads the tartan charge FEATURES, PAGES 14&15



**Sport:** McIntyre favourite to take over as axe falls on Neil McCann at Dundee

## Supplies of flu vaccines 'run out' putting thousands at risk

Warning comes as death rates for last winter at 18-year high

By **SCOTT MACNAB** AND **SHÂN ROSS**

Health officials have claimed private pharmacies have run out of the flu vaccine amid warnings the lives of thousands of Scots are "at stake" this winter after death rates reached a near 20-year high last season.

Fears over soaring heating costs and shortages of the new advanced flu vaccine have intensified after it emerged more than 23,000 Scots died during the cold weather last winter — the highest toll since 1999/2000.

But a Community Pharmacy Scotland spokeswoman confirmed many private pharmacies had run out of the standard flu vaccine for people aged 65 to 74 and would not have fresh stock for at least another month.

A host of NHS GP surgeries across Scotland are also telling patients the vaccine intended for those aged 16 to 64, who are at risk from conditions such as diabetes or pregnancy, will not be available until the end of this month. The widespread shortages could leave many vulnerable Scots unable to take up the Scottish Government's own advice to take free shots to protect themselves before the onset of winter.

The rise in winter death rates should raise "alarm bells", according to Scotland's national charity for older people Age Scotland. The agency said more than three out of four winter deaths in the past decade had been among Scots aged 75 and over.

Virulent strains of winter flu have been previously blamed for a rise in deaths after last winter saw the number of flu-linked deaths treble



### Meghan shows off her bump Down Under

The Duchess of Sussex chose an ivory dress by Australian designer Karen Gee for her first engagement on the royal couple's 16-day tour — as all eyes were on any hint of a baby bump.

Meghan chose the fitted shift dress as she stepped out in public for the first time since the news of her pregnancy was revealed.

She was pictured in the gown at Sydney's Admiralty House yesterday.

FULL STORY, PAGES 18&19

### Safety fears over near misses at city schools

By **DAVID BOL**

Three near misses from falling building materials have been recorded this year at an Edinburgh school where a pupil was killed by a collapsing wall.

A piece of plaster fell from an area above a doorway and "hit a teacher on the head" in the latest of three incidents at Liberton High School this year.

There have been 20 cases of materials either collapsing or falling at Edinburgh schools in the past two years.

Six incidents have happened since August, sparking fresh safety fears.

FULL STORY, PAGE 5

### UK sitting on £20bn in lost pension pots

By **VICKY SHAW**

The UK is sitting on a £20 billion "lost pension mountain" based on estimates from an insurance industry body.

Some 1.6 million lost pension pots worth nearly £20bn could remain unclaimed, with people often losing track of their savings due to job changes or moving house, the Association of British Insurers (ABI) said.

The association described the scale of the lost pensions problem as "jaw-dropping".

Research was carried out

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