

OBESITY JAB THE UK PLAN IS THE STUFF OF SCI-FI

Newton Emerson
Opinion & Analysis



🔥 The 2 Johnnies are basically what you get if you feed Ant and Dec a Tayto sandwich after midnight

Patrick Freyne
Arts & Ideas



PROPERTY

- MY ON-BUDGET HOME RENOVATION
- HOUSE FOR SALE BY THE FORTY FOOT
- SECRETS OF AN AIRBNB HOST

Tánaiste open to election before Christmas

Polling day in late November or early December a possibility, Martin says

Fianna Fáil leader rules out any coalition with Sinn Féin due to policy differences

PAT LEAHY
Political Editor

Tánaiste Micheál Martin has opened the door to an early general election, signalling that he would not object to it if some key legislation was passed in the coming weeks.

The Fianna Fáil leader, speaking to The Irish Times Inside Politics podcast, did not specify any polling date preference, although he indicated that late November or early December would be possible if certain Bills currently before the Oireachtas, including the Finance Bill, were accelerated.

The move comes after repeated suggestions by the Tánaiste in recent months that he favoured a 2025 election. He confirmed that, despite intense and prolonged election speculation in the political world, the Coalition leaders had not yet had a discussion on the issue, though he indicated his willingness to do so.

"If it's the desire of others to do things earlier, we'd need to game that and people would need to work through the timelines around critical pieces of legislation," he said. "I think what people want is to complete work to make sure that there's a solid bit of work done and that we end up, that we end the Government in a harmonious way, having worked together for 4½ years now," Mr Martin said.

Essential

The Tánaiste said the Finance Bill was essential and that Fianna Fáil was also committed to concluding the Gambling Regulation Bill, which was due to be passed in the Dáil this evening.

Fianna Fáil would like to get the Mental Health Bill passed, he said, although he acknowledged there were drafting difficulties with the process that could delay it.

Asked if it was an accurate summary of his position to say that, if important legislation was accelerated and passed through the Oireachtas in the coming weeks, he would have no objection to an election before Christmas, Mr Martin said that was "a reasonable assumption".

Mr Martin said "a conversation is required between all three party leaders".

Asked if the circumstances might be favourable for the Coalition to go for a pre-Christmas election, Mr Martin said: "I think, yeah, clearly, there are circumstances that could be favourable to us going early."

Recent difficulties

The Tánaiste also said that Sinn Féin's recent difficulties "go to the heart of how Sinn Féin as a party works, its culture, its tendency to protecting its own first and putting the party first".

He said Sinn Féin opposed Ireland's economic model, citing its opposition to free trade agreements such as Ceta, the EU's trade deal with Canada.

While he insisted that the policy differences between Sinn Féin and Fianna Fáil continued to rule out any possible coalition between the two, Mr Martin said he continued to have moral concerns about Sinn Féin's culture, and its continuing glorification of the IRA's campaign.

He said Sinn Féin had been "very dishonest and disingenuous in terms of maintaining the mythology".

"I will acknowledge there has been change and there's been attempts made. But I think that fundamental point hasn't changed."

Mr Martin said Ireland could act unilaterally on trade sanctions against Israeli settlements, though he said there continued to be legal difficulties with the Occupied Territories Bill.

The Government is likely to further discuss the issue next week.

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Government seeking fresh advice on trade ban with Israeli occupied territories; Sinn Féin nominates Galway West TD as new PAC chair



■ Kyran Durnin (8) from Drogheda has been missing since August 30th. Detectives have recently obtained a warrant from the District Court to obtain files from Tusla relating to the boy, according to sources

Gardaí presume missing boy (8) is no longer alive

Murder investigation launched despite 'extensive' attempt to find Kyran Durnin

CONOR GALLAGHER,
CONOR LALLY and
RONAN MCGREEVY

Gardaí believe Kyran Durnin – the eight-year-old boy now believed to have been murdered – may have died up to two years before his disappearance was officially reported in August.

Investigators say they are now dealing with a complicated, sensitive, and in places confusing series of events around the child's disappearance and that it will take some time for the full picture to emerge.

They believe several people known to Kyran, who was from Drogheda, Co Louth, have information which will move the investigation forward.

Gardaí also believe files held by Tusla, the State's child and family agency, may prove helpful in piecing together the timeline around the boy's disappearance and presumed murder.

Detectives recently obtained a warrant from the District Court to obtain files from Tusla relating to Kyran, sources said. Gardaí said the agency was co-operating and working closely with the investigation.

Kyran was officially reported missing alongside his mother Dayla Durnin (24), also from Drogheda, in late August. Ms Durnin was found safe in the UK but there was no sign of Kyran.

Gardaí now suspect Kyran was not with his mother when she went missing. They received information from some-

one known to the child indicating he was already dead, prompting officers to formally begin a murder investigation.

"Despite extensive enquiries carried out by gardaí to date, An Garda Síochána have been unable to either locate Kyran, identify any information on his current whereabouts or any evidence that he is currently alive," the Garda said in a statement yesterday. "Following enquiries to date, investigating gardaí now believe that Kyran is missing presumed dead."

Upto two years

Sources said they now believe Kyran may have died up to two years before he was reported missing. Sources stressed the investigation is at an early stage and that these suspicions are the result of preliminary inquiries.

No arrests have been made. As of now, gardaí do not know where Kyran's remains may be located or how he died. Despite opening a murder investigation, gardaí have not ruled out the possibility he died as a result of an accident.

Investigators hope the opening of a formal murder inquiry may prompt people suspected to hold important information to co-operate. It will also grant gardaí additional resources and stronger legal powers to secure evidence. An incident room has been established in Drogheda Garda station and a senior investigation officer has been assigned to oversee the case.

Body of former Irish soldier killed in Ukraine recovered by special forces

CONOR GALLAGHER

The body of Robert Deegan, the former Irish soldier who was killed fighting in Ukraine last month, has been recovered.

The 29-year-old's remains were located yesterday by members of Stugna, the Ukrainian special forces unit Mr Deegan served with.

A former member of the Irish Defence Force's elite Army Ranger Wing, Mr Deegan travelled to Ukraine in 2022 in response to Russia's invasion.

He was killed in fierce fighting near the city of Kupiansk in the Kharkiv region while covering the retreat of his unit.

The Stugna unit had been deployed to push back incursions by Russian forces which were attempting to recapture the area.

The ongoing fighting in the area made it impossible to recover his remains until now, despite several members of his

unit immediately volunteering themselves for the mission.

His body is currently being stored in a morgue in Kharkiv. It will shortly be transported to the Ukrainian capital of Kyiv before being prepared for repatriation back to Ireland for burial.



■ Robert Deegan: lost an eye during first tour with Ukrainian army

It is understood the Irish embassy in Kyiv has been alerted of the development and has been liaising with the Deegan family in Ireland.

Mr Deegan was awarded a medal for bravery by the Ukrainian Armed Forces in recognition of his service recapturing Kupiansk from Russia forces following the 2022 invasion.

He was severely injured in an explosion a short time later as he was travelling in an armoured vehicle. He suffered serious facial injuries, including the loss of an eye and returned to Ireland for medical treatment. Earlier this year, he returned to Ukraine and re-enlisted.

"He was the best soldier I ever served with," said one man who fought alongside Mr Deegan in Ukraine. "He always wanted to be a soldier, nothing else."

Mr Deegan, from Co Kildare, joined the Defence Forces in 2014 and became a member of the Army Ranger Wing (ARW) just three years later, the youngest soldier ever to qualify for the elite unit. He came from a well-known military family. His father John was previously a member of the ARW and his brother Richard is a serving Air Corps officer.

➔ **Zelenskiy urges West to back 'victory plan': page 7**

Weather

Sunny spells and scattered heavy showers. Highs of 13-16 degrees in light to moderate southerly winds.

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