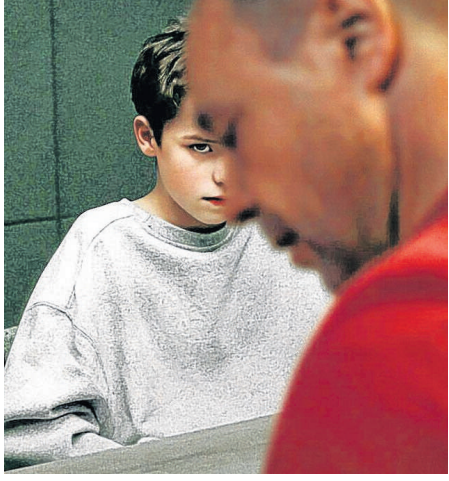


BAD SCIENCE THAT TURNS MASCULINITY TOXIC

Joe Humphreys
Unthinkable



Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have long framed a potential alternative coalition government as unworkable and chaotic. Well, is this what order looks like?

Una Mullally
Opinion & Analysis



THE PRICE HIKES KEEP ON COMING AND THINGS ARE ONLY GETTING WORSE

Conor Pope
Pricewatch

New laws planned to increase cap at Dublin Airport

Draft options on legislation expected to be sent to Minister for Transport in weeks

Ministers highlight need to accelerate reforms targeting competitiveness

JACK HORGAN-JONES
Political Correspondent

The Government is considering interventions to lift the passenger cap at Dublin Airport, including laws allowing the limit to be increased.

The cap of 32 million passengers coming through the airport annually is at the centre of a protracted planning saga. The Government holds the view that the limit hinders economic growth.

Coalition sources said the DAA, which runs the airport, will be expected to persevere with its planning application – but even if a favourable outcome is reached, they believe it could be between three and five years before a solution is in place.

“We need permanent solutions,” one senior Government source said, adding that the current situation could not be tolerated.

Minister for Transport Darragh O’Brien has now received updated advice from attorney general Rossa Fanning on the matter, which includes the potential to pass legislation carving the decision out from planning laws.

One precedent is 2022 legislation on temporary energy generation, which disapplied planning laws to designated developments, although it is understood that such an approach is not risk-free and could face a challenge by those opposed to increasing the passenger cap.

Formally complain
Draft options for moving forward are expected to be sent to Mr O’Brien in coming weeks. He will hold meetings with airlines this week, including the lobby group Airlines for America, amid suggestions the row could be politicised.

Carriers could formally complain to the US government about the cap, which they believe breaches EU-North American air travel treaties.

There is a view within Government that the prospect of impediments to foreign direct investment and the looming likelihood of an EU-US trade war have added to the case for

action. “It’s clear the cap as it currently is in place, even if paused, has the potential to ensure we lose future investment,” a senior source said.

A group of airlines last week sought an extension to a pause on the introduction of the cap, but the Government believes such an approach is “not sustainable”. Mr O’Brien is said to have met the attorney general in recent days along with senior officials and is now understood to be “looking at legislative ways forward for dealing with the cap once and for all”.

Tariffs

It comes as the Government braces for the announcement of tariffs on the EU by the Trump White House, with Coalition ministers signalling that reforms targeting Irish competitiveness and the domestic economy were needed.

In a statement to The Irish Times, Tánaiste Simon Harris said it was “vital that we accelerate measures to further increase our competitiveness and strengthen our position as a good location in which to invest and create jobs”.

Mr Harris, who will brief cabinet tomorrow on the latest tariff developments, will speak to other European countries with large pharmaceutical sectors as the Government intensifies efforts to shield those parts of the Irish economy likely to be exposed to US tariffs as the EU intends to target US producers in their sectors.

Taoiseach Micheál Martin spoke to EU Commission president Ursula von der Leyen yesterday evening, raising a “particular focus” on the food, drinks and pharma industries.

Minister for Enterprise Peter Burke will brief Coalition leaders on plans to “sharpen up” on competitiveness, including new legislation on private wires which allow energy users to run their own cables to transfer electricity, reform to security clearance for investment through Enterprise Ireland and Environmental Protection Agency licensing reform.

→ Coalition looks to contain US tariffs fallout: page 3



Runaway success Dublin City Half Marathon

Emily Mansfield, one of nearly 12,000 runners in the Dublin City Half Marathon, celebrates finishing the 21km race yesterday with a selfie.

Report: Sports Monday

Photograph: Seb Daly/Sportsfile

Disqualified drivers could still secure insurance

Campaigner calls for integration of public and private IT systems on disqualifications

MARIE O'HALLORAN

Disqualified drivers may still be able to obtain insurance despite new regulations coming into effect today requiring insurance companies to obtain driver numbers before providing cover.

The new system commences as it emerged just 3 per cent of banned learner drivers surrendered their licences to the courts to have their ban recorded over the past five years, while only 8 per cent of disqualified drivers with full licences did so. From 2020 to the end of last

year, 40,282 drivers with full licences were disqualified, but only 3,200 surrendered them, allowing the disqualification to be recorded. In the same period 9,316 learner drivers were disqualified, but just 325 surrendered their permits for the conviction to be noted.

If their disqualification is not recorded, gardai and insurance companies may not be able to determine that the ban is in place and also because of IT difficulties. Motorists could renew their cover,

continuing to drive illegally.

The new system requiring motorists to submit their driver number comes into place two years after legislation around it was passed.

Minister for Transport Darragh O’Brien released the figures on banned drivers to People Before Profit TD Paul Murphy. The Minister acknowledged earlier this month that even with the introduction of the new system, insurers will not have access to real-time data “as this will require IT

changes both in my Department and in the many insurer and broker IT platforms”.

Three IT systems are involved – from the department, Insurance Ireland and the IMID Irish Motor Insurance Database – but they have yet to be integrated.

Mr O’Brien said the industry had “sufficient time to prepare for the mandatory capture of driver numbers”, and he could not delay the introduction of the insurance obligation on motorists any further.

Mr Murphy said “there may well be thousands of people still driving after being disqualified for good reason”.

Susan Gray of road safety campaign group Parc said “we believe thousands of drivers are still on the road because there is no consequence if they don’t surrender their licence in court”. She said “we need a date” for the integration of the ICT systems.

→ Three women killed in crashes: page 5

Kinahan crime figure’s seized house vacant due to ‘threats’

OLIVIA KELLY
Dublin Editor

The former home of senior Kinahan crime gang member Seán McGovern, bought by Dublin City Council from the Criminal Assets Bureau (Cab) almost five years ago, remains vacant due to “physical threats” to workers who have attempted to renovate the property.

Cab seized the house at 219 Kildare Road in Crumlin in March 2019 after the High Court the previous year ruled it had been bought with the proceeds of crime. In 2020, the house was sold to the council for use as social housing.

However, it has remained unoccupied and boarded up since, with steel panels, which are now rusted, sealing the doors and windows.

Councillors were last week told “a number of contractors

had attempted to undertake work to refurbish the semi-detached house so it could be allocated to a council tenant, but had been “physically threatened”.

Proposals to abandon plans to renovate the property for social housing and instead use it as “some sort of community hub” were now under consideration, Robert Buckle, senior engineer with the housing maintenance division, told a city council meeting.

However, it is understood senior local gardai are keen the property would be returned to housing use, and a number of families on the social housing waiting list who are aware of the property’s history have expressed an interest in being housed there.

Independent councillor Pat Dunne said the house must not be left unoccupied any longer. “Not only is it an eyesore on a

prominent corner, but it is a reminder to people of the criminal past of certain individuals. We can house a family there quickly, so I’m asking that it be no longer kicked to touch but it be dealt with.”

Land Registry records show McGovern bought the house in 2015. The High Court heard it was purchased for €150,000 through electronic fund transfer from an Investec Bank in Mauritius, care of a trust company, and €247,000 was spent on renovations. Both sums were found to be the proceeds of crime.

Despite the extravagant refurbishment costs, the house now requires extensive repairs.

Just days before it was seized by Cab, it was broken into and substantially damaged, with kitchen and bathroom fittings ripped out and removed. It was subsequently boarded up.

Weather

Mist and fog will clear to a mainly dry with sunny spells. Highs of 13-16 degrees in light to moderate southerly winds.

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Home News

Domestic violence: Those convicted of killing their spouse face losing guardianship rights over their children, under draft laws to be brought to Cabinet: page 3

Health: Industrial action by more than 80,000 healthcare workers has been averted: page 4

World News



France: Far-right leader Marine Le Pen is facing a court verdict today that could derail her plans to run in the next presidential election scheduled for 2027: page 6

Business Today

Housing: The Land Development Agency is on track to see its output of new homes double next year to 2,000, before rising to 3,500 a year by 2027: page 12

Pensions: Four in five Irish workers are not aware of the incoming compulsory workplace pension regime: page 12

Sports Monday

Rugby: Ireland scored eight tries on the way to a commanding 54-12 win away to Italy in the Women’s Six Nations Championship yesterday

Soccer: Man City and Aston Villa progressed in the FA Cup yesterday after wins over Bournemouth and Preston

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