

HACK YOUR HOME TO BOOST YOUR FINANCES

Joanne Hunt
Money Matters



Journalism is the first draft of history and killing journalists can allow history to be rewritten by their murderers

Sally Hayden
Opinion



DUNGLOE TO GO FOUR-STAR ON DONEGAL'S WILD ATLANTIC WAY GOES TO MARKET

Commercial
Property

International anger grows over Israeli attack on Gaza hospital

Monday's tank attack 'horrific and completely indefensible', says UK

Netanyahu discusses Gaza City plan with West Bank settler representatives

MARK WEISS
in Jerusalem

Israel faced increased international anger yesterday over the attack on a Gaza hospital which killed 20 people, including five journalists.

The UK government called Monday's attack on the Nasser hospital "horrific and completely indefensible". Prime minister Keir Starmer's spokesperson said journalists should always be protected and the strikes illustrated the need for a ceasefire.

The European Commission described the Israeli tank fire on the hospital as "completely unacceptable". Spokesperson Anouar El Anouni stressed that civilians and journalists must be protected under international law. "Civilians in Gaza have been suffering for far too long and it is time to break the cycle of violence," he said.

A public letter signed by 209 former EU ambassadors, senior diplomatic staff and ambassadors from EU nation states was published yesterday, calling for urgent action over Israel's war in Gaza and unlawful activities in the occupied West Bank.

The Israel Defense Forces (IDF) said a preliminary investigation into the hospital attack determined that Hamas had installed a surveillance camera at the site to track Israeli troop movements and to help direct attacks against soldiers.

Hamas operatives

The statement added that of those killed in the incident, six were identified as Hamas operatives, including one who took part in the Hamas attack on southern Israel on October 7th, 2023. The army said it regrets the harm caused to uninvolved civilians.

UN human rights spokesman Thameen Al-Kheetan said any Israeli investigation should ensure accountability. "There needs to be justice," he said.

Israel's security cabinet yesterday discussed its plan to attack Gaza City, which will be preceded by the forced expul-

sion of more than 800,000 residents in the coming weeks.

The ministers did not discuss the ceasefire and hostage release deal approved last week by Hamas. Prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu allocated three hours to the talks so he could participate, along with other ministers, at a meal at a Jerusalem restaurant with West Bank settler representatives.

A majority of the Israeli public supports a ceasefire that will bring back the 50 hostages in Hamas captivity, 20 of whom are believed to be alive. IDF chief of staff Eyal Zamir also believes Israel should accept a partial ceasefire.

Protests

Tens of thousands of Israelis joined protests across the country yesterday, blocking roads and culminating in a march and rally in Tel Aviv, urging the government to accept a ceasefire.

Released hostage Gadi Mozes said that Hamas' demands have not changed over the past two years and that Israel must agree to a deal.

"The importance of this day cannot be overstated. The cabinet meeting is simply illusory," he said. "I am not willing to sacrifice anyone on the altar of the messianic ambition of destroying Hamas."

Hanoch Milwidsky, a parliamentarian from Mr Netanyahu's ruling Likud party, described those who participated in yesterday's protests as "rioters in the service of Hamas".

The war began on October 7th, 2023, when Hamas-led gunmen burst into southern Israel, killing some 1,200 people, mainly civilians, and taking 251 hostages.

Israel's military offensive against Hamas has since killed at least 62,000 Palestinians, mostly civilians, according to the Gaza health ministry.

➔ **EU action against Israel 'long overdue': page 2**
'There needs to be justice,' UN tells Israel after Gaza hospital strike: page 6



POLICING CHANGE NATIONAL GUARD ON ARMED PATROL IN WASHINGTON

US national guard troops patrolling in Washington, DC, as part of what President Donald Trump refers to as a crackdown on crime, have begun carrying weapons. Unarmed guardsmen have been patrolling the city for the past two weeks after Mr Trump declared a crime emergency in the district.

Photograph: Anna Moneymaker/Getty

Drogheda reviews grading of pre-cancerous cells

MARTIN WALL and
SHAUNA BOWERS

A number of patients treated at Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital in Drogheda are being told this week of the miscategorisation of pre-cancerous cells as part of open disclosure procedures in the HSE.

Three patients are being invited to what are known as "open disclosure" meetings at the hospital this week.

Such meetings are organised between a healthcare provider

and a patient, or their relevant person, following a patient safety incident.

It is understood that in addition to these three patients, several dozen other patients will be sent letters advising them that the grading of their pre-cancerous cells has been altered following a review.

In some instances, the severity of the grading of the pre-cancerous cells has been increased and in other cases decreased.

It is understood in the case of one patient, a grading of mild,

attributed initially to pre-cancerous cells, has been upgraded to high.

In another case a mild grading has been found to be moderate.

It is understood in another case, a patient underwent a second biopsy, which was found to be unnecessary.

Consultant

The moves follow a review of work carried out by one consultant at the hospital.

In a statement yesterday,

Our Lady of Lourdes Hospital said: "In the course of our quality assurance process in the hospital, we commissioned an independent lookback of all histopathology slides across various specialities in relation to one consultant, focusing on a period from February to November 2024".

"This review is under way and any patients in relation to whom any findings are relevant will be contacted directly by the hospital. HSE Dublin and North East has provided neces-

sary information to the HSE in line with the National Patient Safety Briefing Protocol."

The hospital review is continuing and it is possible other patients may be invited to similar open disclosure meetings in the future.

Full transparency

Stephen McMahon, co-founder and director of the Irish Patients' Association (IPA), said full transparency was important. He called on senior management to answer questions

about when exactly it became aware of this issue and how many patients in total are affected.

"Patients should not be left waiting in fear for a dreaded letter, every affected person must be written to immediately," he said.

Though acknowledging this issue is separate to previous controversies in CervicalCheck as it does not relate to a screening programme, Mr McMahon said it "carries awful shadows of previous debates".

Increase in CAO points for majority of courses at several colleges

BRIAN MOONEY and
JACK WHITE

Central Applications Office (CAO) points requirements have experienced a "volatile" change for the majority of courses at several universities this year.

Despite a reduction in grade inflation and the addition of places on popular courses, some colleges have seen a rise in the points required for two-thirds of programmes.

There were 89,308 CAO applications made this year, a 7 per cent increase on the 83,169 made last year.

In Dublin, points requirements at Trinity have increased by 2.5 per cent, or just under 10 CAO points, on average.

Amid an increase in applications, the points for two-thirds of its programmes have risen. However, the number of courses requiring more than 600 points has remained steady.

With a 9 per cent rise in application numbers, University College Dublin has seen points for 20 of its programmes increase, with all of its courses now requiring at least 400 points.

Dublin is not an outlier, as the trend of rising point requirements is also seen elsewhere, including in Cork and Galway, although the level varies between universities.

Galway and Limerick

Two-thirds of courses at the University of Galway, for example, require higher points, while at the University of Limerick some programmes incurred a rise, but the majority have remained stable or even fallen.

Where universities have been able to maintain or reduce point requirements at 2024 levels, some have done so by increasing places on those courses where capacity allows. Those who sat the Leaving

Cert this year have fewer than 2024 candidates, which means courses requiring more than 600 points will largely stay steady.

However, for courses below 600 points, the effect of reducing enhanced grades is expected to be offset by the increase in CAO applicants and the presence of almost 20,000 who have sat their exams previously.

The majority of these applicants sat the Leaving Cert since 2020 and received a higher level of grade inflation.

A third-level source in the south of the country described the points change this year as "volatile".

However, they said such volatility was expected to some degree, due to rising demand, despite expectations among some that points would somewhat decrease or remain stable following the lowering of grade inflation.

Weather

Today will see sunny spells and occasional heavy showers. Highs of 16-19 degrees.

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Home News

Presidential election: Áras candidate Catherine Connolly has said she is concerned by the US's possible 'misuse' of its UN security council veto. **Page 2**

Down: A man in his 40s has been arrested on suspicion of murdering a man found dead in Newcastle. **Page 4**

World News



Mass deportations: Nigel Farage has promised mass deportations and vowed to take the UK out of the European Convention on Human Rights. **Page 6**

Business Today

Pension scheme: Former National Lottery chief Dermot Griffin has been picked to lead the agency in charge of the auto-enrolment scheme. **Page 12**

Health insurance: VHI has announced an average price increase of 3 per cent across its plans. **Page 13**

Sports Wednesday

Gaelic Games: Jack O'Connor will serve two more years as Kerry football manager after the county board ratified his appointment last night. **Page 20**

Champions League: Celtic missed out on a £40m bonanza as they lost to unfancied Kairat on penalties. **Page 19**