

SCÉAL
IRISH LANGUAGE
SUPPLEMENTInside
today

Nothing will be allowed to get in the way of the Ryder Cup. Why? Because of the only dread that seems to really haunt the State: fear of letting ourselves down

Fintan O'Toole
OpinionHEATHER
HUMPHREYS'
FAMILY HAS
NOTHING TO
APOLOGISE FOREdward Burke
OpinionSeveral
councils
close off
Independent
route to Áras

Sheridan secures Kerry County Council nomination but loses out in Laois

McGregor ends campaign to contest election, claiming process is 'fixed'

CORMAC McQUINN
Political Correspondent

Businessman Gareth Sheridan has become the first Independent candidate to secure a local authority's nomination to contest the presidential election.

However, the path for candidates seeking to win the required four endorsements from county and city councils has greatly narrowed after the "Super Monday" round of meetings.

Councillors on a number of local authorities, including Roscommon, Longford, Cork city, Galway city and Dublin city, opted not to nominate anyone.

Mr Sheridan received a nomination from Kerry County Council but lost out in Co Laois, where councillors voted against helping him to enter the race to succeed President Michael D Higgins.

Meanwhile, former mixed martial arts champion Conor McGregor said yesterday he was ending his campaign to contest the election, claiming the process is "fixed".

He claimed the eligibility rules in Ireland's "outdated Constitution" were a "strait-jacket" that prevented a "true democratic presidential election being contested".

He had been expected to address last night's special Dublin City Council meeting along with other prospective candidates.

'Unifying president'

Conservative campaigner Maria Steen told the meeting there would be no "truly Independent" candidate on the ballot paper unless councils or Oireachtas members gave someone a chance. She said she was not asking councillors to vote for her in the election or to "endorse every view point", but that she believed she could be a "unifying president".

Ms Steen is said to be half-way to securing support from the required 20 Oireachtas members to contest the election.

Independent Minister of State Seán Canney yesterday suggested he would not be add-

ing his name to the list, reiterating his support for Fine Gael candidate Heather Humphreys when asked if he might nominate Ms Steen.

In relation to what other Government supporting Independents might do, Mr Canney told Virgin Media Television: "We don't have any whip – and we may agree on certain things – but what people will do in terms of nominations for presidency, it's up to each individual."

Housing performance

Fianna Fáil candidate Jim Gavin told reporters at the party's think-in in Cork that the Government's performance on housing "is not good enough yet" and needs to improve.

He said he would, if elected, speak out "without fear or favour" on issues such as housing and seek to follow the example of Mr Higgins, but added that he was aware of the constitutional restraints of the role.

Earlier, Kerry County Council became the first local authority to nominate a candidate. Cllr Niall O'Callaghan said he was proposing Mr Sheridan, describing him as a deserving candidate – a young person experienced in business and life. The nomination was seconded by Cllr Martin Grady, who said Mr Sheridan was taking the role of president seriously and had come across well in his presentation to councillors last week.

No vote was taken on Mr Sheridan specifically as the council had previously decided it would approve a nominated candidate.

A Sheridan campaign source insisted he is "still in the mix" to secure the backing of four local authorities and that he is "in pole position" among the Independent hopefuls.

He is expected at Tipperary County Council's meeting today along with several others. Fine Gael's councillors in Tipperary will reportedly defy instructions from party headquarters to vote against Independents seeking to enter the race.

Fianna Fáil
think-in
Taoiseach
confronted
over health
service

Antoinette Burke (right) confronts Taoiseach Micheál Martin and Fianna Fáil TD Mary Butler over the lack of healthcare treatment received by her daughter Katie, outside the party's think-in in Co Cork.

Report: page 2
Photograph: Noel Sweeney/PA

Bloody Sunday families mark 'momentous day'

Freya
McClements

Northern Editor

Trial of Soldier F
over 1972 killings
begins at Belfast's
Laganside court

It was the day they have waited more than half a century for.

To be precise, they have waited 53 years, seven months and just over two weeks since January 30th, 1972, when members of the British Army's Parachute Regiment opened fire on anti-internment marchers in Derry's Bogside, killing 13 people. A 14th died later.

Finally, yesterday, that wait came to an end, with the beginning of the trial of Soldier F, the first soldier to be prosecuted for his actions on the day that became known as Bloody Sunday.

The former member of the Parachute Regiment is accused

of the murder of William McKinney and James Wray, and five counts of attempted murder. He denies the charges.

"Today marks a momentous day in our battle to secure justice for our loved ones who were murdered on Bloody Sunday," Mr McKinney's brother John told reporters outside Belfast's Laganside court complex.

"It has taken 53 years to get to this point and we have battled all the odds to get here."

He was among those who led the march to the court yesterday, alongside other relatives and supporters holding aloft portraits of the dead, just as

they had done at countless rallies and commemorations and hearings over the decades.

That campaign secured a public inquiry into Bloody Sunday, chaired by Lord Saville,

It has taken 53 years to get to this point and we have battled all the odds to get here

which in 2010 found the killings "unjustified and unjustifiable" and the victims innocent; there was subsequently an apology from the British government.

It also secured the trial that began today; though proceedings began in 2019, a separate legal development meant the case was discontinued and only reinstated after a legal challenge by the families.

Relentless commitment

"Everything that we have achieved to this point has been through a relentless commitment and a refusal to lie down," John McKinney said.

They would occupy the courtroom "very proudly with our heads held high and in the knowledge that, regardless of the ultimate outcome, we are on the right side of history".

Inside the courtroom Soldier F, who is the subject of a court order protecting his anonymity, sat shielded by a black curtain.

Opening the case, Louis Mably KC, prosecuting, told the non-jury court their case was that "the shooting was unjustified" and unarmed civilians were "simply shot as they ran away. The shooting was unnecessary and it was gratuitous".

The trial continues.

➔ Shooting of civilians on Bloody Sunday was 'unjustified', Soldier F trial hears: page 4

Magnier loses high-profile
case over Tipperary estate

RONAN MCGREEVY

Billionaire businessman John Magnier has lost his case to buy the Barne Estate in Co Tipperary.

In his judgment, High Court judge Mr Justice Max Barrett concluded a sale had not taken place between Mr Magnier and the owner of the Barne Estate, Richard Thomson-Moore.

Mr Justice Barrett said: "I am satisfied that neither the alleged land-sale agreement nor the alleged option agreement were ever concluded. Nor do I see any breach of the exclusivity agreement to arise. It follows that all the reliefs sought by the plaintiffs will be and are respectfully refused."

The 751-acre estate was put up for sale in July 2023. Mr Magnier claimed he and Mr Thomson-Moore concluded a sale for €15 million on the even-

ing of August 22nd, 2023, and that was a binding commitment.

The judge said he was satisfied that a sale had not taken place.

In a 74-page judgment, Mr Justice Barrett stressed the onus was on the plaintiff, in this case Mr Magnier, to provide the evidence a sale had taken place.

Kitchen-table meeting

Mr Magnier claimed the oral agreement he had reached during a kitchen-table meeting at Coolmore House on August 22nd, 2023, amounted to a sale. Mr Justice Barrett disagreed.

The judge said Mr Thomson-Moore, and agent John Stokes, did not have the legal authority to commit the Barne Estate to a sale as the decision ultimately rested with the trustees in Jersey, who were also the company directors.

"Nor did they [Thomson-Moore and Stokes] hold themselves out as having such authority. The company's directors first learned of the meeting the following day," the judge added.

"If Mr Magnier's hope was to conclude a binding deal, he was dealing with individuals who lacked authority to conclude such a deal."

Mr Justice Barrett said he was satisfied Mr Thomson-Moore and Mr Stokes had informed Mr Magnier at the August 22nd meeting the deal was subject to trustee approval.

The legal costs are likely to run into millions of euro. Mr Justice Barrett said he will hear both parties on costs at a later date.

➔ Tipperary estate dispute hinged on 'exclusivity agreement': page 3

Weather

Dry start with just isolated showers but rain will spread later. Highs of 14-17 degrees in light to moderate winds.

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Business +
Your Money

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Sports
Tuesday

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Athletics: Andrew Coscoran has earned a spot in tomorrow's World Athletics Championships 1,500m final. Page 21

THE REST
IS HISTORY
THE TITANIC

FRIDAY 17 APRIL 2026
BELFAST, WATERFRONT

SATURDAY 18 APRIL 2026
DUBLIN, CONVENTION CENTRE

MONDAY 20 APRIL 2026
CORK, OPERA HOUSE

TICKETS ON SALE THURS 25 SEP AT 9AM

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