



MARATHON EFFORT 18,500 TAKE PART IN DUBLIN

■ A general view of the field in the early stages of the Dublin City Marathon yesterday.
PHOTOGRAPH: BRYAN KEANE/INPHO. REPORTS: PAGE 7 & SPORTS WEEKEND

PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION

Connolly landslide prompts call for more left-wing unity and soul-searching in FF

A sign of what can be achieved when left works together, says SF leader

Fianna Fáil TDs demand discussion on leader Micheál Martin's future

PAT LEAHY and CORMAC MCQUINN

The fallout from the landslide win for Catherine Connolly in the presidential election this weekend began immediately. Sinn Féin leader Mary Lou McDonald said the result was a sign of what could be achieved when left-wing parties worked together – while Fianna Fáil TDs demanded discussion of Micheál Martin's future. Speaking on RTE, Ms McDonald said Ms Connolly's victory showed people how parties other than Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael could win an election.

"When we come together, when we work collaboratively, when we show up for each other, we can win," she said, though she said the party would run its own candidate in the forthcoming Galway West byelection.

Leaders of the other left-wing parties who supported Ms Connolly sounded similar notes during Saturday's count and after the results of the presidential election were announced at Dublin Castle.

Social Democrats leader Holly Cairns said: "Change doesn't stop here."

People Before Profit TD Paul Murphy called for "a major conference of the left to discuss the next steps of continuing and deepening left co-operation".

He said the Government must immediately drop plans to reform the triple lock governing Irish military deployment. Ms Connolly said during the campaign it was "at the core of our neutrality".

For Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, however, the post-mortems are likely to be bruising.

Fine Gael is likely to set up a post-election review when its national executive meets soon. There is also a separate commission on Fine Gael's future, which is expected to report before the end of the year.

In Fianna Fáil, three TDs said the party must now discuss the leadership of Micheál Martin in the wake of the election campaign.



■ President-elect Catherine Connolly at Dublin Castle on Saturday evening after she was announced as the landslide election winner. PHOTOGRAPH: ALAN BETSON

TDs John McGuinness, James O'Connor and John Lahart said yesterday they wanted the party to discuss Mr Martin's future – though all are regarded as long-time critics of the party leader.

Mr Lahart said: "Fianna Fáil has suffered. There was a lot of hurt, embarrassment, humiliation. A modern political party can't afford those errors in judgment." Mr Lahart, however, stressed his comments should not be seen as the start of a heave against the party leader.

Carlow-Kilkenny TD John McGuinness said yesterday that Fianna Fáil's election campaign was a "shambles" and said the party needed to "reinvent itself for the future", including a change of leader "in due course".

Cork East TD James O'Connor said it had been "a very embarrassing number of weeks for the Fianna Fáil organisation" and there was "anger" that "we allowed something like this to happen" as well as "fury" with the party leader.

Asked if he thought the party needed to change its leader now, he said: "I think everything needs to be on the table."

Minister for Justice Jim O'Callaghan, considered by many to be Mr Martin's most likely successor, previously said he had no intention of challenging him for the leadership, though he has acknowledged he had ambitions to lead the party some day.

A Fianna Fáil spokeswoman

said a review of the election had been established by the parliamentary party, and the party would be making no further comment until it is completed.

Meanwhile, congratulations continued to roll in for president-elect Ms Connolly after her overwhelming victory in Friday's election.

The Independent TD was elected Ireland's 10th president in a landslide result that saw her take 63.4 per cent of the vote, comfortably winning on the first count.

Fine Gael candidate Heather Humphreys took less than half that figure, winning 29.5 per cent of first preferences.

Fianna Fáil candidate Jim Gavin, who ended his campaign in early October but remained on the ballot paper, took 7.2 per cent of the vote.

Turnout was higher than expected at 45.8 per cent, exceeding the 43.9 per cent of 2018, buoyed in part by a campaign to

encourage disaffected voters to cast a spoiled ballot. Spoiled votes came in at 13 per cent – multiples of the usual level.

Speaking after her election victory was formally declared at Dublin Castle, Ms Connolly said she would be a president for all: those who voted for her and those who did not.

She said she would "speak out when necessary", specifically mentioning Ireland's neutrality, and said she would "raise my voice", citing her campaign promise to "shape a new republic together".

Meanwhile, it is understood that President Michael D Higgins was taken to hospital last night. Aras an Uachtaráin declined to comment but it is understood the President was receiving treatment, though the stay overnight is understood to be precautionary.

Mr Higgins, who is 84, will reach the end of his second term on November 10th.

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PAT LEAHY



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UNA MULLALLY



DESERVED WIN BUT A HOLLOW CROWN
FINTAN O'TOOLE



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HSE seeks more vaccine uptake after 'severe' flu season

SHAUNA BOWERS
Health Correspondent

The health service is devising plans to increase uptake of the flu vaccine in areas and cohorts of society that traditionally decline the jab, a senior health official has said.

The prevalence of respiratory illnesses is beginning to increase across the State, according to the latest figures from the

infectious disease watchdog, which described the last flu season as "severe and prolonged", and "more intense" than previous years.

Data from the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) show there were 119 cases of the flu in the week ending October 18th, up from 88 the previous week. There were 17 hospitalisations, but none of these required intensive care.

There was also one death. Respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) is currently at "low levels", the HPSC said, but is increasing – rising from 17 cases to 40 in the week ending October 18th.

Dr Colm Henry, chief clinical officer at the Health Service Executive (HSE), said last year's flu season was "very significant", largely attributing this to the dominant variant.

"The variant of flu we had

was one we hadn't seen in some years – AH1N1," he said. "We probably hadn't seen it since 2018 or 2019. Sometimes with that gap you see a greater impact. It's too early for us to say yet what the flu pattern, dominant variant will be yet."

Dr Henry said the severity of flu season is largely driven by the dominant variant-type. He added: "We can't control the flu subtype or the way it transmits,

but we can control the vaccine uptake."

Consequently, he said work is ongoing to encourage people to take up the vaccine.

"That's something our public health teams analyse," he said. "They're devising regional plans [and] identifying areas of low uptake – identifying groups where there's low uptake and focusing resources and maximising uptake in those groups."

Weather

A dry start for most, but it will be cloudy with patchy rain or drizzle in the west and southwest, spreading east later

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World News



Middle East: Binyamin Netanyahu said yesterday Israel would determine which forces it would allow as part of a planned international force in Gaza. Page 10

Business Today

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Tariffs: US and Chinese trade negotiators said they had agreed to a framework of a deal on tariffs. Page 10

Sports Monday

Club hurling: ATJ Reid inspired Ballyhale win their 21st title in Kilkenny as Loughmore-Castleiney secure back-to-back titles in Tipperary

Rodgers under pressure: Hearts beat Celtic to take an eight-point lead in the Scottish Premier Division

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