



# TOMORROW'S WORLD

EXPERTS PREDICT THE NEXT 25 YEARS WEEKEND

## 12 HISTORY-MAKING MOMENTS OF 2025

WORLD NEWS

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# THE IRISH TIMES

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### St Stephen's Day tradition Wren Boys in Sandymount

On St Stephen's Day, traditionally known as Lá an Dreoilín (Day of the Wren), all over Ireland, Wren Boys, usually local bachelors, would parade through the towns and villages carrying a dead wren on a wooden pole and perform songs and dances.

Photograph: Nick Bradshaw



## Drug raids linked to highly impure cocaine

Seizures of 2% purity with drug composed almost entirely of other substances  
Top garda says €157m MV Matthew raid increased wholesale price of cocaine

CONOR LALLY  
Crime and Security Editor

Large cocaine seizures in recent years have led to a surge in the wholesale price of the drug, resulting in some dealers reducing the potency of street cocaine in Ireland to try protect their profits.  
Gardaí have seized quantities of cocaine offered for sale

in pubs that was below 2 per cent purity, meaning the drug was heavily diluted and composed almost entirely of substances other than cocaine.  
The Garda's most senior drug squad investigator said cocaine valued at €157 million seized on the MV Matthew ship in 2023 increased the price of the drug on the wholesale market in Ireland as the cartel who

controlled the drugs carried out an "investigation" into what had gone wrong.  
In an interview with The Irish Times, Det Chief Supt Seamus Boland, who leads the Garda's Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau, said the cost of 1kg of cocaine increased to €40,000, from €25,000, in the period after the Panamanian tanker was intercepted in a Garda and Defence Forces operation off the coast of Cork in 2023.  
The seizure resulted in a reduced supply of cocaine as drug traffickers decided to "pull back" on smuggling runs amid a loss of confidence in Irish drug dealers who encouraged them to route 2.2 tonnes of cocaine through Irish waters.

"There was distrust on their side, so until they carried out their own investigations, they pulled back," he said of the Dubai-based criminals who control the routes into Europe.  
Those senior European figures include Dubliner Daniel Kinahan, the leader of the Kinahan cartel.  
**Criminal networks**  
Det Chief Supt Boland said in the period since 2023 the shock within criminal networks caused by the MV Matthew cocaine seizure – the biggest of its kind in Ireland – dissipated and the wholesale value of cocaine returned to €25,000-€30,000.  
Overall, he said the Forensic Science Ireland tests showed the average purity of cocaine in

Ireland was about 58 per cent, and was imported in consignments that were over 90 per cent pure.  
More recently, however, cocaine seized by gardaí that had been offered for sale in pubs was below 2 per cent purity and the substance was mixed with other products, usually medicinal substances to bulk it up.  
Det Chief Supt Boland said people who bought the drug often did not notice because they were already drunk.  
On the subject of violent crime, he said while fatal shootings linked to organised crime had been at record lows in recent years, drug-related intimidation was a major concern.  
It was likely to become an

even bigger focus for the Garda next year, especially in the wake of the firebombing in Edenderry, Co Offaly, on the night of December 5th.  
It claimed the lives of Tadhg Farrell (4) and his grand-aunt Mary Holt (60) who were in the family home on Castleview Park at the time.  
"The majority of people who are using cocaine and are feeding this whole industry don't live in communities that are devastated by violence – it never comes to their door," said the senior garda.

➔ **A year with no gangland gun murders: how one Dublin attack 'changed everything': page 5**

## Christy Moore was questioned under UK terror laws 'for curiosity value'

MARK HENNESSY

Singer Christy Moore was detained and questioned by British police for hours at Holyhead in 2004 "for entertainment or curiosity value", the Depart-

ment of Foreign Affairs complained to the head of British ports policing.  
In October 2004, Moore and his driver were questioned under the Prevention of Terrorism Act at the Welsh port by Britain's special branch police about song lyrics, personal details and family members as the pair made their way to a number of concerts in Britain.  
The singer later made a strongly worded complaint, saying he had found the detectives' action "threatening", "frightening" and "saddening".

The Moore case featured prominently at a meeting between officials at the Department of Foreign Affairs and their counterparts at the British Home Office in December that year, according to records released to the National Archives.  
The meeting was called after a sharp rise in the number of complaints made that year over the treatment meted out to Irish people travelling through British ports and airports.  
Three main areas of concern were raised by the Irish officials: the photographing of pas-

➔ **Singer Christy Moore made a complaint about his treatment by British police in 2004**



senger room where he was held for two hours was locked.  
Eamonn McKee, an official for the Foreign Affairs Anglo-Irish division at the time, questioned Commander Bob Milton – who was the UK's national co-ordinator of ports policing – about Moore's case.  
McKee brought up the issue of inappropriate questioning and the damage that can be done should a person feel they are being questioned for entertainment or curiosity value.  
Refusing to comment on individual cases, Milton spoke

about the training problems that could occur with inexperienced officers, saying it was up to passengers to make complaints to local chief constables, who could decide on disciplinary action.  
The Irish officials made clear that their main complaint centred on the photographing of passengers, saying that people were being captured on the British side.  
➔ **State Papers: pages 8 & 9**

### Photos of the year

MAGAZINE

### The stars of 2025 Critics' choice

### CHRISTMAS GIVEAWAY

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### Sport review of the year

SPORTSWEEKEND

### Home News

**Court of Appeal:** A man has received court permission to challenge a €125 clamping charge. **Page 4**

**Drug crime:** Gardaí have recorded more than 2,500 incidents of drug-related intimidation since 2021. **Page 4**

### World News

**Nigeria:** US defence secretary Pete Hegseth has warned of further strikes against Islamic State. **Page 10**

### Weather

Frost will clear early to leave a dry day with widespread spells of low winter sunshine. It may, however, turn a little cloudier across the east later. Highest temperatures of 3-8 degrees in light to moderate breezes.

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