

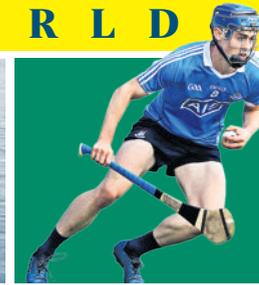


IRELAND AND THE WORLD



Paddling for the planet

A record-breaking bid to clean up rivers Times2



Why Dublin are superpower (in-waiting)

Christy O'Connor, Page 46

Children's science centre delayed at least five years amid row

Seán McCárthaigh
 Senior Ireland Reporter

Plans to deliver Ireland's first national science centre for children may be delayed until at least 2023 amid a row between the promoters and the Office of Public Works (OPW).

The state-backed centre was to open in 2016 but documents, obtained under

freedom of information laws, show that the project has effectively stalled amid a dispute over the original agreement.

They show that the OPW believes it has been threatened with legal action. It has responded by warning the National Children's Science Centre (NCSC) that political support for the project has waned.

Exploration Station, the National

Interactive Science Centre, is to be built in part of the National Concert Hall in Dublin. It is expected to house 200 exhibits including a €2 million planetarium, attracting more than 150,000 visitors a year.

Ireland is the only country in the EU without a dedicated, interactive science centre for children. The proposal has received state backing but the OPW has

yet to issue a tender for the project, despite signing a 2013 agreement with the NCSC to complete the centre in 2016.

It is understood that the duration of the contract will be 50 months which means the centre is unlikely to open before 2023 at the earliest.

The OPW is prepared to commit €30 million to the project but it is understood the overall cost has become

higher due to the delay. Correspondence between the parties shows that Danny O'Hare, the NCSC chairman, is becoming increasingly frustrated.

The NCSC has accused the OPW of being in "flagrant and continuing" breach of the agreement by not advancing the project.

Dr O'Hare complained on numerous occasions. **Continued on page 7, col 5**



STEFAN ROUSSEAU/PA; OLI SCARFF/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Dancing Queen The British prime minister Theresa May danced onto the stage to Abba's hit song before delivering her speech at the Tory party conference. Pages 20-22

Concern over Naughten's dinner with head of bid

Peter O'Dwyer
 Senior Ireland Business Reporter

Denis Naughten was told of potential changes relating to the last remaining bidder for the National Broadband Plan at a private dinner hosted by the businessman heading the consortium, *The Times* can reveal.

The communications minister accepted an invitation from David McCourt, the head of Granahan McCourt, to attend a private dinner in New York earlier this year.

Mr Naughten, who was in New York to address the United Nations, met Mr McCourt with officials from his department in mid-July.

At that point Mr McCourt's consortium still included SSE, the British infrastructure company, as well as Granahan McCourt, Enet and others. The consortium was the only bidder remaining after Eir and Siro, a joint venture between Vodafone and the ESB, walked away from the process. SSE's withdrawal was subsequently announced at the end of July.

At the dinner, the telecoms entrepreneur reassured Mr Naughten of his commitment to the project to provide high-speed broadband to 543,000 rural homes and businesses and told him that a request could be made to alter the consortium as SSE may withdraw.

Actavo, the engineering services company owned by Denis O'Brien, is one of several new partners involved in Granahan McCourt's bid, along with Nokia, the Kelly Group and KN Group.

A spokesman for the Department of Communications confirmed the details of the dinner yesterday. He said: "During the course of this social event Mr McCourt mentioned to the minister that the department had raised issues regarding the speed with which his consortium was submitting required documentation to the NBP procurement process, and the risk of further delays."

"Mr McCourt also said that a request may be submitted to the department around a potential change to the consortium structure. In this context, **Continued on page 2, col 3**

Doctors discharge suicidal patients to 'pass the buck'

Vulnerable at risk because staff not properly trained, says top psychologist

Aaron Rogan Senior Ireland Reporter

Doctors are discharging suicidal patients from emergency departments to "get rid of the risk", a leading psychologist has said.

Eoin Galavan, a clinical psychologist and expert in suicide prevention, said that vulnerable people are being placed in danger because hospital staff are not properly trained to deal with them.

He said doctors in emergency departments must stop discharging

suicidal patients once their medical problem has been dealt with. Too often doctors were not equipped to deal with suicidal patients if they did not require psychiatric care and simply discharged them instead, he said.

Mental health experts are calling for Ireland to adopt a "no wrong door" framework that would require all services to link up so that suicidal people are not left without proper treatment.

Dr Galavan said that a person's suicidal tendencies must be treated as the

primary problem regardless of other issues such as drug or alcohol addiction. "It is better than the current passing-the-buck approach that happens where everyone's just trying to get rid of the risk," he said.

Today *The Times* reveals the details of a woman from Cork who died aged 31 in May this year after her family said she was discharged from an emergency department despite their pleas for her to be detained under the Mental Health Act. Letters to the hospital show the

family's concern that the woman, who had psychiatric problems and was addicted to drugs, was repeatedly discharged from hospitals and acute mental health wards even after she told a counsellor she wanted to die.

The case mirrors that of Caoilte Ó Broin, whose body was found in the Liffey in 2016. His family said it was difficult to get care for him because he was repeatedly turned away from mental health services as he had problems with **Continued on page 8, col 5**

TODAY'S EDITION

Budget talks for childcare cash

Katherine Zappone is locked in "difficult" budget negotiations with the finance minister to secure funding to extend the affordable childcare scheme. **Page 4**

Housebuilding plan 'sped up'

Leo Varadkar says that the government is speeding up its housebuilding programme and has dismissed accusations that it has "sat on the sidelines". **Page 6**

Noise row over doughnut shop

The Krispy Kreme doughnut shop that opened in Dublin last week has been forced to close a drive through at night after neighbours complained about noise. **Page 9**

COMMENT

The new garda commissioner must promote a vision of reform and service for his force

CORMAC LUCEY, PAGE 13

Trump rebuked for mockery

President Trump's mocking of the woman who made sex-assault claims against the judge he has chosen for the Supreme Court was criticised by three key senators. **Page 24**

Firms 'must invest in IT'

Innovation in financial services creates opportunities but also poses risks that could lead to another crisis, a Central Bank of Ireland deputy governor said. **Page 31**

Horan set for return to Mayo

James Horan, the former Mayo manager, will be put forward for ratification at an executive committee meeting to resume the role that he left in 2014. **Page 56**

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DINNER TONIGHT**Tuscan chicken**

This is one of those easy but special chicken stews, flavoured with lemon and rosemary, white wine and stock. The gravy bobs with black and green pitted olives, the flavours and textures complemented by boiled potatoes to mash into the delicious sauce. Alternatively, serve with crusty bread and green beans.

Serves 4

Prep 15 min

Cook 40 min

Ingredients: 700g chicken thigh fillets; 2 tbsp flour; 2-3 tbsp



olive oil; 1 onion; 2 garlic cloves; 2 sprigs rosemary; 250ml chicken stock; 250ml white wine; 1 lemon; 50g green pitted olives; 50g black pitted olives.

Unfurl the chicken fillets and slice down the pieces into 3 or 4 chunky strips. Toss with the flour. Brown in batches in 2 tbsp hot oil in a spacious, lidded frying/sauté pan. Meanwhile, halve, peel and finely chop

the onion and garlic. Soften the onion and garlic in the residual oil in the pan or wipe out the pan and use the remaining 1 tbsp oil. Return the chicken. Add the rosemary, microplane the lemon zest over the top and add the juice of half the lemon plus the stock and wine. Stir vigorously as the liquid comes to simmer. Reduce the heat to low, cover and cook for 20 minutes. Stir in the olives and season to taste with salt and lemon juice. Simmer, uncovered, for a further 5 minutes. Serve now or reheat later.

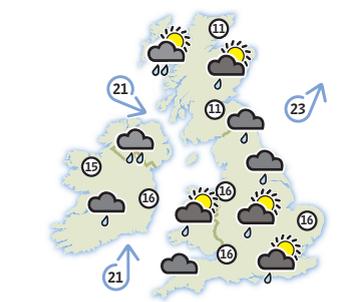
Lindsey Bareham

COMMENT

Why tackling corruption needs to become a priority for Ireland

ROBERT GILLANDERS, THUNDERER, PAGE 14

THE WEATHER



Overcast with outbreaks of rain in Ireland, but some bright spells may develop by noon. **Forecast, page 18**

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Calls for report on campus sexual assault and violence

Ellen Coyne Senior Ireland Reporter

Universities, students and the government have pledged to join forces to examine the scale of sexual violence on campuses across Ireland.

Mary Mitchell O'Connor, the junior minister for higher education, said that sexual assault was "too common" for too many third level students. She will be joined by Charlie Flanagan, the justice minister, and representatives from the gardai at a forum on sexual violence in Dublin Castle today.

It was reported last month that three students had said they were sexually assaulted during freshers week at University College Cork. A study by the National University of Ireland Galway this summer said that 70 per cent of women and 40 per cent of men had suffered some level of sexual harassment by the end of college.

"This problem will only be effectively tackled by everyone working together. Third level institutions have a responsibility in this area, and many have run sexual consent workshops for their students. These can have a significant positive impact on the students they engage with," Ms Mitchell O'Connor

said. She had previously backed mandatory consent classes for all freshers. She said that she was holding today's forum to hear "first hand" what universities were doing to tackle sexual violence.

The justice minister has praised Lynn Ruane, the student activist and independent senator, for starting a national conversation about sexual violence.

Mr Flanagan told Ms Ruane, who recently spoke about her experience of rape, that a "technical issue" was delaying the first national sexual violence study in 12 years. He has promised a second Sexual Assault and Violence in Ireland (SAVI) report. The first was in 2002, and the government has failed to deliver on a promise to carry out a second one for over four years.

Ms Ruane revealed that she had been raped in her own home in 2010 after a party. A man let himself into her room and raped her while she was asleep. She woke up during the attack.

Yesterday she asked Mr Flanagan in the Seanad when the government was going to carry out a second SAVI report to try and understand the scale of sexual violence. "For the last two weeks, since I shared what happened to

me, I have been inundated with hundreds of letters and mails from women and girls from every part of this island," she said.

"Some people may never be able to speak to another person about their experience of sexual assault, much less a garda. Just because someone cannot report, though, does not mean they should be invisible.

"We need a survey that goes into communities, that can reach survivors in their own surroundings and translate their experiences, their pain in sharing that part of themselves into a better understanding of the realities of sexual violence, the barriers to accessing law enforcement, medical and therapeutic services for those abused and their families and how the state can do better and respond to these needs."

Mr Flanagan said that it was "extremely important" to the government to have up to date and reliable data on sexual violence in Ireland.

He said that a "technical issue" with carrying out the report was delaying him being able to get government approval to set up a second SAVI. He added that he was keen to work with Ms Ruane on the matter.

Banks pay out €580m over tracker mortgage scandal

Niamh Lyons Ireland Political Editor

Banks have paid out €580 million to 38,400 affected tracker mortgage customers, the governor of the Central Bank will tell a committee today.

Philip Lane will confirm that the process is "significantly advanced", with 93 per cent of those who were taken off low rates receiving offers of redress.

Four of the five main lenders are close to completing their redress and compensation process, with the Central Bank "exerting significant pressure" on the remaining lender.

"We will continue to challenge them [lenders] where necessary in order to confirm that all groups of affected customers have been identified and included for redress and compensation," Mr Lane will tell the Oireachtas finance committee today. Separate enforcement investigations into six lenders are in progress.

There are still concerns about the culture within the financial sector, according to the governor. He will also acknowledge the detrimental and "devastating" effect that the failures of lenders have had on customers, including the loss of homes and properties.

The Central Bank conducted an

industry-wide review of tracker mortgage accounts. The governor will say some banks adopted a "narrowly legalistic approach" with some offering initial compensation proposals that "fell well short of our expectations", adding: "While such issues were addressed, they raised serious questions about the current and not just historic culture in the banks."

Mr Lane will also stress that the central bank has placed a "specific focus" on improving the levels of diversity at senior levels in financial services firms. "The aim is to improve decision-making with these firms, reduce the risk of groupthink, improve risk management, and in doing so, ensure that organisations give sufficient priority to the experience and treatment of their customers," he will say.

He will also update the committee on preparations for Britain leaving the European Union.

"We have received more than 100 Brexit-related applications for authorisation, across a number of sectors," he will say. The applicants, which include banks, investment companies and commercial and retail insurance, intend to sell directly to Irish customers or from Ireland to the EU.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1
Concern over Naughten dinner

Mr McCourt sought to reassure the minister of his commitment to the process and that his team was taking all necessary measures to expedite matters," the spokesman said.

Mr Naughten told the Oireachtas communications committee on Tuesday that he had a "discussion" with Mr McCourt in New York. He told the committee that he did not express any opinion about potential changes to the consortium as it was not his role to do so.

The department spokesman last night said that the minister did not engage in the conversation that took place at the dinner, other than to tell the businessman that it would be inappropriate

to discuss the broadband plan. The spokesman said one of the minister's officials noted the information relayed by Mr McCourt and passed it on to the National Broadband Division upon his return to Dublin.

However, a source familiar with the meeting told *The Times* that Mr Naughten and his officials wanted to know whether Mr McCourt remained committed to the NBP and sought assurances to that end.

The revelation that Mr Naughten attended a private event with Mr McCourt while in New York came as the minister was urged to publish the minutes of the meeting and explain why he had met with the businessman.

Eamon Ryan, the Green Party leader and former communications minister,

'Prescription levy affecting health of poor'

Katie O'Neill Ireland Reporter

The government has been urged to begin phasing out the €2 prescription levy for medical card holders before next week's budget.

The presidents of the Irish Pharmacy Union (IPU) and the National Association of General Practitioners (NAGP) have jointly called for an end to the fee, describing it as a levy on the health and wellbeing of the least well-off.

Maitiú Ó Tuathail, of NAGP, said the fee was a barrier to patients getting vital medicine. He said: "A system must be introduced whereby marginalised people are exempted from fees which they frequently cannot afford." Dr Ó Tuathail, pointed to research from 2016 by UCD and Trinity College Dublin academics which showed that when the prescription charges were introduced there was a fall in medicine use.

A levy of 50 cent per item was introduced for medical card holders in 2010 and rose in previous budgets to €2.

Daragh Connolly, of the IPU, said people should be focusing on getting well, "not worrying about how they will pay for their next vital prescription".

said the minister had left himself open to accusations of having been "swayed" by Mr McCourt.

Mr Ryan said: "I think the question is what did they discuss, why did he have the meeting and how does he avoid accusations that it's open to him being swayed? I'd be interested to know who else was at that meeting in New York. I think [releasing the minutes] would be appropriate. The minister himself brought up that they were there and he should definitely share them."

Catherine Murphy, the Social Democrats co-leader, accused Mr Naughten of having acted "in an inappropriate manner". Joan Burton, the Labour TD, said the minister had "questions to answer" and called on him to make a statement in the Dáil on the matter.



Film & Music

News and reviews of the latest releases Times2



Early election holds no fears for Varadkar

David Davin-Power, page 18

Callinan blamed for smear as garda whistleblower vindicated

Niamh Lyons, Jennifer Bray
 Ellen Coyne

Martin Callinan, the former garda commissioner, has been excoriated for smearing and denigrating Sergeant Maurice McCabe in the third interim report of the Disclosures Tribunal.

The inquiry was established to investigate claims that garda chiefs or-

chestrated a smear campaign, including false sex abuse claims, against the whistleblower — a scandal that almost led to the collapse of the government last year. Mr Justice Peter Charleton praised the integrity and fortitude of Sergeant McCabe and said he “had the interests of the people of Ireland uppermost in his mind” at all times.

The tribunal accepted the explana-

tion of Frances Fitzgerald, the former justice minister, in relation to her knowledge of the garda legal strategy at the O’Higgins Commission. It said her decision to resign last November was a selfless act carried out in the national interest. Opposition TDs stood by their calls for her to resign, saying she had lost the confidence of the Dáil.

The judge found no evidence that

Nóirín O’Sullivan, Mr Callinan’s successor, played any “hand, act or part” in the smear campaign but heavily criticised discipline and management structures within the force.

The tribunal might have been avoided completely, the report said, if Tusla had explained its creation of a false rape claim against Mr McCabe. Superintendent David Taylor, the

former garda press officer, was also denounced in the tribunal report for his part in smearing the garda whistleblower. It said that he was a witness whose “credibility was completely undermined by his own bitterness”.

The report said Mr Callinan was part of a “campaign of calumny” against Mr McCabe and he was actively aided by
Continued on page 7, col 1

Broadband plan in crisis after Naughten resigns

Minister held ‘four extra meetings’ with businessman

Peter O’Dwyer
 Senior Ireland Business Reporter

The National Broadband Plan was plunged into further crisis yesterday as Denis Naughten resigned amid concerns that the project was compromised by a series of private meetings he had with the last remaining bidder.

In a highly charged speech the former communications minister told the Dáil that the taoiseach had lost confidence in him and that he had been asked to reflect on his position. It came after a series of revelations in *The Times* about Mr Naughten’s contact with David McCourt, the preferred bidder for the contract.

Leo Varadkar said last night that he had not been informed of an additional four private dinners between the pair and that this had left the former minister open to allegations of a conflict of interest. The deepening controversy casts further doubt on the troubled infrastructure project.

Mr Varadkar yesterday ordered a review of the procurement process for the state contract to construct the €1 billion rural broadband network.

“I have no doubt that his intentions were honourable at all points,” he said of Mr Naughten.

“But I do believe he left himself open to allegations of a conflict of interest and an inappropriate relationship with Mr McCourt, which could have in turn brought the process into question, thus potentially jeopardising the project in its entirety. Ultimately as minister he had a decision-making role,” the taoiseach told the Dáil.

The resignation stunned government and opposition politicians yesterday and has left the passage of the minority government’s budget on a knife-edge.

Mr Naughten announced his resignation in an extraordinary Dáil statement, saying he had been left in an “impossible, stark position” that no politician ever wanted to be in after the



David McCourt entertained Denis Naughten at his house while a €1 billion infrastructure contract was under consideration

taoiseach indicated that he did not have confidence in him. No member of the opposition had sought his resignation. There were no senior government ministers in the chamber during Mr Naughten’s emotional address, after which he left immediately without answering opposition questions.

His decision came after a week of intense scrutiny over his contact with

Mr McCourt during the procurement process. Last week *The Times* revealed that the pair had had a private dinner in New York in July.

Mr McCourt, the head of Granahan McCourt, is the lead bidder in the last remaining consortium vying for the lucrative state contract after the recent withdrawals of Eir and Siro, a joint venture between Vodafone and the

ESB. Details of the meeting in Manhattan released by the Department of Communications showed that a wide-ranging discussion was held.

A copy of the NBP communication protocol first reported by this newspaper showed that the minister and his officials had contravened the rules of the procurement process, which state
Continued on page 2, col 3

Dog stadium sale at twice market rate ‘a disgrace’

Jennifer Bray
 Ireland Deputy Political Editor

The state’s purchase of a former greyhound stadium for almost twice the value placed on it by an estate agent has been called a “disgrace” at a powerful Dáil committee.

Opposition TDs demanded answers as to why the Department of Education paid the Irish Greyhound Board (IGB) €23 million for the site in Harold’s Cross. As disclosed by *The Times*, Savills, the estate agent hired by the board, valued the land at €12 million if it was to be used for housing and €6 million if it remained as land for recreation use.

At the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) yesterday, David Cullinane, a Sinn Féin TD, said that the price paid “just happened to match the €21.3 million debts accumulated by the Irish Greyhound Board”. He added: “I raised concerns at the time that the sale price could be perceived as a bailout. The news of the valuations done by Savills certainly doesn’t assuage those fears.”

“The Department of Education and the Greyhound Board need to appear before the committee to explain just what went on here.”

Marc MacSharry, a Fianna Fáil TD, said it was a disgrace and told the committee: “If this was a bailout for Bord na nGon [IGB], call it that, but don’t treat the people like fools.”

The purchase of the stadium was subject to the site being rezoned for school use, which was approved by Dublin city council last year. Land used for schools would generally cost the same or less than land used for housing.

Documents show that Seán Ó Foghlú, the secretary-general of the Department of Education, told the PAC last year that its offer of €23 million was based on an assessment of the site by the Valuation Office. Its value of €23 million was provided in April last year, a month after Savills’ valuation.

Shane Cassells, a Fianna Fáil TD, said: “The thing that really galls me, did the Department of Education get value for money? I would like to see the methodology that they used.”

