

## Sports Monday

★ Kerry and Galway win provincial finals  
★ How to start – and finish – a marathon in the best shape



**Lorcan Sirr  
Mel Reynolds**  
Social housing output has actually halved per capita since 1975  
Opinion, page 10



**Conor Pope**  
Availability, cost, economics, range, and the price of batteries: a guide to electric cars  
Pricewatch, page 9



**Una Mullally**  
Is AI the biggest cause for concern? Or are digitally addicted humans the problem?  
Opinion, page 10

## A sadly familiar scene: The 199th mass shooting in the US this year



**Martin Wall  
Analysis**

The footage on social media showed a depressingly familiar scene. Bodies of innocent victims strewn on the ground, this time at a shopping centre.

The alleged perpetrator, dressed in black, lay dead nearby. Beside him was an AR-15-style assault rifle.

The mass shooting at the Allen Premium Outlets, about 40km northeast of Dallas, Texas, is the 199th such

incident this year, according to the Gun Violence Archive in the US, which collates such data. This is the largest number of such shootings at this point of the year since at least 2016.

The Gun Violence Archive defines a mass shooting as any incident in which four or more people, not including the shooter, are killed.

At least nine people, including the gunman, died in the

shootings at the Allen Premium Outlets on Saturday.

Medical City Healthcare, which runs 16 hospitals in the area, said in a statement its trauma facilities were treating eight wounded people who ranged in age from five to 61.

Witnesses described scenes of panic – almost a stampede, one said – as an individual stepped from a car outside the shopping complex and opened

fire at people on the footpath.

In the sprawling centre, which has about 120 stores, shoppers and staff ran for cover, hiding in storage areas or other out-of-the-way places.

A police officer who was in the shopping mall for unrelated reasons, shot and killed the gunman, authorities said.

The attack was the second most deadly such incident in the US this year. The killings

will again put the spotlight on gun laws in the US. Following the massacre of 19 school children and two teachers in Uvalde, Texas a year ago, US president Joe Biden signed into law the first significant gun control measures in the country in about 30 years.

Biden acknowledged that it did not go far enough but with a Republican-controlled House of Representatives and insuffi-

cient support in the senate to overcome a filibuster, further legislation seems unlikely.

After the California shootings this year the president announced an executive order with the goal of increasing the number of background checks conducted before firearm sales – making this as close of possible to a universal requirement without legislation.

But Biden's real aim is to ban

assault rifles – used in many mass shootings – and high-capacity magazines. Yesterday the president ordered the US flag be flown at half mast on all public and military buildings as a mark of respect to those who died in Allen, Texas. But a ban on assault weapons seems as far away as ever.

Report: World News, page 6

## Secret deal allows RAF to defend Irish skies

Defence agreement with UK from 1950s remains despite concerns over 70 years

Revisions after 9/11 led to understanding on where British may use lethal force

**CONOR GALLAGHER**  
Crime and Security  
Correspondent

Ireland maintains a secret arrangement dating back to the Cold War era, allowing the UK to police the country's airspace, despite ministers and military officers raising concerns about it over the years, The Irish Times has learned.

The agreement was drafted in the early 1950s when relations between the west and the Soviet Union were at a low point, according to interviews with diplomatic, political and military figures.

In the knowledge that the Defence Forces has almost no ability to monitor or intercept the new long-range strategic bombers being developed by the Soviet Union, the State entered into a formal arrangement with the UK in 1952 which would allow RAF aircraft to intercept hostile aircraft in Irish airspace.

This agreement was renewed and updated over the years, most notably following the attacks of September 11th, 2001, when fears turned to the possibility of an attack on Ireland by a hijacked airliner. Again knowing the Defence Forces were unable to respond to such a threat, an understanding was reached where British aircraft were permitted to operate in Irish airspace and use lethal force against an airliner if required.

The secret agreement required the consent of the Irish government. One source described it as not a formal treaty but as a "memorandum of understanding".

Under the Constitution, any

formal treaty or alliance with another nation requires Dáil approval. It is understood government officials received legal advice that the agreement fell below the definition of a treaty, meaning it could remain secret. However, over the years others have raised concerns about the secrecy, including at the Cabinet table. In the early 2000s Air Corps officers raised concerns about the agreement, with one senior officer advising officials if an RAF pilot took lethal action in Irish airspace it may be a breach of international law.

In recent years the agreement has been used to allow RAF aircraft enter Irish airspace to intercept Russian bombers off the west coast. Last November, in a rare public acknowledgment of the arrangement, James Heappey, a British minister of state for defence, told Westminster RAF jets "deployed into Irish airspace on occasion".

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs said it does not comment on national security but its policies are conducted "with full respect for Irish sovereign decision-making authority and for Ireland's long-standing policy of military neutrality".

Separately, the Defence Forces has confirmed it monitored four Russian navy and merchant ships off the Irish west coast last week. One of them, the Admiral Grigovich, has been used in Russia's war against Ukraine to fire cruise missiles at targets.

Understanding keeps Ireland's skies under protection: page 4



## Iftas for Inisherin Return to the red carpet

The Banshees of Inisherin cast and team celebrate winning Best Film at the 20th Anniversary Irish Film and Television Academy Awards. Kerry Condon and Brendan Gleeson were awarded best supporting actors. In the television section, Sharon Horgan's drama Bad Sisters won four awards.

Report: Page 5  
Photograph: Nick Bradshaw

## Review recommends €25,000 a year for PhD researchers

**CARLO O'BRIEN**  
Education Editor

A national review of State supports for thousands of PhD researchers is expected to recommend increasing their pay to €25,000 in an attempt to retain research talent.

About 6,000 doctoral researchers across higher education institutions receive stipends. Most are paid standard rate of some €18,500 annually.

The rates of pay have sparked protests over recent months. Students have warned inflation and cost-of-living issues have created a "crisis" that threatens the sustainability of higher education research.

A draft national review, focusing on the adequacy of State supports for PhD researchers, says stipends should be increased to at least €25,000, informed sources said.

The report was commissioned by Minister for Further and Higher Education Simon Harris, who is due to receive a final version this month. It was commissioned in the context of the Government's research and innovation strategy, Impact 2030, which aims to boost funding for the sector.

It is also understood to avoid making a firm recommendation on whether students should be categorised as employees due to the complexity of the issues involved.

Mr Harris met a group of academics last week who presented him with an open letter signed by almost 2,000 researchers. They have warned Ireland risks falling behind other EU member states unless there is a change in how the sector is funded.

He is understood to have said a significant hike in pay for

PhDs was to be proposed, which would need sign-off by the Government.

Postgraduate students, meanwhile, have been campaigning for substantial improvements to their pay and working conditions. The Postgraduate Workers' Organisation, the product of a merger involving two groups representing those in the sector, says average pay for those undertaking research while pursuing a PhDs is just €7.88 per hour, well below the minimum wage.

In a statement, the Department of Further and Higher Education said the national review of supports for PhD students is concluding a comprehensive round of consultations. "There are very significant complexities involved and options will need very careful consideration as part of the review," a spokesman said.

## Weather

Sunny spells developing along with showers, some thundery, in light breezes. Highs of 14-21 degrees, cooler in the west.

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## Home News

**Housing:** Just over 1 per cent of the €5.5m due under the vacant site levy in 2021 was collected, new Department of Housing figures show. Page 3

**HSE centre:** A centre for adults with disabilities that was the subject of a report on sexual abuse is to close. Page 2

## World News



**Coronation:** About 67,000 lunches and street parties to celebrate King Charles took place in the UK at the weekend. Page 6

## Business Today

**Cartamundi:** The games maker has cited a lack of State support as one of the reasons for closing its Waterford plant. Page 12

**US debt:** President Joe Biden said "The United States is not a deadbeat nation" in advance of talks about raising the debt ceiling. Page 12

## Sports Monday

**Premier League:** After a vital 2-0 victory over Newcastle at St James's Park, Arsenal are just a point behind leaders Manchester City.

**URC:** With wins over Sharks and Glasgow, Leinster and Munster will meet in the URC semi-final at the Aviva Stadium next Saturday.

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