

Irish Examiner



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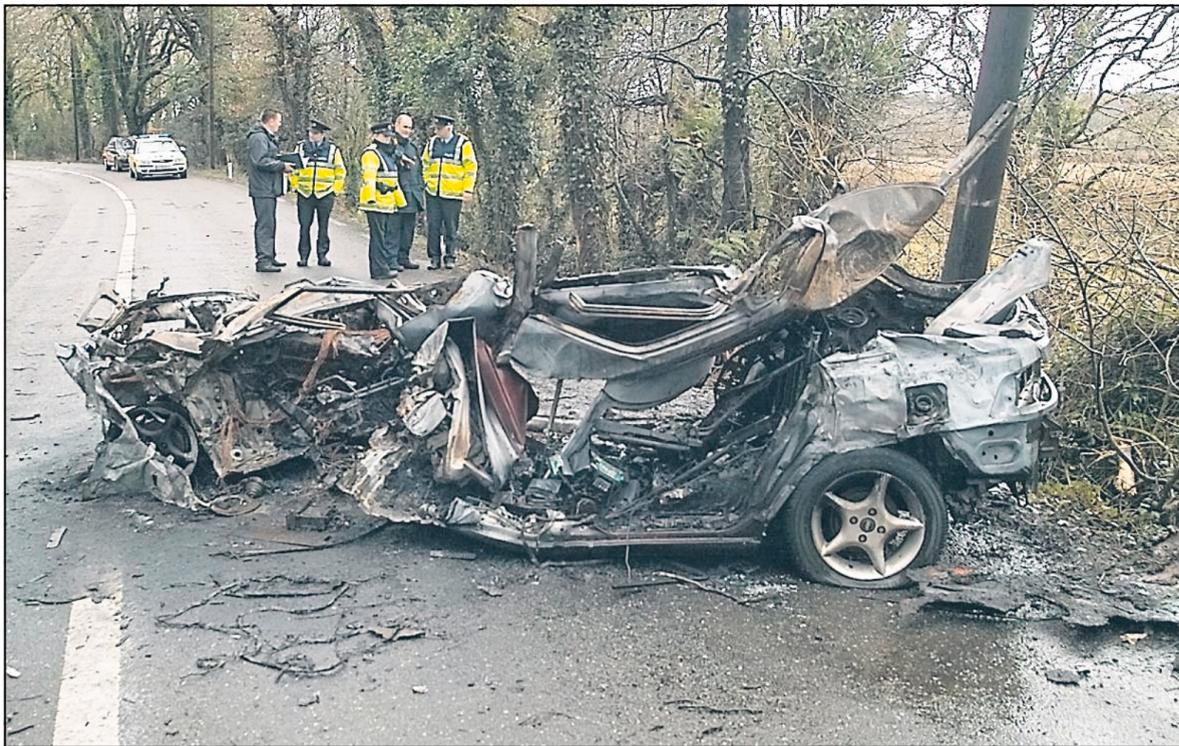
INSIDE



Monday, February 4, 2008

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Gardaí at the scene of a crash near Ballineen, Co Cork, in which one man died.

Picture: Denis Boyle

Roads claim seven victims in 24 hours

by Stephen Rogers, and Jimmy Woulfe

A HORRIFIC 24-hour period on the roads over the weekend saw seven people killed in three smashes in Roscommon, west Cork and Laois. The first accident, a head-on collision on the Limerick to Dublin road on Saturday morning, killed four people and seriously injured another. Three colleagues from computer company Dell were travelling to the Ireland-Italy rugby match when their car smashed into another vehicle. Two of the Dell employees from Limerick and Clare, and the Italian and Polish occupants of the other vehicle all died. The third rugby fan was in a stable condition in hospital yesterday.

On Saturday evening, a

man died when his car crashed into trees and burst into flames at Manch between Ballineen and Dunmanway in west Cork.

In the third crash in the early hours of yesterday morning, two Polish men travelling in a Fiat Brava were killed when they crashed into a minibus outside Athlone.

Its 16 passengers were on their way to Dublin Airport for an early-morning flight to a ski destination. All of the passengers on the bus and a third occupant of the car had to be hospitalised.

The deaths bring to 31 the number of people killed on the roads in 2008.

The fact that the majority of those killed were not from this country has prompted gardaí to call for those in foreign communi-



The scene of bus and car crash near Athlone in which two men died.

ties to become more aware of this country's road safety message.

Supt Seamus Kane of Ballinasloe Garda Station is leading the investigation into the Athlone smash in which two Polish men were killed. He said: "Gardaí would appeal to people

to examine their own driving and perhaps leaders in other communities as well, to address road safety issues with those who have come to Ireland to live."

Brian Farrell of the Road Safety Authority said the carnage of the weekend was a harsh reminder

to motorists that even though road deaths were at a record low last year, they cannot be complacent.

"People have to remember that the weekend is the most dangerous time for driving," he said.

"Six out of 10 fatal accidents happen between Friday and the early hours of Monday morning."

Mr Farrell said that, while it was no comfort to the families of those killed over the weekend, a bad weekend of road fatalities was becoming more rare.

"The most important thing we have to remember is that it has been a bad weekend — that is all that it has been. Unfortunately, we are always going to have periods like this. However, 10 years ago a weekend like this was almost the norm."

NEWS: 7



NEWS Freecycling

One person's junk is another's fortune: How the

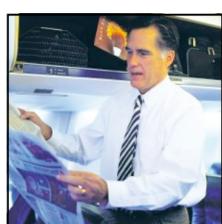
website Freecycle is making good use of 'useless' products by helping people find a new home for goods they no longer want. **Page: 4**

ANALYSIS Tackling abuse

The stigma associated with reaching out for help must be broken if crimes against children — which have increased dramatically in the past year — are to be tackled. **Page: 13**

BUSINESS Concern grows

Concern is growing European agriculture will be sacrificed for a world trade deal. Agriculture Minister Mary Coughlan said recent developments in talks are worrying. **Page: 14**



ANALYSIS Election fever

In terms of popularity and numbers, Super Tuesday is even looking like a match for the US's real enduring passion, last night's Super-bowl American football final. **Page 10**

FG claims Ahern tax declaration was 'false'

by Shaun Connolly
Political Correspondent

BERTIE AHERN made an "untrue" declaration to the Revenue over his taxes, Fine Gael last night insisted as the Greens rallied to the Taoiseach's defence.

Government ministers dismissed the charge Mr Ahern gave "false" information to tax collectors while Green leader John Gormley said that he fully trusted Mr Ahern.

In the most explicit attack on the Taoiseach so far, FG environment spokesman Phil Hogan accused Mr Ahern of giving a statement to the tax authorities that was not true.

"He has made a false declaration in the past because otherwise you wouldn't make a voluntary disclosure to the Revenue and he cannot get a tax clearance certificate unlike all other taxpayers in the country.

"He could be the only PAYE worker in the country that cannot get a tax clearance certificate.

"There are various reasons you make a voluntary disclosure and the first one is



Bertie Ahern: Lodged €70k to cover any liabilities.

that you don't make a voluntary disclosure to the taxman unless you have done something wrong in a previous declaration," he told RTE Radio.

"The declaration Mr Ahern made to the Revenue was untrue," he told the Irish Examiner.

Mr Hogan added he believes Mr Ahern will not get back any of the €70,000 the Taoiseach is understood to have lodged with the Revenue to cover any liability he may have to the tax collectors.

"So he has put down a down-payment of money to

clear up any problems he has. And he believes that some of that money he will get it back. In fact, I subscribe to the view that he may not get any of it back," said Mr Hogan.

He accused cabinet ministers like Brian Cowen and Mr Gormley of refusing to challenge the Taoiseach on his tax matters.

"Why should anybody be paying their tax if the leader of the country is not able to do so? All of these people want to look the other way for the benefit of political expediency," Mr Hogan added.

Education Minister Mary Hanafin strongly dismissed Mr Hogan's claims.

"There is absolutely no evidence the Taoiseach did not pay his taxes," she said. Environment Minister Mr Gormley also gave his clearest backing yet to Mr Ahern.

"I think the Taoiseach is tax compliant and that is good enough for me.

"He has said that. There has to be, at some level, a certain trust and that trust is there in relation to the statements he has made," he told RTE's This Week.

Government faces calls to stop sale of cheap booze

■ Lobby groups want ban and mandatory ID card

by Conor Kane

THE Government came under pressure last night to introduce measures to stem the spiralling tide of alcohol abuse and alcohol-related antisocial behaviour.

With a bottle of beer costing as little as 75 cent in some outlets due to price promotions, lobby groups launched campaigns demanding a ban on cut-price promotions and a mandatory national ID card to combat alcohol problems.

The Beverage Council of Ireland made a call for restricted alcohol availability, echoing similar demands by the Catholic bishops and the Institute of Public Health.

All are calling for action to deal with underage drinking and increased alcohol availability.

The council has called for a ban on the advertising of price promotions of alcohol products; strict segregation of alcohol in supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations, enabling fencing off of the area out-

side of legal trading hours; restricting promotional displays of alcohol to within the alcohol sales area in stores; special training for all staff in alcohol-sales issues and the immediate introduction of a mandatory national ID card for over-18s.

The council's executive director Bernard Murphy said that large-scale promotion, purchase and consumption of cut-price alcohol in supermarkets, convenience stores and petrol stations is leading to large volumes of alcohol consumption and is a contributory factor to antisocial behaviour.

The council represents companies that market and distribute both alcoholic and non-alcoholic packaged drinks.

According to Mr Murphy, "happy hour" promotions are outlawed in the off-licence sector, "but there is absolutely no restriction on price and volume-based promotional activity in supermarkets, convenience

stores and petrol stations". Meanwhile, the Institute of Public Health is also calling for more limits on the availability of alcohol.

In its submission to the Government's alcohol advisory group, the institute called for an end to special promotions by supermarkets and legislation on the minimum pricing of alcohol.

It says sanctions and penalties relating to underage alcohol consumption "are not working" and wants a traceability mechanism that would allow the authorities to identify where alcohol consumed by under-18s was sold.

"We believe that this would be a deterrent to irresponsible serving," said a spokesperson.

The Catholic bishops are also calling for tracking of alcohol products sold in retail outlets as well as limits on their sale and the floor space devoted to alcohol and a reduction in the price of soft drinks.

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