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Day two of our special opinion poll - P15



THE GAIL WALKER FRIDAY INTERVIEW



JIM DOUGAL

From the BBC to the EC - P14

PM RULES OUT TALKS DELAY

'Put talks package to vote'

SCOTS VOTE 'AYE' IN POLL



Tartan triumph: Scots celebrate at the International Conference Centre in Edinburgh early this morning as it became evident that, for the first time in 300 years, Scotland will have its own Parliament, with tax-varying powers. Edinburgh should see its assembly by the year 2000.

THE Government today ruled out any postponement of the scheduled launch of substantive multi-party talks at Stormont next week.

It was being made clear in London that, despite the political turmoil over the IRA's headline statement on the talks process, ministers would not be shifted from their target date of Monday.

But there was strong speculation that the Ulster Unionists will delay their entry into the talks until Sinn Fein makes its position clear.

Senior sources said the 110-strong party executive, which will meet tomorrow to discuss participation, was unlikely to endorse face-to-face negotiations with republicans.

UUP negotiator and honorary secretary Jeffrey Donaldson declined to comment on a possible outcome of tomorrow's meeting.

But he stressed that the party was seeking assurances from Government that any return to IRA violence would result in Sinn Fein's immediate expulsion from talks.

He said yesterday's IRA statement that it has difficulties with the Mitchell Principles "demonstrates that if republicans don't get their way at the negotiating table then there will be a return to violence."

Mr Donaldson said his party was demanding the Prime Minister also make a statement to re-affirm that the consent principle will be a guiding principle of talks.

Ulster Unionist leader David Trimble was due to make a hard-hitting address to the Forum today stressing that unionists will not tolerate constitutional change over their heads.

UUP unlikely to face SF

By Desmond McCartan and Martina Purdy

Political Development Minister Paul Murphy has vowed to quiz Gerry Adams over the IRA statement on Monday.

DUP leader Ian Paisley said the IRA statement showed the ceasefire was tactical and urged the Government to

eject Sinn Fein from talks. But Mr Adams has tried to downplay the significance of the IRA comments, contained in an interview in Republican News.

He insisted the IRA's comments were "broadly supportive of the Sinn Fein position which was absolutely behind the search for a real and democratic settlement."

SDLP negotiator Mark Durkan said the statement was for internal consumption of the IRA and should not surprise anyone.

But former Taoiseach John Bruton disagreed and claimed republicans were aiming for maximum embarrassment.

He urged unionists not to be manipulated by republicans.

In Washington, White House spokesman Mike McCurry expressed concern at the IRA statement which has fuelled loyalist anger at the process.



David Trimble: Forum statement.

Viewpoint, page 14

NORTHERN Ireland people want a referendum on their political future even if the Stormont talks fail.

The finding, contained in an opinion poll published today, comes at a time when the problems facing the negotiations are mounting.

If the talks do not succeed by next May, most people still want the British and Irish governments to put a 'settlement package' to the test in a referendum.

Less than one in ten people - 9% - regard the idea as unacceptable.

Imposing a settlement, however, does not find much favour - six out of ten people oppose the two governments taking matters into their own hands if the talks collapse.

The opinion poll - undertaken by Queen's Rowntree Trust in association with the Belfast Telegraph and UVF - shows that most people want a direct say in their political future.

If a settlement of any sort is being proposed, they want a chance to vote on it.

The survey gauged public feeling on whether the talks should continue if all unionists stay out.

Opinion was mixed, with 47% opposing them continuing, but 53% saying the idea was either desirable, acceptable or tolerable.

As to what should happen if Sinn Fein left the process, only one in four people - 25% - opposed the talks continuing.

A majority of Catholics and Protestants back the idea of a referendum if the

Ulster seeks referendum on future

By Mark Simpson

talks fail, but they are at odds over what amounts to the passing of any settlement package.

A simple majority in Northern Ireland is the most popular pass-mark among Protestants.

Catholics would prefer to see the success of the referendum hinge on support gained from more than 50% in each community.

A compromise option is a weighted majority - 70% - to be set as the pass-mark in Northern Ireland.

When put to the two communities, the idea received a positive response with only around 20% in each community ruling it out completely. Protestants liked the idea better than Catholics.

The opinion poll also showed the two communities disagree on who should be entitled to vote in a referendum.

● Poll results, page 15

Councils to get greater powers for development

By Noel McAdam, Local Government Correspondent

NORTHERN Ireland's 26 councils are to be given greater powers to develop their own areas and towns, it was announced today.

The plan is seen as a confidence-building gesture aimed at unionists, who have long demanded more powers for councils.

Revealing details of the plan, local government minister Lord Dubs pledged new proposals for legislation giving councils powers to manage and develop their own property.

Councillors are also to be given half the places on a new planning advisory body which could overrule the Department of Environment.

Lagan Valley Ulster

Unionist MP Jeffrey Donaldson said: "It is a small step in the progress towards greater powers for local councils."

The plan has particular significance in Belfast, where the council owns large pieces of land which could be zoned for industrial development, community needs or housing.

City Hall Ulster Unionist group leader Fred Cobain said: "It has enormous potential for us and addresses the democratic deficit in Northern Ireland in that it relaxes the power that the DoE, which is not elected, has over us."

But Alliance local government spokesman Stewart Dickson said: "Councils already had control over their own property."

However, Lord Dubs signalled there will be no major shake-up of local government until the Stormont talks reach agreement.

Court gives Lagan boat bar green light

By Julie O'Connor

A LEGAL challenge to a controversial plan for a floating restaurant and bar on the River Lagan was dismissed today.

Belfast High Court gave the go ahead for the proposal.

Mr Justice Brian Kerr dismissed a judicial review brought by a Belfast rower, Oonagh Nelson.

Opponents claimed the DoE failed to take account of how the development would jeopardise sporting activities on the river when it overruled Belfast City Council and approved the plan for the 100ft long, 35ft high pub.

Developers TKS plans to moor the boat parallel to the Stranmillis embankment and close to Queen's PE centre.

Dismissing the judicial review, Mr Kerr agreed with the Department of the Environment that the river was not part of the Belfast Urban Area Plan.

Speaking after the judgement, Miss Nelson said she was devastated by the outcome.

"We really did expect to win," she said. "We are also very disappointed and this will have a great effect on sporting activities on the Lagan."

"Eight boat clubs use the Lagan, and this is going to disrupt everything."

"The residents will now also have to put up with a lot of disruption and noise."

Martin Brennan, the solicitor for Miss Nelson, said they would be considering an appeal.

Campaigners have waged a six-year battle over the boat bar.

Pervert parole fury

THE Prison Service was under fire today after a convicted child sex offender was allowed parole in his home area of Portadown.

His ex-wife and Churchill Park residents hit out after the paedophile spent three days with relatives, without the community being informed.

A police source said

learned of his release second hand when friends spotted him.

A spokesperson for the Churchill community said: "There are two schools in the area and hundreds of young children living in Upper Garvagh. This sort of action is highly irresponsible."

There was no immediate response from the Prison Service.

PRACTICAL PHILOSOPHY. Those seeking an understanding of our existence and the world are invited to attend a course in Practical Philosophy. This is not a history of philosophy, nor a comparative study of philosophers. The philosophy is that Man in truth is limitless and that there is unity underlying all apparent diversity. This is known as non-dualistic philosophy and can be applied to day to day living.

Bodyguard not told of Diana's death. Deal face to face with Adams, unionists told. Double shotgun death latest. Yes, yes to tartan dream. WEATHER OUTLOOK. GREATER BELFAST AREA: A cool and windy end to the day with fleeting sunny spells and scattered sharp showers.

Donaldson & Lytton SUNDAY SALE. To Celebrate the opening of our new store in Bangor we are running a Sunday Sale from 12 Noon - 6pm on the Sunday 14th Sept. South African Pine Table & Chairs - £795. Pine Beds from £459. Leather Natuzzi Suites 3+1+1 from £1395. Loose cover suites from 30% OFF. Reylon Beds 1/3 OFF. CLEARANCE STOCK FROM HALF PRICE. Traditional leather suites £1595. ORIENTAL RUGS ALL 1/3 OFF. We Only Move Every 75 Years. So You Better Make The Most Of It! 165 Clondeboye Road, Bangor Co. Down. Tel: (01247) 455551