

NEWSREEL WORLD



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Programmanus

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Hi, I'm Alanna Leslie, and it's time for Newsreel World.

Today, we're heading to India, The Cook Islands and Ethiopia...
But first...

The Republic of Ireland

ALANNA LESLIE: In the Republic of Ireland in February, people voted in their first general election since 2016.

The Republic of Ireland became independent from the United Kingdom in 1921. Two parties have dominated politics ever since. After this election, however, they may not be in power anymore; which is a huge thing in Ireland.

From Limerick in the South West of the country, Sarah Coleman reports...

SARAH COLEMAN: The Republic of Ireland has recently held a General Election where the Irish people voted to elect a brand new government to the Dail, which is what Parliament is called in the Republic of Ireland.

The biggest story is the huge gains made by Sinn Féin, a political party that is in favour of Northern Ireland rejoining the Republic of Ireland and leaving the United Kingdom.

Sinn Féin went from 13.8% of the vote in the last election in 2016 to 24.5% of the vote this time, making them the most popular party in the Republic.

Young people in particular voted for Sinn Féin due to their policies on housing, mainly to provide more social and affordable homes and tax-cuts for people on low wages.

So what do young Irish people think about the result of Ireland's election?

CHLOE: *Obviously we still don't really know what's going to happen in terms of who's going to actually take, you know, the government. But, I'm really hopeful Sinn Féin can do that because I feel like Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael, the right wing parties have had, you know, enough of a chance to, you know, change things in the country.*

KATHLEEN: *I'm not surprised by the rise of Sinn Féin. If anyone takes a look at our policies, you know, they targeted everyone. They got it right with young people. I never saw more young people engage with an election because they just got it right.*

SARAH COLEMAN: There are 160 seats in the Dail and if one party secures 80 or more seats, they automatically form a majority government.

In this election, no party has met this amount as three parties have won a similar number of seats each.

Fine Gael and Fianna Fáil have previously said that they will not work with Sinn Féin, which makes the formation of the next government uncertain.

So, despite Sinn Féin's surge in popularity, it's going to be a long and complicated process figuring out who will be in charge of the Republic of Ireland for the next four years.

This is Sarah Coleman reporting for Newsreel World from Limerick in the Republic of Ireland.

ALANNA LESLIE: Now it's time for a few quick stories from around the world...

American astronaut makes history

ALANNA LESLIE: American astronaut Christina Koch recently returned to Earth having spent 328 consecutive days living on the International Space Station. That's nearly a whole year living in space!

Christina has now spent more consecutive days in space than any female astronaut in history. She was also part of the first all-female spacewalk that happened in October last year.

First lady donate money

ALANNA LESLIE: The wife of Namibia's president, also known as the first lady, has promised to donate all her wealth to charity when she dies.

Monica Geingos', who works as a lawyer, is estimated to be worth £2.3 million pounds. She plans to leave it all to her One Economy Foundation, which lends money to entrepreneurs, gives grants to students and supports victims of gender-based violence.

Rugby League

ALANNA LESLIE: The Cook Islands consist of 15 islands that are located northeast of New Zealand. Now, the country has launched a brand new women's Rugby League tournament.

It's been created to help prepare the international side for the women's Rugby League World Cup in 2021.

It's been spearheaded by Sharlene Atai, a Cook Islander who played Rugby League for New Zealand at international level.

Protests in India

ALANNA LESLIE: In India, protests against a new citizenship law have brought tens of thousands of people together from different faiths and backgrounds across the country.

The law is seen as discriminatory towards India's Muslim population.

From Mumbai, Chhavi Sachdev can tell us what's been happening:

CHHAVI SACHDEV: Since December last year India has seen marches on an unprecedented scale. While some of the protests have turned violent, for the most part, the gatherings have been peaceful, and rather unusually, spearheaded by women.

In the middle of a deserted street in Delhi, amidst shuttered shops, hundreds of women sit on thin green sheets.

The majority are in black hijab or burkhas. The vigil has been ongoing. Some pray, some read, others gossip. And then from time to time, a group gets going with a chant: Inquilab Zindaabad - long live the revolution.

But why are people doing this?

The focal point of the protests is a law that the Indian government passed in December to grant citizenship to migrants from six religions who crossed into the country before 2015. India is a secular country, with no official state religion.

This new Citizenship Amendment Act, the CAA, has been called discriminatory and unconstitutional because it excludes Muslims with no way for them to appeal this exclusion. At a gathering in Delhi, I met a woman called Rajlakshmi who had traded her journalist role for an activist role for the day.

RAJLAKSHMI: It views certain citizens of this country as second class citizens and it's so good that so many people have, sort of, come out against it, you know. It affects every citizen of India.

CHHAVI SACHDEV: Concerned citizens have come out in the thousands to be present at the sit-ins. Students and professionals have joined housewives from all walks of life to occupy these spaces despite being harassed by the police to break it up. One such is a lawyer who spoke to me anonymously.

ANONYMOUS LAWYER: So far, in Bombay, I've been to about half a dozen protests and the first protest was actually my first protest ever. I've led a very privileged life, in my cocoon. And the recent incidents have made things where you, sort of, take a stand and you realize that you need to take a stand and you can't just be passive enjoying your privilege.

CHHAVI SACHDEV: Human rights organizations are concerned because detainment camps have already been set up across several states.

The government has condemned protestors as unpatriotic and many marches and protests have been denied permission to gather or forcefully dispersed by police armed with long batons and tear gas. For now, the protests look like they're here to stay.

This is Chhavi Sachdev reporting for Newsreel World from Mumbai in India.

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Chhavi.

Ethiopian poet

ALANNA LESLIE: Now, Ethiopia...

*NEBILA ABDUL-MELIK: This is Addis:
I'm nostalgic for a city I know in my thoughts,
as though my absence for over a decade has meant nothing,*

*as all the characters that populate my memories are as I left them;
although many are long gone.*

*The city of now is no longer as was,
the present has left little to imagine of its past.
Whole neighbourhoods created and destroyed,
homes, his, her stories crumble with bulldozers giving rise to high rises.*

ALANNA LESLIE: These are the words of Nebila Abdulmelik, an Ethiopian poet who writes about her home of Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital.

Ethiopia as a country is almost unrecognizable from the one Nebila was born in.

Economically, it's grown hugely and there have been massive infrastructure investments made in recent years.

But some human rights groups are concerned that the government is attempting to suppress any criticism of it, ahead of the general election happening there later this year.

NEBILA ABDUL-MELIK: Our meetings, though frequent, are fleeting.

*I'm yet to acquaint myself with what you've become,
to re-learn who you were and who I was with you.*

*I fear feeling at home, at home,
of feeling more comfort in places that are not.
Is it possible to be outside of one's own world?
Or, perhaps, it was never mine to claim.*

*Perhaps notions of home and world wax and wane and take on meanings of their own.
New flower, I wonder if I'll grow old with you? Or if you will age with me... Addis.*

ALANNA LESLIE: But how has Nebila seen her country change in her lifetime?

*NEBILA ABDUL-MELIK: It feels completely different in so many ways. Physically, it's very different.
There's been a lot of construction. Some old buildings, some old landmarks have been demolished.
Also, I feel like, the green spaces have disappeared. That's changing a little bit now because
there's a lot more focus on, you know, having green spaces. But I think mostly it's the physical
space that's shifted.*

ALANNA LESLIE: Thanks Nebila.

That's it for today. See ya next time!