



NEWS IN BRIEF

GERMANY

Authorities knew of Nazi art haul last year

The German government knew for 17 months that a huge trove of art, possibly including works stolen by the Nazis, had been found in Munich.

A spokesman for the Bavarian Justice Ministry says federal officials were informed about the find on 21 or 22 March 2012, less than a month after the 1,406

pictures were discovered. Hannes Hedke told the Associated Press that the Chancellery in Berlin also was handed a list of the works seized at the time. After the case was uncovered this month, the government acknowledged only that it had been informed "for several months".

Jewish groups and lawyers for potential claimants have criticised the secrecy surrounding the investigation. AP

IRAN

Minister hopeful for nuclear talks agreement

Iran's Foreign Minister said yesterday he was hopeful ahead of negotiations next week with world powers, but reiterated Tehran's demand for recognition of its "nuclear rights."

Talks on Iran's nuclear programme will resume on Wednesday in Geneva, after the two sides failed to strike an accord last weekend. AP

Presidential candidate Evelyn Matthei at her final campaign rally in Chillan this week. **LUIS HIDALGO/AP**



Why education and dancing hold the key to Chile's election

Students calling for reform of private schooling are central to presidential vote

ED STOCKER
IN SANTIAGO

Chileans will vote for a president tomorrow, and polls suggest they will endorse Michelle Bachelet, a left-leaning medic who previously held the country's top job from 2006 to 2010.

The likely result is in part due to the unpopularity of the current right-wing rule, and a social dispute that has seen student protests calling for free, quality education.

"Chile has the most neoliberal model in the world," said Mario Waissbluth, head of Educacion 2020, a non-profit organisation that hopes to overhaul the educational system. "The UK and the US, bastions of capitalism, look socialist compared with us. I'm not exaggerating. Chile is the Tea Party's dream in terms of social and economic policies."

That dream has been a classic non-interventionist state. The education system is the world's most market-driven, with 90 per cent of university education and 35 per cent of secondary schools privately run.

Ms Bachelet and her right-wing rival Evelyn Matthei have been forced to listen by a long-running student movement that gained international notoriety in 2011, when students clashed with the heavy-handed Carabineros, the police force made infamous during the dictatorship. Student lead-

ers pressed for free higher education. But the government of Sebastian Pinera, the billionaire incumbent, did little to change the status quo. In July 2011 he declared education was a "consumer good".

While Ms Matthei, the Alianza candidate, has built her campaign on maintaining the economic success of the past – neoliberal policies that were implemented by the dictatorship – Ms Bachelet and her Nueva Mayoría coalition have promised a new direction.

"Ms Bachelet knows that she has to provide some sort of institutional solution to the political and social demands," explained Robert Funk, a political scientist from the University of Chile.

Secondary schools are accused of being highly segregated, with the rich going to good schools and the poor to bad. When it comes to higher education, wealthy students often get places at public universities that still rank as among the most prestigious.

Ivan Belmar Vidal, 26, had to give up his studies in 2011 due to spiralling debts acquired at two private universities: "The people who go to the traditional universities tend to have the best secondary education," he said. "The big problem with the system? Those with fewer resources have to attend the private universities."

Ms Bachelet talks of eradicating fees and ensuring everyone has access to a good education, while maintaining the mixed system. But her potential victory would not be a cause for universal celebration: "Students need to have more of a say in deciding the system," said Andres Fielbaum, 26, president of the University of Chile's Student Federation.

Vote Ford! The case for Toronto's troubled Mayor

The embattled politician (and occasional drug user) still has appeal, write **TIM WALKER** and **DAVID MCDUGALL** in Toronto

On Thursday evening, Rob Ford, the embattled Mayor of Toronto, received an expression of support from an unexpected quarter. A report on a satirical website had suggested that Charlie Sheen was calling for his resignation, following Mr Ford's admission that he had smoked crack cocaine. The Los Angeles-based actor felt the need to clear things up.

"Dear Mayor Rob Ford," Mr Sheen wrote on Twitter. "The only truth or correct reporting in today's repulsive story regarding my alleged comments about you is the accurate spelling of your great city... If I can be of any assistance in any capacity in this media cesspool, please accept the noble offer of my steady hand and compassionate heart."

From any other celebrity, this show of solidarity with the scandal-hit politician might have seemed extraordinary, but Mr Sheen has experienced his own share of scandals, which may explain his attitude. What is less easy to explain is that almost a quarter of Toronto voters are still standing by their 44-year-old mayor: an Ipsos-Reid poll conducted this week found that 24 per cent believed he ought to stay in his job.

This, of course, comes after Mr Ford's admission that he once smoked crack while in a "drunken stupor", several months after reports surfaced of a video of him sampling the drug, and days since Toronto police revealed they had seized that video. It was neither the first nor the last indignity of Mr Ford's time in office. In the past, he was ejected from a local ice hockey game for public drunkenness, and accused of groping a woman who ran against him for mayor.

Late last week, another embarrassing video emerged, in which the Mayor appeared to threaten to murder an unnamed rival. On Wednesday, Mr Ford confessed to the city council that he had purchased illegal drugs during his time as Mayor. He also faced a series of new allegations from City Hall staffers, including suggestions that he had a physical altercation with two of his aides on St Patrick's Day 2012.

Responding to the allegations from an impromptu press



Scandal-hit Toronto Mayor Rob Ford has rejected demands that he should resign after a seemingly endless series of gaffes. **REUTERS**

conference on Thursday, Mayor Ford denied, in graphic terms, a female staffer's claim that he had offered to perform oral sex. "It says I wanted to eat her pussy," he said live on television news. "I would never do that. I'm happily married. I've got more than enough to eat at home."

Later, he apologised for the vulgar comments. With his wife Renata standing beside him, looking suitably mortified, Mr Ford told reporters he was under "tremendous, tremendous stress" and had sought support from "a team of healthcare professionals". He had "acted on complete impulse" when responding to the allegation, which he described as "100 per cent lies". Mr Ford has repeatedly denied that he suffers from drug addiction or a drinking problem. Asked about the accusation of drink-driving, he said he "might have had some drinks and driven, which is absolutely wrong".

And yet, instead of taking one of this series of humiliating moments as a signal to resign, Mr Ford has seemingly

the past fortnight's events as a launch-pad for his 2014 re-election campaign. Whether he can ever get it off the ground is another matter.

Toronto's city council cannot force a mayor from office unless he is convicted of a criminal offence – and no charges have yet been brought against Mr Ford. Yesterday, however, the council voted to strip him of many of his powers, including the authority to appoint and dismiss the committee responsible for the city's budget. The motion was approved by 39 votes to three. Among the dissenters were Mr Ford himself, and his brother, councillor Doug Ford.

Kathleen Wynne, Premier of Ontario, the province that includes Canada's largest city, has said she is ready to step in with special legislation to help the council remove Mr Ford from office if necessary.

Even the Canadian Football League has complained about Mr Ford's behaviour, after he made his offensive remarks regarding oral sex while wearing the official jersey of

the Toronto Argonauts team.

And yet, even as his city threatens to become an international laughing stock, Mayor Ford can still claim support among Toronto's citizens. He was elected in 2010 with 47 per cent of the vote, 11 per cent clear of his nearest rival – the largest margin of victory for any incoming mayor in Toronto's recent history. Many believe he has lived up to the promises he made during his campaign: to reduce frivolous spending, cut taxes and save the city money.

Joy Green, a resident of the city ward which Mr Ford represented as a councillor, blames the Mayor's travails on "bad judgement" attributable to "health issues", and says most of her neighbours still support him. "He has been an excellent Mayor," Ms Green said.

Ms Green lives in an apartment block that was raided by police in June, a raid which led to the discovery of the Mr Ford "crack video", not to mention large quantities of drugs and firearms. She pointed to the Mayor's achievement in find-

ROB FORD IN HIS OWN WORDS

On cocaine and prostitutes
"No one, but no one, is gonna accuse me of having escorts and doing lines at a bar."

On oral sex
"I'm happily married. I have more than enough to eat at home, thank you very much."

On buying drugs
"It was a personal mistake that we all have done. Maybe not as serious as mine, but we all have skeletons in our closet that many people would not want to have exposed."

On alcohol
"It's extremely embarrassing. The whole world is going to see it. I don't have a problem with that... Obviously I was extremely, extremely inebriated. That's all I have to say."

On crack cocaine
"Have I tried it? Probably in one of my drunken stupors, probably approximately about a year ago."

ing funding, despite stiff opposition at City Hall, for the expansion of Toronto's subway system. Of his refusal to step down, she said, "He's a strong stubborn man, and that's something I like about him."

Myer Siemiatycki, a politics professor at Ryerson University, explained that Mr Ford had succeeded in tapping into "politics of resentment and retribution", which is deeply felt in Canada, thanks to widening income inequality.

In yet another twist, a Canadian television station announced this week that the Mayor and his brother would be hosting their own television show, beginning on Monday. The right-leaning Sun News Network – known locally as "Fox News North" – said Ford Nation would be a TV version of the brothers' conservative talk-radio show, which came to an end last week. Even if Mr Ford can't win votes, he can surely win ratings.

SCAN PAGE
To watch Ford admitting to buying drugs

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Chile is the Tea Party's dream in terms of social and economic policies