

## Politics



Dozens of people were killed in protests in **Nicaragua**. People are furious that the regime of President Daniel Ortega emptied the public pension pot and then ordered workers to top it up. The protests lasted for days, even after Mr Ortega backed down. Several ugly sculptures erected by his wife were wrecked by angry mobs. Independent news channels were blocked by censors; a journalist was killed while recording a broadcast.

Mario Abdo Benítez won **Paraguay's** presidential election, maintaining the ruling Colorado Party's grip on power. The former senator beat Efraín Alegre, of the Liberal opposition.

In the first of three televised debates, **Mexico's** five presidential candidates sparred over how to reduce crime and violence. Most pundits thought Ricardo Anaya, the centrist candidate, gave the best performance, but polling gives Andrés Manuel López Obrador, the left's man, a lead of up to 20 percentage points. The election is on July 1st.

Prosecutors in **Guatemala** working with CICIG, a UN-backed anti-corruption commission, accused President Jimmy Morales's party of accepting more than \$1m in illegal donations during the campaign in 2015. A group of prominent businessmen apologised for funding him. Mr Morales claims he is innocent.

In **Toronto** the driver of a van that ploughed into pedestri-

ans, killing ten, was charged with murder. Before the attack the driver announced on Facebook that a revolt of involuntarily celibate men—who resent women for not having sex with them—had begun. Most of the dead were women.

### Harmony breaks out

**North Korea** announced that it was suspending missile launches and nuclear tests, in advance of a summit between its leader, Kim Jong Un, and South Korea's president, Moon Jae-in. South Korea, for its part, stopped blaring propaganda, including k-pop music, across the border with the North.

Setya Novanto, a former Speaker of the lower house of **Indonesia's** parliament, was sentenced to 15 years in prison for corruption. The case had been seen as a test of the country's justice system.

A suicide-bomber killed 60 people who were registering to vote in Kabul, the capital of **Afghanistan**. Parliamentary elections, currently scheduled for October, have already been delayed by three years because of squabbling within the government.

Police in **Shanghai** arrested eight people in connection with what officials described as a Ponzi scheme operated by a Chinese company, Shanlin Financial. They have been accused of illegally raising more than 60bn yuan (\$9.5bn), using money deposited by new investors to pay long-standing ones.

The former chief regulator of **China's** insurance industry, Xiang Junbo, was formally charged with bribe-taking. Mr Xiang was sacked last year. His agency was merged with the banking regulator last month.

### A new terror

An attack on a church in **Nigeria** left at least 19 people dead, including two priests, in the latest incident of violence between nomadic herders and farmers in the country's volatile middle belt. The escalating conflict is now claiming more

lives than an insurgency in the north-east of the country by jihadist groups, including Boko Haram.

A parliamentary committee in **Zimbabwe** summoned Robert Mugabe, the former president, to testify in relation to allegations that up to \$15bn-worth of diamonds were looted from government-controlled mines.



Palestinians in **Gaza** demonstrated along the border fence with Israel for the fourth time in recent weeks. **Israel** says Hamas, the Islamist movement that rules Gaza, is using the protests as cover for attacks. Israel has shot and killed 40 Palestinians over the course of the protests, according to Gaza's health ministry.

An air strike hit a wedding in **Yemen**, killing dozens of people. The Houthi rebels blamed the Saudi-led coalition that is fighting on behalf of Yemen's deposed government. The secretary-general of the UN, António Guterres, called for an investigation.

### Out of office message

**Armenia's** president-turned-prime minister, Serzh Sargsyan, resigned days after being elected to his new job following huge demonstrations against him, including by off-duty members of the armed forces. Russia declined to intervene.

Peter Madsen, a renowned **Danish** inventor, was sentenced to life in prison for the murder of a Swedish journalist, Kim Wall. Ms Wall's dismembered body was found off the coast of Copenhagen in August. She had visited Mr Madsen's submarine for an interview.

**Germany's** Social Democrats formally elected Andrea Nahles as their leader, the first woman to head the party. Ms Nahles has a battle trying to unite the SPD after its battering at last year's general election and contentious decision to join another grand coalition with the Christian Democrats.

### The ask Haspel show

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee voted in favour of **Mike Pompeo** as secretary of state. A few hesitant Democrats in the full Senate threw their support behind his appointment. It was less clear whether the woman chosen to succeed Mr Pompeo as director of the CIA will be confirmed. Concerns have been raised about **Gina Haspel's** past involvement in torture. A battalion of retired military officers have voiced their objections to her nomination.

The **Republicans** held a congressional seat in the suburbs of Phoenix, but with their majority slashed from 37 percentage points in 2016 to just five. It is the latest special election indicating a swing towards the Democrats ahead of the mid-terms in November.



**Emmanuel Macron** went to Washington on a state visit, the first of the Trump administration. Last year the French president charmed Donald Trump at the Bastille parade in Paris. He used his trip to the American capital to try to persuade Mr Trump not to pull out of the agreement monitoring Iran's nuclear programme, which Mr Trump wants to "fix". In a speech to Congress, delivered in flawless English, Mr Macron decried the rise of nationalism in various parts of the world.

## Business

The yield on America's **ten-year Treasury bond** passed 3% for the first time since early 2014. Stockmarkets frowned, as investors worried that a climbing yield on the benchmark bond would lead to higher borrowing costs. In the aftermath of the financial crisis, when central banks hoovered up trillions of dollars-worth of government bonds, the ten-year yield fell to historic lows. It has risen steadily this year in part because the Federal Reserve is continuing along its path of tightening monetary policy.

### A muddle for Murdoch

**Comcast** formally submitted a £22bn (\$31bn) bid for **Sky**, Britain's premier subscription-TV broadcaster. That prompted Sky to withdraw its recommendation to accept an offer from **21st Century Fox**, which owns 39% of Sky and wants to buy the remaining 61% in order to sell the lot to Disney, along with Fox's other entertainment assets.

**Vincent Bolloré**, one of the richest businessmen in France, was placed under formal investigation in a corruption probe. A former subsidiary of his Bolloré Group is alleged to have supported the election campaigns of politicians in Guinea and Togo in 2009 and 2010 in return for port contracts. Mr Bolloré and his firm deny wrongdoing.

After rejecting four previous offers, **Shire**, which specialises in drugs for rare diseases and is listed in London, said it was willing to recommend to shareholders a preliminary takeover bid from **Takeda**, a smaller Japanese rival. The deal is worth £46bn (\$64bn). If completed the combined company would rank alongside industry giants such as Bayer and GlaxoSmithKline.

Christian Sewing used his first quarterly earnings report since becoming chief executive at **Deutsche Bank** to lay out sweeping changes to its in-

vestment-banking and trading divisions. Revenue from trading plunged by 17% in the first quarter compared with the same period last year, a stark contrast with Deutsche's American rivals, which posted strong growth in trading income. Deutsche now plans to shrink its business in America, a move that activist investors had been pushing for, in order to focus on commercial clients in Europe. The German bank's overall net income fell by 79% to €120m (\$147m).

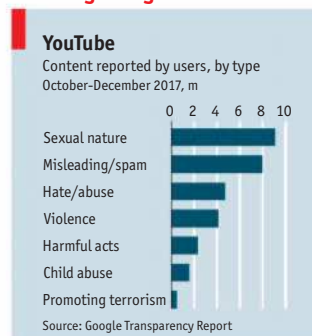
**Barclays** said that Britain's financial-conduct regulators had finished their investigation into Jes Staley, the bank's chief executive, over his attempt to uncover the identity of a whistleblower, and that they have proposed he pay a financial penalty, but "are not alleging...that he lacks fitness and propriety" to continue in his job.

The Irish government reached an agreement with **Apple** over repaying the €13bn (\$16bn) in back taxes that the European Union's competition regulator has decided are owed to Ireland. The government and Apple are both appealing against the regulator's ruling from 2016, which found that Ireland's low-tax arrange-

ments with the tech company constituted illegal state aid. Until the appeals process is exhausted, Apple will pay the €13bn into an escrow account.

Soaring revenues from advertising pushed **Facebook's** net profit in the first quarter up by 63% year on year, to \$5bn. The number of monthly active users grew sharply to 2.2bn in the three-month period (the Cambridge Analytica scandal emerged at the tail end of the quarter). Alphabet, **Google's** parent company, saw its net profit increase by 73% to \$9.4bn.

### Planting a flag



Meanwhile, **YouTube**, which is owned by Google, published its first data on the videos it removes from its website. Nearly 8.3m videos were taken down in the last three months of 2017 for violating YouTube's

guidelines; four-fifths of them had been identified by machine-learning algorithms. Around 30m people objected to videos; 1.5m were taken down because of human complaints. Of those that were flagged by people, sexual content caused the most concern, accounting for 30% of all videos reported.

**Twitter** reported net income of \$61m for the first three months of the year, its second consecutive quarterly profit following years of losses. The social network now has 336m monthly active users. Its profile has been lifted by one very active user, Donald Trump, who has posted 37,400 tweets (and counting) since signing up in March 2009.

### Baby, you can't drive my car

Compelled to make its deliveries ever more convenient, **Amazon** demonstrated a service that allows couriers to leave packages in customers' cars, which can be unlocked with a wireless connection. The service is available for certain types of vehicles with the required technology and certain types of drivers with the required level of trust.

For other economic data and news see **Indicators** section

