

Google employees protest over China search engine

Washington, United States

Hundreds of Google employees have signed a protest letter over the company's reported work on a censor-friendly search engine to get back into China, The New York Times said Thursday.

The employees are demanding more transparency so they can understand the moral implications of their work, said the Times, which obtained a copy of the letter.

It has been signed by 1,400 employees and is circulating on the company's internal communications system, the newspaper said, quoting three people who are familiar with the document.

Brazil must let Lula run in October vote: UN panel

Geneva, Switzerland

The UN Human Rights Committee ruled Friday that Brazil's imprisoned leftist leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva cannot be disqualified from upcoming presidential elections because his legal appeals are ongoing.

The committee issued the finding following an urgent request filed by Lula's lawyers on July 27.

In a statement, the panel "requested Brazil to take all necessary measures to ensure that Lula can enjoy and exercise his political rights while in prison, as (a) candidate in the 2018 presidential elections."

Lula, a two-term former president who is serving time behind bars for corruption, is currently leading the polls for the October vote.

US sanctions Myanmar

Washington, United States

The US government yesterday hit four Myanmar military commanders and two military units with punitive sanctions, accusing them of "serious human rights abuses" and "ethnic cleansing" in violently expelling minority Rohingya from their homes.

Military and border guard commanders Aung Kyaw Zaw, Khin Maung Soe, Khin Hlaing, and Thura San Lwin were accused of leading violent campaigns against the Muslim Rohingya in Rakhine state as well as minorities in Kachin and Shan states.

"Burmese security forces have engaged in violent campaigns against ethnic minority communities across Burma, including ethnic cleansing, massacres, sexual assault, extrajudicial killings, and other serious human rights abuses," said Sigal Mandelker, Under Secretary for Terrorism and Financial Intelligence in the US Treasury.

Benetton, more than just pullovers

AFP | Paris, France

Italian company Benetton, perhaps best known for its bright-coloured sweaters and hard-hitting advertising campaigns, has received a lot of unwanted publicity this week in the wake of the deadly bridge collapse in Genoa.

The Benetton family is the biggest single investor in Italian infrastructure group Atlantia, which operates the motorway on which the collapsed Morandi bridge was situated.

In the hours following the disaster,

which killed 38 people, photoshopped pictures of the rubble appeared online superimposed with the words "United Colors of Benetton".

Italy's Deputy prime minister Luigi Di Maio, mentioning Benetton by name, said that the money collected on toll roads should be reinvested in maintenance, "but in fact they share out the profits and then bridges collapse."

The Benetton family's holding company, Edizione, last year booked annual revenue of 12.1 billion euros (\$13.8 billion) from a business empire that stretches far beyond trendy tops and toll roads.

Clothing

Back in the 1960s, three Benetton brothers, Luciano, Carlo and Gilberto, along with their sister Guilianna launched a homemade production line in Ponzano Veneto, a village near Venice. Their sweaters proved popular items in local stores and a brand was born.

Their signature soft wool jumpers made in a variety of colours quickly seduced the masses.

The company went from strength to strength especially between 1982 and 2000 -- its fame fuelled by daring ad campaigns by Italian photographer Oliviero Toscani, such as a 1989 poster which featured a black woman breastfeeding a white baby.

But for over a decade the brand has battled dwindling sales.

In 2017, following heavy losses, Luciano Benetton announced he was coming out of retirement at the age of 83 to retake the reins of the company.

The Benetton group also owns the Sisley brand.



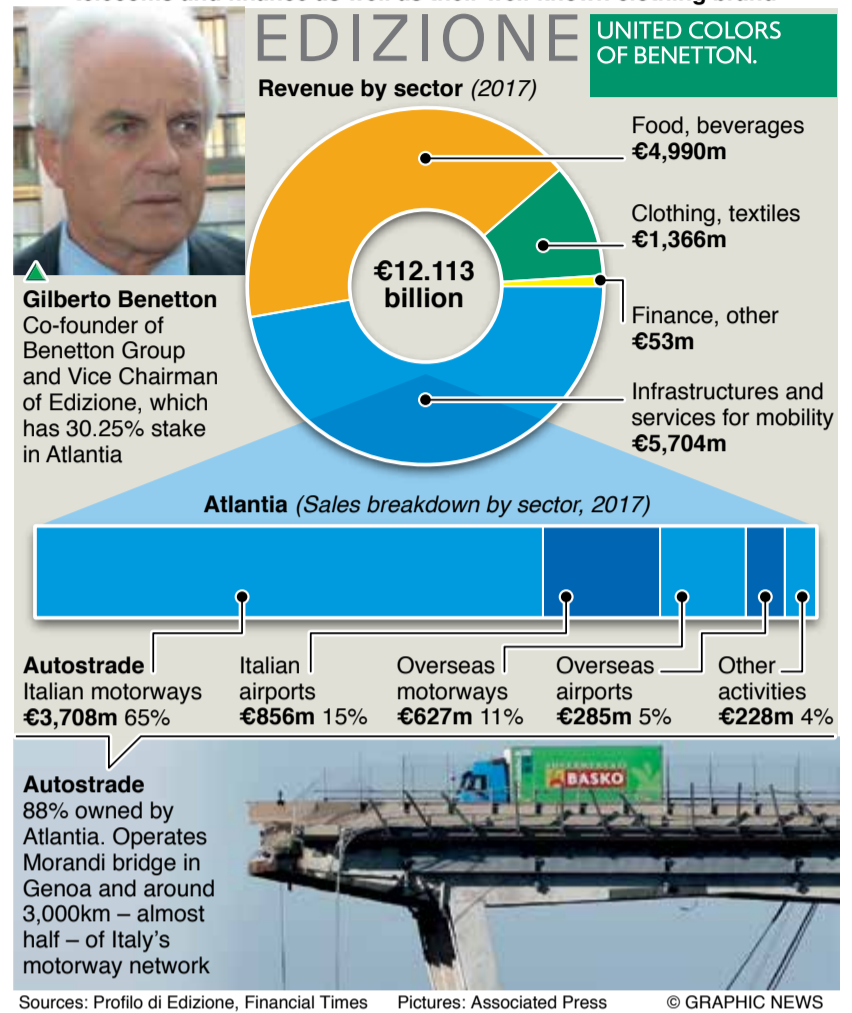
This handout file picture released by Studio Leoni on August 16, 2018 and taken in 1965

Infrastructure and transport

Less well-known to the general public, the group generates the biggest share of its revenue, 5.2 billion euros, from its infrastructure and transport divisions.

Benetton family's business empire

The Benetton family controls Edizione – one of Italy's most significant business groups – with interests spanning infrastructure, catering, telecoms and finance as well as their well-known clothing brand



With a stake of 30.25 percent, Benetton is the biggest single shareholder in Atlantia.

Atlantia's prime asset is Autostrade per l'Italia, which operates the A10 highway where a segment of the overpass collapsed on Tuesday.

Shares in Atlantia have slumped since, amid a barrage of criticism from the government and other quarters.

The government has accused iAutostrade per l'Italia of failing to invest in sufficient maintenance -- a claim the company denies -- and said it would seek to revoke its lucrative contracts.

Benetton also has major interests in a number of other companies in the sector, including Aeroporti di Roma, which runs Rome's two main airports, the Nice Cote d'Azur airport and Getlink, formerly Eurotunnel, which operates the Channel Tunnel between England and France.

Telecoms

Benetton holds 29.9 percent of the Spanish Cellnex group, specialists in

telecoms and broadcasting technology.

Catering

In 1995, the financial holding company Edizione branched out into the restaurant business, buying a majority stake in Autogrill, an Italian-based multinational food and drink company.

Property and agriculture

Edizione also holds a portfolio of 112 properties -- 59 in Italy and the rest elsewhere in the European Union -- for the luxury retail market.

On the agriculture side, the Benetton family also owns the Rome-based dairy company, Maccaresse.

Benetton also operates several agricultural companies in Argentina via the Argentine Southern Land Company.

Finance

This year, Benetton has increased its stake in the Italian insurer Generali to 3.1 percent. It also has a 2.2-percent stake in Italian investment bank, Mediobanca.

Plane slides off Manila runway causing delays

Manila, Philippines

A Chinese passenger jet slid off the runway as it landed at Manila airport in torrential rain forcing dozens of flight cancellations yesterday, as engineers struggled to remove the stricken aircraft.

The Xiamen Airlines plane, carrying 157 passengers and eight crew, landed on its second attempt before skidding onto the grass and ripping off its left engine late Thursday evening, airport general manager Ed Monreal said.

All on board were safely evacuated from the aircraft with no serious injuries.

But nearly 24 hours after the accident, rescue crews were still unable to remove the plane, forcing the airport to cancel take-offs and landings from the largest of its two runways.

An official statement said the runway would remain closed until around 5:00am Saturday (2100 GMT Friday) as two cranes were still being put in place to



A Xiamen Air plane sits on the grassy portion of the runway of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (courtesy of Time/AP)

lift the plane.

Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines spokesman Eric Apolonio said at least 67 local and international flights were cancelled on Friday.

He told AFP that recovery efforts were being hampered by recent heavy rains that had

softened the ground around the runway, making it difficult to lift the aircraft.

Four people suffered "superficial scratches" as they evacuated the Boeing 737-800 jet, which had flown to the Philippine capital from Xiamen in southeast China, airport general manager

Monreal said.

"With God's blessings all passengers were able to evacuate safely," Monreal said, adding the cause of the incident was under investigation.

The second runway for smaller aircraft remained open, but the authorities said the accident

has delayed thousands of passengers, including holidaymakers travelling ahead of a long weekend.

Footage from the main airport terminal showed hundreds of passengers still lined up as they sought to re-book their flights.



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