

Netflix executive axed over use of N-word

AFP | Los Angeles

Netflix sacked its chief spokesman Jonathan Friedland, he revealed on Friday, after he used the N-word twice in the space of a few days during meetings with staff.

The head of communications announced his departure after being upbraided for a second time for using the racial slur, which is controversial for its ubiquity in hip-hop culture and completely taboo in almost every other context.

"I'm leaving Netflix after seven years. Leaders have to be beyond reproach in the example we set and unfortunately I fell short of that standard when I was insensitive in speaking to my team about words that offend in comedy," he tweeted.

ZTE expected to take last step to lift ban

Reuters|Beijing

ZTE Corp is expected to deposit \$400 million in an escrow account in a U.S. bank in the "next couple of days," the last step the Chinese company must take before a ban on U.S. suppliers can be lifted, a U.S. Department of Commerce official told Reuters on Friday.

ZTE, which makes smart phones and networking gear, agreed to pay a \$1 billion penalty and put \$400 million in an escrow account as part of a settlement agreement reached on June 7 to regain access to the U.S. market, which it needs for components.

ZTE, China's No. 2 telecommunications equipment maker, ceased major operations after the Commerce Department imposed the ban in April.

India speeds up environmental clearances

Mumbai | Economic Times

India is fast-tracking environmental clearances for projects like power plants and coal mines in a bid to propel growth, setting off alarm bells among environmentalists and affected residents who say the decisions are being made too quickly.

In a country where state machinery typically moves slowly, the environment ministry under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has slashed the average time taken to grant clearances to 170 days from 600 days, said two government sources with direct knowledge of the matter.

"We're standardising processes and taking decisions swiftly," said one of the officials, who did not want to be named, citing government policy. "We know the basic issues, and merely taking more time for approvals does not mean much."

Thousands join march to call for Brexit deal referendum

100,000 EU supporters march through Central London demanding a public ballot

● Protesters packed the main arteries of the capital, waving British, Irish and EU flags and colourful banners to call for a "People's Vote"

Reuters|London

Around 100,000 supporters of the European Union marched through central London yesterday to demand that the British government hold a final public vote on the terms of Brexit, organisers said.

Protesters packed the main arteries of the capital, waving British, Irish and European flags and colourful banners to call for a "People's Vote" on the eventual deal in which Britain leaves the world's biggest trading bloc.

On the second anniversary of the 52 to 48 percent Brexit vote, polls show political divisions are entrenched. Despite some confusion over what Brexit will



Protesters during the march in central London. - AFP Photo

actually mean there has been no clear change of heart.

The "People's Vote" campaign, which includes several pro-EU groups, is campaigning for a public ballot "so that we can decide if a decision that will affect our lives for generations makes the country better or worse off".

Neither of Britain's two main political parties back the idea

of holding a referendum on the final deal.

"People have seen politicians making a cataclysmic mess of a really bad deal they didn't vote for, or even a no deal they didn't vote for," a spokesman for the campaign told Reuters.

"This is the people telling the political elite that they got it wrong."

One banner read: "17 million

voted for Adolf Hitler. 17 million voted for Brexit. 17 million can be wrong" and another couple carried a placard which read: "We are doing this for our grandchildren."

A Survation poll earlier this week found that 48 percent of respondents supported a referendum on the final deal, while 25 percent were opposed.

As yet there is no certainty about what the final deal could look like, amid infighting in Prime Minister Theresa May's Conservative government as well as among some of its opponents about what they want from Britain's new trading ties with the EU after it leaves in March next year.

'Bog roll Brexit'

Marking the anniversary, Britain's foreign minister Boris Johnson, one of the main proponents of the "Leave" vote, wrote a column in tabloid newspaper the Sun defending Brexit.

Britain had voted for "the freedom to bust out of the corsets of EU regulation and rules"



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SPOKESMAN FOR CAMPAIGN

he said, and any softening of the final deal - such as continued membership of the single market and customs union - would be unwelcome.

Those who voted for Brexit had not changed their minds, he said.

"They don't want some bog roll Brexit - soft, yielding and seemingly infinitely long" he said, using a British slang term for toilet paper.

China must lead way in governance reform: Xi

Reuters|Beijing

China must lead the way in reforming global governance, the foreign ministry yesterday cited President Xi Jinping as saying, as Beijing looks to increase its world influence.

China has sought a greater say in global organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and United Nations, in line with its growing economic and diplomatic clout.

Since taking office in late 2012, Xi has taken a more muscular approach, setting up China's own global bodies like the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank and launching his landmark Belt and Road project to build a new Silk Road.

Beijing has cast itself a responsible member of the international community, especially as President Donald



Xi Jinping

Trump withdraws the US from agreements on climate change and Iran, and as Europe wrestles with Brexit. China must "uphold the protection of the country's sovereignty, security and development interests, proactively participate in and show the way in reform of the global governance system, creating an even better web of global partnership relationships", Xi

said in comments reported at the end of a two-day high-level Communist Party meeting. This would help create conditions for building a modern, strong socialist country, the ministry cited him as saying at the meeting attended by officials from the foreign and commerce ministries, the military, the propaganda department and the Chinese embassy in the US.

While Xi did not provide details, the statement cited him as mentioning the importance of the Belt and Road, and other key diplomatic platforms like his "community of common destiny", a lofty concept meant to guide China's relations with the world. This proposes a "new style" of international relations is proposed that is "win-win" and of "mutual benefit" for all, but nations remain critical of China's behavior over issues such as the South China Sea.

Air India unveils revamp plan

Reuters|Mumbai

State-run Air India will revamp its business and first class cabins on international flights to try to boost revenues by wooing more high-paying passengers, a top company official said on Friday, days after a plan to privatise the ail-

ing airline was called off. The government on Wednesday shelved a plan to sell a 76 percent stake in the debt-laden carrier due to lack of interest from bidders. Air India, known for its Maharaja mascot, is saddled with about \$7 billion of debt and its sale was expected to cement Prime Minister Narendra Modi's credentials as a reformer willing to step away from running money-losing businesses. The airline, which now plans to focus on finding ways to remain competitive and win market share, also unveiled a new food menu and amenities for passengers, and uniforms for its airline staff. These changes, expected to be introduced over the next two months, could earn the airline an additional 10 billion rupees a year in revenue, Air India's chairman and managing director Pradeep Singh Kharola told reporters.



The airline plans to focus on finding ways to remain competitive and win market share

India, UAE, Saudi likely to enter into oil cooperation

● India and UAE energy partnership has diversified from buyer-seller partnership to a more comprehensive one

Economic Times | New Delhi

United Arab Emirates (UAE) Foreign Minister Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan will undertake first ever six-city India visit next week aiming at creating an energy bridge between Delhi-Abu Dhabi-Riyadh

amid impending sanctions on Iran and volatility in global oil prices that has impacted consumers in South Asia's biggest country.

During Zayed Al Nahyan's visit - which is a follow up of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's February visit to the Gulf state - India and UAE would create tri-lateral cooperation with Saudi Arabia to secure Delhi's energy interests that could help to check rising oil prices. EThas learnt that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) will be signed between Saudi Aramco and the Abu Dhabi National Oil

Company (ADNOC) for Ratnagiri Refinery and Petrochemicals Limited on June 25.

This is the first such trilateral venture for India involving two

oil-rich Gulf countries.

India and UAE energy partnership has diversified from buyer-seller partnership to a more comprehensive one. UAE was the first country to supply oil to India's strategic oil reserve facility in Mangalore and India is among the few non-Western nations that has been allowed stake in oil field in Abu Dhabi.

During Modi's trip to Abu Dhabi this February, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC)-led consortium signed a 10% offshore

concession agreement, giving Indian companies an opportunity to develop Abu Dhabi's lucrative offshore oilfields which produce about 1.4 million barrels of oil per day. The consortium, led by India's ONGC -0.09 % Videsh, contributed a participation fee of \$600 million to enter the Lower Zakum concession, which will be operated by the ADNOC Offshore, a subsidiary of ADNOC on behalf of all concession partners. This is the first time that an Indian company will be involved in the development of oilfields in Abu Dhabi. About 8% of India's oil needs are supplied by the UAE.

