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FAOM LAWMAKER LEONG CALLS ON CASINOS TO INCREASE WORKERS' SALARIES IN FACE OF RECORD-BREAKING GROSS GAMING REVENUE IN JULY

▲ P4

MGM CHINA REVENUE GROWS TO HKD10.5B IN H1, FOCUSES ON EXPANDING TABLES

▲ P4

CHINA PROPOSES TO LIMIT CHILDREN'S SMARTPHONE TIME TO MAX 2 HOURS A DAY

▲ P7



AP PHOTO



China A highway bridge in northern China collapsed due to flash floods triggered by heavy rains, and two cars fell into the river, state media reported yesterday, as parts of China are experiencing the worst floods in decades. There were no known casualties as of yesterday afternoon after a bridge across Mayi River collapsed along the Harbin-Mudanjiang Highway in Heilongjiang province, according to Beijing News. Images published by local media showed two badly damaged cars floating in the water.

AP PHOTO



South Korea At least 13 people were injured in South Korea yesterday when a man rammed a car onto a sidewalk and then stepped out of the vehicle and began stabbing people inside a nearby shopping mall near in the city of Seongnam. At least nine people were stabbed and four others were injured by the vehicle in the attacks that occurred in a crowded leisure district near a subway station.

AP PHOTO



West Bank The Palestinian foreign minister yesterday attacked the Biden administration as weak and passive in the Middle East, as violence between Israel and the Palestinians surges to its highest levels in nearly two decades. The comments by Riad Malki reflected the Palestinian frustration with Joe Biden, who initially won plaudits from the Palestinians when he rejected the Trump administration's unabashedly pro-Israel stance. But Biden has done little to follow through on that vision.

More on backpage

BORDER EYES

Police to test iris-facilitated border crossing on residents ▲ P3



COLOANE WASTE WATER PLANT TENDER FOR MODERNIZATION AND OPERATION ATTRACTS SEVEN BIDDERS

▲ P2



▲ P11

PUBLIC WORKS

TENDER FOR MODERNIZATION AND OPERATION OF COLOANE WASTE WATER PLANT WITH SEVEN BIDDERS

RENATO MARQUES

THE public tender for the modernization and operation of the Coloane Waste Water Treatment Plant has received bids from seven different entities, the Environmental Protection Bureau (DSPA) has announced after the proposals' opening ceremony.

According to the bureau, the proposals received range in cost between 1 billion patacas and 2.14 billion patacas.

The lower price proposal came from a consortium headed by the company Zhu Kuan - Fomento Imobiliário, Limitada (MOP999,750,379.37), while the higher one came from Nam Kwong - Suez-Bewg JV (MOP2,139,551,815.99). The average price of the seven bids is MOP1.38 billion.



The bidding companies are seeking an eight-year contract in which the tender winner must provide operation and maintenance services for the Coloane Plant as well as carry out the first

phase of modernization and remodeling within a maximum of 84 months (seven years).

Of the seven bidders, only two (the consortium led by Companhia de Desenvolvimento de Tecnologias Greenfort Lda., and the consortium formed by the WATERLEAU and Empresa de Construção e Fomento Predial Nam Fong, Limitada) have presented a conclusion time for the modernization work fewer than the maximum of 84 months, with both proposing completion in 83 months.

The modernization works will link this plant to a new facility to be built on the site to which deeply treated wastewater will be sent to produce recycled water, as the government has previously announced.

As the Times reported, the project for the construction of

the Recycled Water Treatment Plant was discussed at an Urban Planning Committee (CPU) meeting in late April this year.

The new project will occupy a 2,930 square-meter area in a land plot beside the Waste Water Plant that in the past has been at the center of turmoil as the Secretary for Security, Wong Sio Chak, announced the government's intention to use it as a storage facility for hazardous materials and products.

After inhabitants of residential developments in the area protested this decision, the government suspended the project and has recently proposed a new purpose for the plot.

Although the CPU has given the green light to the urban conditions plan for the construction, it is not yet clear when construction will begin, nor when it is expected to be ready to use.

According to the Waste Water Plant tender information, and considering the tender winner will have seven years to adapt and prepare the plant for the later forwarding of the water to the recycling plant, this is not expected to happen anytime sooner than 2030.

CC increases the number of goods subjected to regular price inspection by 25%

RENATO MARQUES



RENATO MARQUES

THE Consumer Council (CC) has increased by 25% the list of products subjected to regular price inspections in local supermarkets, according to the CC's own report.

The measure aims to increase price transparency and provide consumers with information on goods' prices so they can make informed buying decisions.

From this month, the number of goods to be subject to weekly price investigations in supermarkets increased to 500 in 14 categories.

Additionally, to help

consumers compare prices, the CC has improved its "Macao Price Information Platform" mobile application. Consumers can use the app to verify current prices and where to find them at a better price among a network of 103 supermarkets in the survey's scope.

The CC also noted that, considering the population's purchasing habits, it has been adjusting some of the products in scope and has added 10 products for closer supervision.

In the first half of this year, the CC added the price of refrigerated chickens, pre-packed eggs and food and drinks in F&B establishments.

CC's price investigation reflects the price variation of the same product between different commercial establishments, to help consumers make a price comparison to better save on expenses in their daily lives.

CE TO ATTEND AL NEXT WEEK CLOSING THE LEGISLATIVE YEAR WITH Q&A WITH LAWMAKERS

THE Chief Executive (CE), Ho Iat Seng, will attend a plenary session scheduled for Aug. 11 at the Legislative Assembly (AL).

The session will be the last plenary of the current legislative year, which draws to a close on Aug. 15, returning only in October, after the legislative holidays.

It is expected that the lawmakers will come up with proposals and topics related to the policy address for 2024, which the CE will present as usual in mid-November this year.

The increase of civil servants' salaries and the resumption of other fi-

nancial benefits to the population, such as the 7,000 patacas that the government used to transfer annually into the Central Provident Fund accounts of older permanent residents, are topics likely to be discussed.

The last time the government made such a transfer of funds was in 2019 as the CE reaffirmed that such a special contribution is legally attached to the surplus of the government's general account, which has been recording a deficit since 2020 as result of the restrictions to the entry of visitors related to the Covid-19 pandemic. **RM**

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Police to test iris-facilitated border crossing on residents

ANTHONY LAM

IRIS-FACILITATED border crossing using the eye will be tested on invited residents during the next phase of testing for the technology, the Central District Municipal Advisory Committee has said.

Citing the Public Security Police Force (PSP), committee vice president Ao Ieong Kuong Kao and member Edgar Tam told a press conference the first phase of border-crossing and stress tests on the technology had been concluded.

Currently, the system is being fine-tuned. With six border checkpoints at which human channels possess the necessary hardware, over 500 pieces of such equipment has been installed.

The next phase of the test will involve inviting local adult residents for data collection and border crossing tests, before the technology is fully rolled out to all Macau residents for border crossing with digital identity.

Tam said iris-facilitated border crossing is safer and more accurate than fingerprints but requires higher technological standards. Wearing colored shades or con-



tact lenses will not be possible for iris-facilitated border crossing. The technology will also be unavailable at the Qingmao Border checkpoint where juxtaposed e-channels are widely used.

Committee vice convenor Wu Hang San also said during her pre-agenda speech that the technology had been introduced in the Border Gate checkpoint.

She believed the widespread use of such technology would be difficult, considering its high introduction and maintenance costs. She suggested that the government continue to work with local associations to promote the "benefits" of the technology and bolstering its popularity by further improving the iris data collection technology.

Meanwhile, committee member Leong Wai Kei said that with some people having concerns over the use of iris data, the government should work more closely with local associations to promote the use of digital identity.

"Moreover, residents should be educated about personal data protection and cybersecurity, so as to decrease the abuse of their

digital identities and ensure the safety of data," Leong added. He also suggested further promotion of the use of digital identity.

The committee has also discussed the government's proposal to pedestrianize Rua de Felicidade, colloquially referred to in English as the Happiness Street.

Member Lei Kit Ian, an educator, suggested the government take a cultural education approach to the project, considering the red-light district history of the street. He said the street encapsulated the Lingnan culture, with featured dining and lodging establishments as well as the business-residence duplex layout of shops.

He believed the street could become a popular spot for educational tours that have recently become popular in both the mainland and Macau. Academics and parents can utilize the street for educational purposes. Spending during the tours will also help revive the economy of the district.

Several other members also made suggestions regarding the preservation and presentation of the street's cultural background if the proposal becomes a reality.

Member Chang Ka Wa, meanwhile, reminded the government to conduct sufficient communication with residents before setting out the proposal, because each coin has two sides. It was suggested that the plan start at a small scale and gradually expand, with growing consensus from residents in the neighborhood.

One Account app to launch ID renewal service

THE government One Account app will be further upgraded and an ID card renewal service is planned for the next phase, a public administration official told a press conference yesterday afternoon.

At a press conference announcing new education-related upgrades to the app, Chan Chi Kin, Public Administration and Civil Service Bureau (SAFP) department head for e-governance, disclosed that to cope with the release of the new version of ID card, certain updates will also be made to the app. The most prominent change will be allowing renewals to be made via the app.

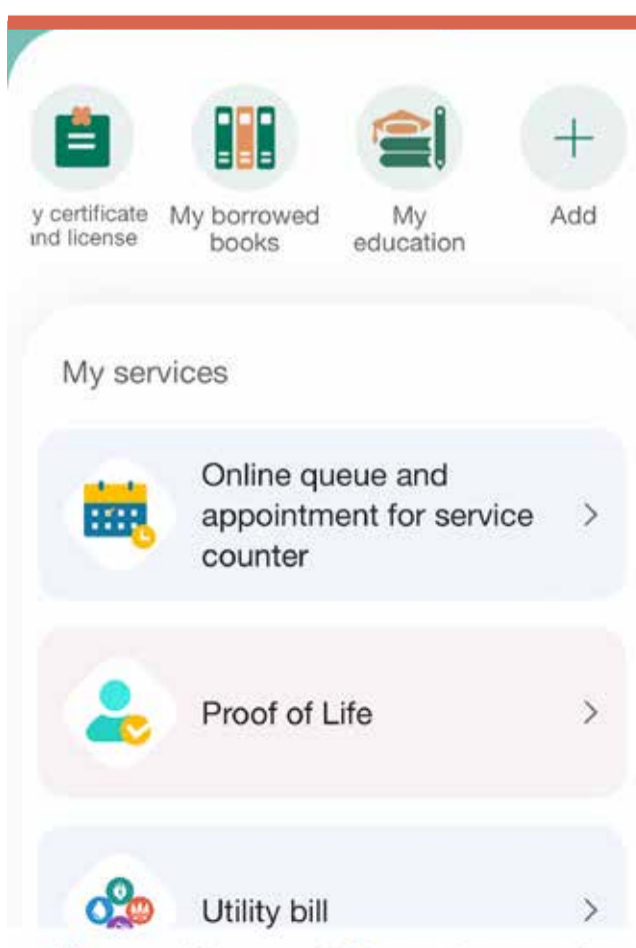
Chan also disclosed that although some service bookings can be made on the app, the mode of booking is quite scattered. As a result, the SAFP

is contemplating a way to centralize all booking actions for the sake of convenience.

Another function concerning updating residential or contact addresses is also nearing its official release.

At the same press conference, the Education and Youth Development Bureau (DSEDJ) announced that app users can manage their education-related procedures, such as continuing education subsidies, premier school enrolment for infants, as well as non-tertiary private education teaching staff career-level query services. However, not all aforementioned services are available now, with some of them only available from September.

The new functions are available on the latest version of the app, the DSEDJ noted. AL



INSURANCE

HSBC LIFE OPENS MACAU CENTER AS IT SEES INCREASING DEMAND FROM GBA CLIENTS

HSBBC Life yesterday opened an HSBC Life Insurance Planning Centre in Macau, marking a milestone as it aims to solidify its presence in the Greater Bay Area (GBA).

According to the insurance firm, its Macau business is experiencing "treble-digit growth and so it is the right place for us to set up this new facility."

"Macau stands as a very important and unique city in our GBA plans to capture the rising demand for insurance protection and wealth management within the region," said Edward Moncreiffe, HSBC Life CEO of Hong Kong and Macau.

Moncreiffe added that, in the first six months of

the year, the group has issued over HKD6 billion in new premiums across Hong Kong and Macau to mainland Chinese visitors, roughly 30% of which has come from customers from the Guangdong province.

"We continue to see strong demand from across the region for our leading health and wealth solutions. [...] We will thus continue to invest in our infrastructure across this region," he added.

The new center complements the two HSBC Life Para-medical Centres in Hong Kong established in Tsim Sha Tsui and Causeway Bay to offer one-stop medical underwriting and health services to customers. LV

RENATO MARQUES

LAWMAKER Leong Sun Iok, representing the Macau Federation of Trade Unions (FAOM), has responded to news of record-breaking gross gaming revenue (GGR) in July from local casinos with a call to the gaming operators to increase workers' salaries as a way of sharing part of these profits with those affected by the economic crisis precipitated by the pandemic.

Leong made the call in an interview with the Chinese language state media outlet Macao Daily News, published yesterday.

Using similar language to that of his colleague Lei Chan U, who on Monday at the Legislative Assembly called for a pay raise for civil servants, Leong also said that a salary increase from the gaming concessionaires would be an exemplar for other private sector companies in different sectors to follow, catalyzing a general salary increase across economic sectors in Macau.

The lawmakers noted that the profits currently being collected by the gaming and hotel industry

FAOM CALLS ON CASINO OPERATORS TO INCREASE WAGES

are attributable to the efforts and contributions of their workers, many of whom were laid off or furloughed during the pandemic.

As the Times has reported, July saw the best monthly GGR since January 2020, with the casinos cashing in some MOP16.66 billion and bringing this year's accumulated GGR very close to the psychological milestone of MOP100 billion (MOP96.798 billion in the first seven months).

If, as expected, casino earnings continue to hold steady, it is expected that total GGR at the end of this year could surpass MOP160 billion, higher than the government's forecast of some MOP130 billion for 2023.

According to official statistics at the end of 2022, the average earnings of full-time employees in the gaming sector were MOP23,680, an amount 3.9% lower than that reported at the end of 2019.



Lawmaker Leong Sun Iok

GAMING

MGM China revenue grows to HKD10.5b in H1, focuses on expanding tables

MGM China has announced revenues of HKD820.9 million for the first half of the year, compared to a loss of HKD2.4 billion for the same period in 2022.

In an announcement, the gaming operator said it continued to outperform the market amid an industry recovery.

The group's net revenue grew 231.2% year-on-year to HK\$10.6 billion for the period.

Between January and July, revenues from the gaming industry in Macau grew 263%, compared to the same period in 2022, according to data from the Gaming Inspection and Coordination Bureau, reaching MOP96.8 billion, against MOP174 billion collected in the same period of 2019.

MGM China, in the second quarter, saw visitation recover to 95% of the second quarter of 2019. Daily gross gaming revenue (GGR) was 98% of the second quarter of 2019, said the group.

Under the gaming concession contract effective January 1, 2023, the group is entitled to operate a total of 750 gaming tables, compared



with 552 gaming tables previously, which represents a 36% increase.

All tables were licensed and the current phase of deployment optimization of all tables will complete in the third quarter. In the future, the group pledged that it would continue to invest in its gaming floor to enhance table yield.

In an earnings call with analysts, CEO and president of MGM Resorts Bill Hornbuckle said, "Just a few weeks ago, we reconfigured

an enhanced Pit 7 at MGM Macau, and the Lotus Room at MGM Cotai and expect to complete the deployment optimization in Q3 of our tables."

"In Macau, we are focused on four key priorities: activating our incremental 200 tables; making optimistic changes to our casino floor to maximize yield; taking care of our premium mass customers; and driving international customers to our property through our global branch office network," he added. LV

CRIME

THREE ARRESTED FOR ALLEGED CONSTRUCTION SCAM

ANTHONY LAM

TWO men and a woman have been arrested for allegedly scamming a six-digit sum of money by impersonating waterproof work professionals, the Judiciary Police (PJ) announced yesterday.

The three suspects, all from mainland China, are aged between 33 and 40 years. The police have identified them as having connections to a criminal syndicate. The police said four people had fallen victim to the fraud.

According to the police, the syndicate had advertised its "waterproof work" on social media platforms. When

they received queries, they would dress up in work clothes and pretend to be inspecting the situation. They would then quote their clients for MOP688 or MOP988 per catty (500g) of waterproof materials, and claim that only one catty would be needed.

One victim decided to take the MOP688 plan. The three started working immediately but later claimed that over 70 catty of materials were used "due to a more serious condition than evaluated," requesting MOP50,000 from the victim. The victim paid MOP40,000 and was allowed to settle the remainder later. After discussing the incident

with family, the victim approached the police on July 30.

Investigations revealed three other victims, who lost MOP23,000, MOP30,000 and MOP13,000.

On Aug. 1, the police arrested the two men at the Border Gate checkpoint, and the woman at the local casino. They confessed that the materials were worth several hundreds of Chinese yuan only. The profits were shared among themselves and the syndicate handlers, with 30% to them and 70% to the syndicate.

The police have requested that people who have had similar experiences contact them.



ENERGY

Green development boosts business growth

YUAN SHENGGAO,
CHINA DAILY

AS a pioneer of the “park city” philosophy, Chengdu is encouraging low-carbon transition by emphasizing green development in its socioeconomic advancement.

Huaizhou New City, located in Chengdu's Jintang county, is home to such industrial giants as TW Solar, B&M Science and Technology, CATL and Dynanonic. Over the first half of this year, it welcomed a group of photovoltaic glass and new lithium battery manufacturers from the Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei area and the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.

Local officials said the growth initiative has helped connect the downstream of the photovoltaic industry while accelerating progress of Chengdu's green and low-carbon industry.

In June, the Jintang base of TW Solar, which has a total investment of 3.2 billion yuan (\$447.5 million) and is the first gigawatt-level photovoltaic component



production base in Southwest China, went into operation. According to the company, the base is expected to achieve an annual output value of 40 billion yuan and provide 3,000 jobs.

In early June, TW Solar announced plans to invest in a photovoltaic project with a capacity of 20 GW in Chengdu's Shuangliu district, which is expected to open in 2025. The city's current photovoltaic industry generates nearly 20 billion yuan and includes

more than 20 businesses in Jintang county and Shuangliu district.

Chengdu is also boosting hydrogen energy across manufacturing sectors from fuel cells to vehicles. The city has developed a complete hydrogen energy industrial chain that integrates the production, storage, transportation, refueling and application of hydrogen gases and has mapped out function areas in the Pidou and Longquanyi districts.

More than 60 hydrogen businesses and research and development institutions — including Dongfang Electric Corporation, HQHP and SinoHytec — are now operating in the city. The Western Industry Park for Hydrogen, which is being constructed by Chengdu Smart Car City Development, a joint venture between Chengdu Jiaozhi Financial Holding Group and the Longquanyi district government, will serve as an industrial hub.

In May, the park completed construction of 21 buildings and opened its demonstration hall. The move helped attract businesses involved in sectors ranging from hydrogen energy and automobiles to electronics and environmental protection.

“The park is expected to start operating in the first half of 2024,” said Liu Tao, chairman of Chengdu Smart Car City Development. “It will be the largest hydrogen energy industrial complex in Chengdu.”

By the end of 2025, the park hopes to include 50 to 100 businesses involved in hydrogen energy and automobiles, which

will form an industrial chain and reach an output value of more than 10 billion yuan.

Over the past few years, Chengdu has rolled out a series of policies for sectors such as photovoltaic, power batteries, new energy vehicles, hydrogen energy and energy storage to create a green and low-carbon industry with an output value worth 100 billion yuan. In June 2022, the city government issued a guideline on the development of green hydrogen energy, spurring establishment of a whole industrial chain.

With the development of hydrogen energy, the NEV sector sees great potential in Chengdu, and the city has encouraged the application of hydrogen energy vehicles with an industrial chain and the opening of several routes for hydrogen-powered buses.

NEV sales in Chengdu reached 74,100 units through the first five months of this year, up 20.5 percent from 2022, and the sales volume ranked fourth in all of China. And as of the end of May, Chengdu had built a total of 131,000 NEV charging piles. **MDT/CHINA DAILY**

AD

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TYPHOON

KHANUN FORECAST TO MAKE U-TURN TO JAPAN, AFTER FLOODING AREAS AROUND BEIJING

THE typhoon that damaged homes and knocked out power on Okinawa and other Japanese islands this week was slowly moving west yesterday but is forecast to make a U-turn and dump even more rain on the archipelago.

Typhoon Khanun, now in the waters between China and Japan's southwestern islands, is expected to slow to nearly stationary movement before a weakening high pressure system nearby allows it to turn east today, the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

That forecast would largely spare China, where rain from an earlier typhoon caused deadly flooding and damage this week around the capital, Beijing.

Khanun, which means jackfruit in Thai, had sustained surface winds of 162 kph with higher gusts Thursday morning. Up to 20 centimeters of rainfall were expected in the Okinawa region by midday Friday, JMA said.

China and Taiwan were also making preparations for the storm. Though the eye is forecast to stay offshore as the typhoon



turns east, winds exceeding 90 kph extended an average radius of 100 kilometers, Taiwan's Central Weather Bureau said yesterday afternoon.

China's weather authorities issued rainstorm alerts for the eastern coast, from Jilin province, near the border with North

Korea, to Zhejiang province, south of Shanghai. Ships were called into port and passenger ferry services halted in Zhejiang province.

Light rain was falling in the Taiwanese port city of Keelung, near Taipei, and coast guard personnel were warning people to stay off the beaches. The island

shut its financial markets yesterday, some of its northern cities shut offices and schools, and offices closed in anticipation of worsening weather on the northeastern coast.

In Okinawa, the typhoon injured 41 people, three of them seriously, according to the pre-

fectural government.

A 90-year-old man was found under a collapsed garage in Ogi-mi village, and his death is being investigated as possibly caused by the typhoon's high winds.

The storm at one point left nearly 220,000 homes, or about 30%, of those in Okinawa, without power, according to the Okinawa Electric Power Company. Also, some 7,000 homes on Amami, an island northeast of the Okinawan islands and part of Kagoshima prefecture, were without power, according to the Economy and Industry Ministry.

Most were still without power yesterday as the storm hampered restoration work. Hospitals that lost power were only receiving emergency cases.

Wind warnings for the main Okinawa Island were lifted yesterday, though moderate winds and rain were affecting the island. Public transit systems that closed during the storm resumed operations, and some flights in and out of the Naha Airport were expected to resume later on. **MDT/AP**

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ADVERTORIAL

SANDS CHINA NEWS

Vienna's Janoska Ensemble Bringing Their Unique Improvisation to The Parisian Theatre This Month

Austria's lively **Janoska Ensemble** is performing at The Parisian Theatre Aug. 19 as part of the **Sands Performing Arts Program**.

The string and piano quartet are bringing their signature '**Janoska Style**,' where their unique interpretation of classical pieces combines the highest level of technical perfection with the art of improvisation – creating an eclectic mix of classical, jazz, pop and world music.

Their upcoming performance at The Parisian Macao is part of the **Sands Performing Arts Program**. The program makes use of Sands China's world-class venues to stage nationally and internationally acclaimed shows and develop a diverse platform for performing arts projects in Macao. It fully utilises Macao's role as a platform of international exchange, in alignment with the Macao SAR government's vision for the integrated tourism and leisure industry.

The program recently hosted the Macao debut of **Floral Princess 65th Anniversary**, an innovative hi-tech remake of the classic Cantonese opera 'Floral Princess' that fuses tradition and technology. Later this year, the program will present the mesmerising dance drama, **Poetic Dance: The Journey of a Legendary Landscape Painting**.

A family of virtuoso musicians from Vienna, the Janoska Ensemble features violin, piano and double bass, with their shows bringing a modern interpretation to classical music, including their own compositions. Their performance at The Parisian Theatre will focus on the great 'B' composers, including Bach, Brahms, Beethoven and even The Beatles – all known for a certain level of improvisation.

The group said: "Thanks to the invitation from Sands China, we are thrilled to perform in Macao for the first time as part of The Big B's World Tour! We have carefully selected pieces from our latest album, The Big B's, for Macao audiences. There are some real-world sensations and some symphonic works that we play in our unique Janoska Style. We are confident that we can offer a new classical music experience and we have also arranged a special song just for Macao, so stay tuned."

For tickets or to get more information, please visit the Cotai Ticketing website at <https://www.cotaiticketing.com/shows/janoska2023>.



HEALTH

China proposes to limit children's smartphone time to max 2 hours a day

CHINA'S internet watchdog has laid out regulations to curb the amount of time children spend on their smartphones, in the latest blow to firms such as Tencent and ByteDance, which run social media platforms and online games.

The Cyberspace Administration of China this week published the draft guidelines on its site, stating that minors would not be allowed to use most internet services on mobile devices from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m., and that children between the ages of 16 and 18 would only be able to use the internet for two hours a day.

Children between the ages of 8 and 15 would be allowed only an hour a day, while those under 8 would only be allowed 40 minutes.

Only certain services, such as apps or platforms that are deemed suitable to the physical and mental development of minors, will be exempted. The CAC did not specify which internet services would be allowed exemptions.

The restrictions are Beijing's latest efforts to attempt to limit internet addiction, a problem it views as widespread among its youth. In 2019, Beijing limited children's daily online game time to 90 minutes a day and tightened those restrictions in 2021, allowing children only an

hour a day of online game play on Fridays, weekends and public holidays.

Short-video and online video platforms like Douyin, Bilibili and Kuaishou have offered youth modes that restrict the type of content shown to minors and the length of time they can use the service. Children are also pushed educational content, such as science experiments.

The latest restrictions would impact firms like Tencent, China's largest online game company, and ByteDance, which runs popular short-video platform Douyin. Firms in China are often responsible for enforcing regulations.

"To effectively strengthen the online protection of minors, the CAC has in recent years pushed for the establishment of a youth mode on internet platforms, expanding its coverage, optimizing its functions and enriching it with age-appropriate content," the CAC said.

"Since the mode was launched, there has been a positive impact in reducing youth internet addiction and the impact of undesirable information," it added.

The CAC said draft guidelines were open to public feedback until Sep. 2. It did not say when the new rules would be into effect. **MDT/AP**

AP PHOTO



USA

Trump to face judge in DC over charges he tried to overturn the 2020 presidential election

MICHAEL KUNZELMAN,
ERIC TUCKER
& NOMAAN MERCHANT,
WASHINGTON

DONALD Trump is due in federal court today [Macau time] to answer to charges that he sought to overturn the results of the 2020 presidential election, facing a judge near the U.S. Capitol building that his supporters stormed to try to block the peaceful transfer of power.

In what's become a familiar but nonetheless stunning ritual, Trump is expected to be processed by law enforcement, be taken into custody and enter a not guilty plea in front of a judge before being released, so he can rejoin the campaign trail as he seeks to reclaim the White House in 2024.

An indictment earlier this week from Justice Department special counsel Jack Smith charges Trump with four felony counts related to his efforts to undo his presidential election loss in the run-up to the

Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol, including conspiracy to defraud the U.S. government and conspiracy to obstruct an official proceeding. The charges could lead to a yearslong prison sentence in the event of a conviction.

The Republican former president was the only person charged in the case, though prosecutors referenced six co-conspirators, mostly lawyers, they say he plotted with, including in a scheme to enlist fake electors in seven battleground states won by Democrat Joe Biden to submit false certificates to the federal government.

The indictment chronicles how Trump and his Republican allies, in what Smith described as an attack on a "bedrock function of the U.S. government," repeatedly lied about the results in the two months after he lost the election and pressured his vice president, Mike Pence, and state election officials to take action to help him cling to power.

This is the third criminal case brought against Trump in the last six months. He was charged in New York with falsifying business records in connection with a hush money payment to a porn actor during the 2016 presidential campaign. Smith's office also has charged him with 40 felony counts in Florida, accusing him of illegally retaining classified documents at his Palm Beach estate, Mar-a-Lago, and refusing government demands to give them back. He has pleaded not guilty in both those cases, which are set for trial next year.

And prosecutors in Fulton County, Georgia, are expected in coming weeks to announce charging decisions in an investigation into efforts to subvert election results in that state.

Trump's lawyer John Lauro has asserted in television interviews that Trump's actions were protected by the First Amendment right to free speech and that he relied on the advice of lawyers. Trump

has claimed without evidence that Smith's team is trying to interfere with the 2024 presidential election, in which Trump is the early front-runner to claim the Republican nomination.

Smith said in a rare public statement that he was seeking a speedy trial, though Lauro has said he intends to slow the case down so that the defense team can conduct its own investigation.

The arraignment will be handled before U.S. Magistrate Judge Moxila Upadyaha, who joined the bench last year. But going forward, the case will be presided over by U.S. District Judge Tanya Chutkan, an appointee of President Barack Obama who has stood out as one of the toughest punishers of the Capitol rioters.

Chutkan has also ruled against Trump before, refusing in November 2021 to block the release of documents to the U.S. House's Jan. 6 committee by asserting executive privilege. **MDT/AP**

this day in history



1964 THREE CIVIL RIGHTS ACTIVISTS FOUND DEAD



The bodies of three civil rights workers missing for six weeks have been found buried in a partially constructed dam near Philadelphia, Mississippi.

Agents from the Federal Bureau of Investigation found the three young men - two white and one black man - about six miles from the town in a wooded area near where they were last seen on the night of 21 June.

They were Michael Schwerner, aged 24, Andrew Goodman, 20, both from New York and James Chaney, 22, from Meridian, Mississippi. All were members of the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) dedicated to non-violent direct action against racial discrimination.

As soon as the men were reported missing, the case was made top priority and codenamed Miburn (Mississippi burning). FBI agents headed by Major Case Inspector Joseph Sullivan were sent down to Mississippi to investigate the matter.

After a tip-off they found the mens' burnt-out car two days after their disappearance.

The bodies have been taken to Jackson, Mississippi, for further examination into the cause of death. It is believed all three had been shot and the finger of blame is pointing at the Ku Klux Klan white supremacist group.

Church burned down

The three young men had left the CORE office in Meridian six weeks ago to investigate the destruction of a black congregation church in Longdale, Neshoba County because it was used as the site for a "freedom school".

The school was set up by Mr Schwerner as part of a wider civil rights campaign in Mississippi teaching black children, among other things, black history and the philosophy of the civil rights movement.

The Mount Zion Church was burned down on 16 June by members of the KKK searching for Mr Schwerner.

His wife, Rita, made an emotional statement to newspapers today.

She said: "My husband, Michael Schwerner, did not die in vain. If he and Andrew Goodman had been negroes, the world would have taken little notice of their deaths.

"After all, the slaying of a negro in Mississippi is not news. It is only because my husband and Andrew Goodman were white that the national alarm had been sounded."

Courtesy BBC News

IN CONTEXT

On 13 October 1964 James Jordan, a member of the Ku Klux Klan, told FBI agents he had witnessed the murder and was willing to testify. A total of 19 men were arrested and charged.

On 24 February 1967 Judge William Cox dismissed 17 of the 19 indictments but he was overruled by the Supreme Court and the so-called Mississippi Burning trial took place in October 1967.

It emerged that the three young men had been arrested by Deputy Sheriff Cecil Price on 21 June, then released from Neshoba jail in the middle of the night and attacked and killed by the KKK as they drove out of town.

Among those convicted were Deputy Sheriff Price, who got six years in jail. Ku Klux Klan leader Sam Bowers and KKK member Wayne Roberts were sentenced to 10 years each.

A film based on the FBI investigation was made in 1988 called Mississippi Burning.

In June 2005 Edgar Ray Killen, 80, was convicted of recruiting the killers. Killen was sentenced to 60 years in jail for the three manslaughters.

MACAU'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

YOUR STARS

ARIES
Mar. 21-Apr. 19
You should sit down with someone you trust and work out a budget that will enable you to save a little extra. Expect to have problems with the ones you love. Expect to have problems with the ones you love.

TAURUS
Apr. 20-May. 20
Trips, educational pursuits, or projects that could lead to new outlooks should be on your agenda. Concentrate on getting ahead financially and let your personal life settle down for a while.

GEMINI
May. 21-Jun. 21
You will be overly sensitive when dealing with your personal life. You can work in conjunction with those in the know in order to get to the bottom of any pending issue.

CANCER
Jun. 22-Jul. 22
Stretch the truth, and you may get blamed for something you didn't do. Plan to visit friends or relatives. Don't let the cat out of the bag.

LEO
Jul. 23-Aug. 22
You may find that someone you live with may be irritable; you're best to leave them alone. You will profit from home improvement projects and real estate deals.

VIRGO
Aug. 23-Sep. 22
You need time to make things better. You have to take hold of your life and make some crucial decisions. Find out all the facts before you jump to conclusions.

LIBRA
Sep. 23-Oct. 22
Get more involved in group efforts at work. Don't second guess yourself, just go to it. Risks will not be profitable. It may be a disappointing day emotionally.

SCORPIO
Oct. 23-Nov. 21
Travel for business purposes may bring the highest returns. You will be relentless when it comes to getting yourself back into shape. Be careful; you may say something you'll regret later.

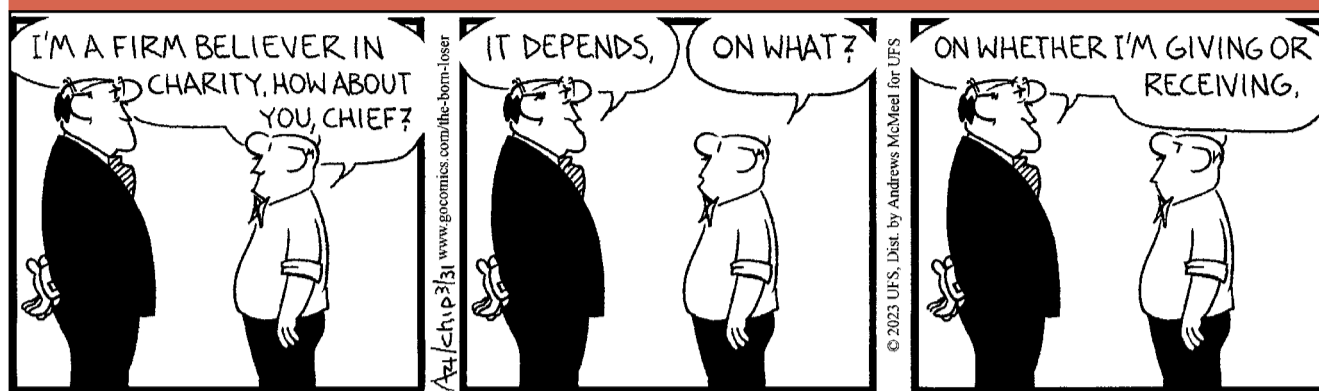
SAGITTARIUS
Nov. 22-Dec. 21
Be careful that you don't spend too much time with a person belonging to someone else. If you work in conjunction with someone else you may find they're trying to steal your thunder.

CAPRICORN
Dec. 22-Jan. 19
Do your own thing and everything will settle down. Your ability to add a sophisticated touch will help you capture the look you're after. Overindulgence will be a problem if you are out in a social setting.

AQUARIUS
Jan. 20-Feb. 18
Empty promises are evident and deception probable. Moves or the possibility of having someone different living with you may be difficult at first.

PISCES
Feb. 19-Mar. 20
Romantic opportunities may not be as they appear. Your lover may cost you financially. Avoid any erratic behavior or it could cause isolation at home.

The Born Loser by Chip Sanson



SUDOKU

EASY

		4	8	1	2				
7	9						2	3	
6			7					5	4
8				6	4			9	
9	2		8			1		6	
	3	9	7					8	
5	4				8			3	
	8	9					1	5	
			5	4	9	7			

EASY+

						1		
1		9	8			5	7	
	6		2					5
9				3			1	6
3				6				2
5	4			2				7
	8					1		3
		3	6					1
		4			9	6		

MEDIUM

8	9			7				
	5			8	4			
	7	4						8
5							9	
		3		1		6		
	9							5
2					5	3		
			4	7			6	
			3			1		2

HARD

				8	1			
	2						6	
	7							
1	4							8
			3					
8								
			6			3		2
5				1				
			2				7	

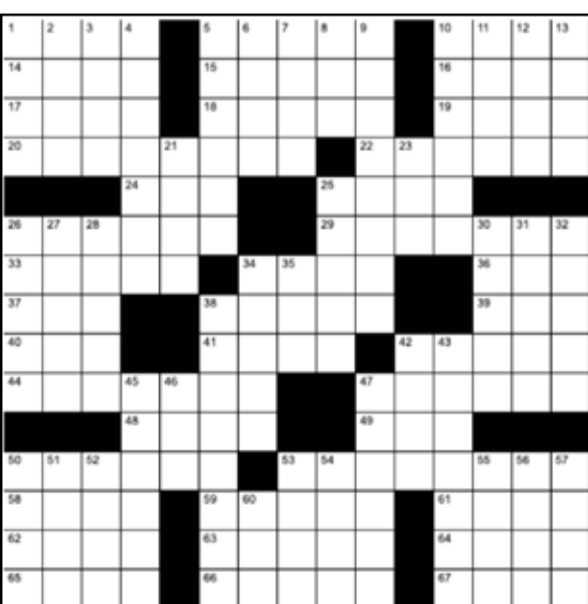
WEATHER

	MIN	MAX	CONDITION
CHINA			
Beijing	26	33	rain
Changchun	23	29	thunderstorms
Chengdu	23	32	showers
Chongqing	26	34	rain
Fuzhou	28	37	cloudy
Guangzhou	26	35	cloudy
Guiyang	20	29	showers
Haikou	25	32	rain
Hangzhou	26	32	rain
Harbin	22	28	rain
Hefei	25	35	fine
Nanjing	26	34	cloudy
Shanghai	28	32	rain
Taipei	27	29	rain
Wuhan	28	37	fine
Hong Kong	29	32	thunderstorms
WORLD			
Moscow	18	29	overcast
Frankfurt	11	21	rain
Paris	13	21	rain
London	13	20	rain
New York	20	27	thunderstorms

CROSSWORDS

ACROSS 1- Coarsely ground corn; 5- Cattail's locale; 10- Purple fruit; 14- Rent-; 15- Make one; 16- Stand; 17- City in Western Nevada; 18- Halts; 19- Daredevil Knievel; 20- Pharmacist; 22- Put in; 24- Stimp's pal; 25- Arguing; 26- "Constant Craving" singer; 29- Clumsy person; 33- Lots and lots; 34- King of comedy; 36- Sportscaster Berman; 37- ___-Wan Kenobi was a character in "Star Wars"; 38- Area of land; 39- Fall behind; 40- "Sister Act" extra; 41- Adjutant; 42- Gives off; 44- Eternal; 47- Minister; 48- Detest; 49- Free; 50- Enough!; 53- Very large woman; 58- Fail to include; 59- Amusing; 61- Charles Lamb's nom de plume; 62- Change for a five; 63- Practice; 64- Cincinnati club; 65- Mudville complement; 66- "See ya!"; 67- Untidy condition;

DOWN 1- Reddish-brown gem; 2- Super server; 3- Hindu lawgiver; 4- Schedule of activities; 5- Meditative; 6- Formicary residents; 7- Civil disturbance; 8- The Racer's Edge; 9- Vacillant; 10- "Voilà!"; 11- As it happens; 12- Addict; 13- Hot sandwich; 21- Mil. leaders; 23- Zip; 25- Expeditiously; 26- Basic monetary unit of Sweden; 27- Rid of insect pests; 28- Singer Frankie; 30- Stan's pal; 31- "Hyperion" poet; 32- Uneasy feeling; 34- Emerge; 35- Little guy; 38- Esthetic; 42- Ireland; 43- Partway through period; 45- Fourth highest peak in the world; 46- Projection at the corner of a door architrave; 47- Entreaty; 50- Midday; 51- Bygone Dodge; 52- Appearance; 53- Midge; 54- "Splendor in the Grass" screenwriter; 55- Gen. Robert ___; 56- Caesar and others; 57- Lip; 60- Olympics chant;



Crossword puzzles provided by BestCrosswords.com

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

- Emergency calls 999
- Fire department 28 572 222
- PJ (Open line) 993
- PJ (Picket) 28 557 775
- PSP 28 573 333
- Customs 28 559 944
- S. J. Hospital 28 313 731
- Kiang Wu Hospital 28 371 333
- Commission Against Corruption (CCAC) 28326 300
- IAM 28 387 333
- Tourism 28 333 000
- Airport 59 888 88
- Taxi 28 939 939 / 2828 3283
- Water Supply - Report 2822 0088
- Telephone - Report 1000
- Electricity - Report 28 339 922
- Macau Daily Times 28 716 081



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HKD 22,000/mth 4 bed 3 bath

AD

DRIVE IN

PASSION AND LOVE GET MESSY IN IRA SACHS' SMOLDERING 'PASSAGES'

LINDSEY BAHR,
MDT/AP FILM WRITER

If you've been wondering where all the sex has gone from the movies, you're in luck: The new film "Passages" does not hold back in depicting the fresh passion of a love affair.

But "Passages" should really come with a warning, and not because of its realistic illustrations of queer and heterosexual intimacy, which got the film slapped with an NC-17 rating. (Its distributor, MUBI, opted instead to release it in theaters as unrated.) No, "Passages" should come with a warning for its brutal honesty about the intoxicating haze of a new relationship and all its casualties.

At least it's fun and dangerous at the start (aren't they all, though). Directed by Ira Sachs, working again with his co-writer Mauricio Zacharias, "Passages" is centered on Tomas (Franz Rogowski), a German living in France with his English husband Martin (Ben Whishaw), who begins an affair with a French woman, Agathe (Adèle Exarchopoulos).

AP PHOTO



Franz Rogowski (left) and Adèle Exarchopoulos in a scene from "Passages"

Tomas is a film director.

Like many directors before him, Tomas carries these expectations with him into his real life and relationships. At the wrap party, Martin doesn't feel like dancing with Tomas, but Agathe, fresh out of her own relationship does. Later that night, they end up in bed and Tomas bikes home the next day to tell his husband how exciting it was to sleep with

a woman.

"Passages," many have noted, has a very European sensibility despite being directed by an American. Gender preferences aren't etched in stone (nor do they require any discussion or explanation). Fidelity and monogamy aren't the biggest deal.

But even the most enlightened of young people still have feelings that can get hurt, despite their in-

tellectual rejection of traditional social mores. Later in the film, Tomas sits down for an excruciatingly awkward dinner with Agathe's parents who ask him about his intentions with their daughter and his plans.

Tomas is immediately defensive and hostile to the line of questioning. And while you can see both sides, as in many instances in "Passages," Tomas comes off

the worst. He's so consumed with his own needs and pursuits that he can't for a moment step outside of himself into anyone else's shoes. When rejection comes from one place, he's learned he can find quick solace elsewhere.

The trio of actors are wonderfully chaotic and all empathetic in their own way. But Whishaw is particularly excellent as one of the poor souls swept up in Tomas' cyclone. Martin is on his own journey of discovery, learning for himself what he's willing to tolerate in the name of love and when too much is just too much. Agathe is a bit more underdrawn which can be frustrating — she's sometimes more object and foil than actual character. But Exarchopoulos still brings depth and substance that may not be on the page.

Some have likened "Passages" to a horror movie (though aren't all coming of age movies horrors in some way?) Regardless, it would make a fitting double feature with Christian Petzold's "Afire". They are both films that let you dabble in the feeling of having had a semester abroad, tumultuous feelings and all, without all the actual emotional fallout or jetlag.

"Passages," a MUBI release in select theaters Friday, is unrated. Running time: 91 minutes. ★★★★★

AD

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C&C RECEIVED THE 1ST SILVER
"DEIGNAN AWARD"
FOR RESPONSIBLE ENTREPRENEURSHIP
IN MACAU (2023)





TASTE OF EDESIA

Cocktail Challenge

IRENE SAM, MDT

HONG KONG and Macau is preparing for the much-anticipated Local Final of the Sustainable Cocktail Challenge, a global initiative organized by sustainably crafted premium rum brand Flor de Caña, where 10 talented mixologists will compete to create the most spectacular sustainable

cocktail and win the coveted title of "Hong Kong and Macau's Most Sustainable Bartender".

The Local Final is going to take place at Daily Tot on 5th September, 2023. The evaluation criteria included: history and inspiration behind the cocktail, the use of sustainable ingredients and techniques and the level of creativity, in addition to its flavor and appearance.

The winning mixologists from each country will qualify to participate in the Asia Pacific Regional Final of the Sustainable Cocktail Challenge that will take place in November 2023 in Vietnam. Furthermore, the winners of the regional final will then go on to the Global Final of the Sustainable Cocktail Challenge that will take place in exotic tropical Nicaragua in 2024.

Perfection with 111SKIN

PERFECT skin is a must for the summer. For discerning individuals who are looking for effective spa treatment in a luxurious environment, The Spa at THE KARL LAGERFELD is an embodiment of palatial luxury that reflects the world of Karl in unconventional dark and gold tones. The lustrous jade art piece, towering at 2.1 metres in size and positioned at the centre of the spa reception, is a true testament to unparalleled artisanship. The spa unites holistic traditions with state-of-the-art, science-based

treatments featuring London's revolutionary, luxury skincare brand 111SKIN, which provides unrivalled clinical results backed by innovative research. Ingredients such as peptides, gentle acids, nourishing creams and serums transform the skin to perfection. The temperature-controlled indoor and outdoor swimming pools offer an oasis of style and well-being, with décor that features oversized scalloped stone columns and an art deco motif that complements the modern space. **IS**



OPINION

China Daily
 Editorial, China Daily

**RATING
 DOWNGRADE
 REFLECTS BAD
 GOVERNANCE**

Fitch Ratings lowered the United States' long-term credit rating to AA+ from its top mark of AAA on Tuesday. The agency, one of the three major credit rating companies, along with Moody's and S&P Global Ratings, said the country's high and growing debt burden and the "steady deterioration in the standards of governance" had undermined confidence in its fiscal management.

As predicted, US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen disagreed with Fitch's move, calling it "arbitrary and based on outdated data" in a statement. The White House, too, said it "strongly disagrees with this decision". White House Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said: "It defies reality to downgrade the US at a moment when President Biden has delivered the strongest recovery of any major economy in the world."

But their protestations have only served to show Fitch has hit the nail on the head. The downgrade is the second in US history. Standard & Poor's stripped the country of its triple-A rating in 2011, also amid a debt-limit standoff.

Fitch had indicated the possibility of a downgrade in May, then maintained that position in June even after the debt ceiling crisis of the US government was temporarily resolved.

Although US lawmakers finally agreed on further raising the country's debt ceiling so that it can pay its bills by borrowing more from the future, the structural problem concerning the fundamental fitness of the US governance system has not been touched upon. The partisan struggle in Washington has hijacked the nation's political system. The legislature, media outlets and other power watchdog departments in the country, which are supposedly designed to be a solid foundation for the smooth running of the US political system, are also split along party lines, which is reflective of the deeply polarized country.

Ever since former US president Donald Trump took office, the two parties have reached a tacit consensus that there is no need to continue to retain the last shreds of political decency in their power struggle.

As a result, the world has seen one political farce after another staged by the two camps of narrow-minded and shortsighted politicians, who prioritize their grip on power.

Take the debt ceiling as an example. Despite the makeshift agreement, the federal government now faces the prospect of a shutdown this fall, as lawmakers will continue to spar over how, where and what level of federal funds should be spent. The nonstop dueling risks tumbling the US economy into a "recession" in the final three months of this year. And, as Fitch has warned, that will generate spillover effects for an already troubled world.

The weakness in the property sector during the first half of the year has dragged down the economy, prompting the government to optimize property policies to support economic growth, said Ding Shuang, chief economist of Standard Chartered Bank for Greater China and North Asia, in an interview with China Daily.

In the first half of the year, especially in the second quarter, China's property sector experienced weakness with falling sales and declining property investments. This not only impacted the property industry but also affected retail sales in sectors such as construction materials, furniture and home appliances. The supply-demand balance in the property sector is expected to improve and

property policies optimized in response to the current situation. Regarding the drivers of economic growth, consumption is likely to play a crucial role, especially in the service sector.

To boost consumption confidence, the government may need to implement some stimulus measures.

This can be achieved through endogenous growth momentum, emphasizing the encouragement of private investment and further development of internet-related industries. Historically, the private sector has been a major employer in China, so enhancing employment opportunities and income prospects could lead to sustained growth in consumption, according to China Daily report.

AP PHOTO



**BRAZIL'S LULA VOICES
 SUPPORT FOR MORE
 COUNTRIES JOINING
 BRICS GROUP**

CARLA BRIDI, BRASILIA

BRAZILIAN President Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva said yesterday [Macau time] that he supports more countries joining the BRICS group of large developing nations, which currently includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

The group will hold a summit in Johannesburg from Aug. 22 to 24. The meeting will have in hand a list of others desiring to join their group.

"Possibly, in this meeting, we can already consensually decide which new countries can join BRICS," Lula told international journalists in the capital, Brasilia. "I am of the opinion that as many countries want to enter, if they are in compliance with the rules we are establishing, we will accept the countries' entrance."

Lula's comments came hours after Reuters reported that Brazil has resisted expanding the group's membership. It quoted unidentified Brazilian diplomats as voicing concern that adding more nations could lessen the influence of the existing members.

Around 20 countries

have formally applied to join the bloc, Brazilian Foreign Affairs Minister Mauro Vieira said after Lula's session with journalists. Among them are Argentina, United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, Indonesia, Iran and Venezuela, he said.

Vieira said that all BRICS members are interested in making an effort to accept other countries, but parameters still need to be discussed and there needs to be mutual agreement among leaders.

The summit in Johannesburg will occur as China and Russia, facing isolation by the U.S. and European Union, seek to expand their economic influence in developing countries. Russian President Vladimir Putin will join the summit via video call, while all other heads of state are expected to attend in person.

Since taking office, Lula has repeatedly bucked the existing Western-dominated international structure.

He has rejected the U.S. and EU's shared position of supporting Ukraine in its fight against Russia's invasion, refusing to provide arms to Ukrainian forces and pushing for peace talks to bring the war to an end.

He has called for an end

to the dominance of the U.S. dollar in international trade and supported a common currency for commerce within the South American bloc Mercosur and for trade among BRICS nations. He has also taken swipes at the International Monetary Fund.

Lula repeated those positions yesterday.

"Why does Brazil need the dollar to trade with China or Argentina? We can trade in our currency," he said.

He went on to hail the prospects of the Chinese-backed New Development Bank, commonly known as the BRICS bank, which is funding infrastructure projects in Brazil and elsewhere in the developing world.

"The BRICS bank must be effective and more generous than the IMF. Which is to say, the bank exists to help save countries and not to help sink countries, which is what the IMF does many times," he said.

Lula also criticized the U.N. Security Council, saying its members have been responsible for starting wars despite the body's stated mission of maintaining peace and security. Brazil has been seeking a permanent seat on the council for decades. **MDT/AP**

USA Mike Pence fought the Department of Justice in court to try to avoid testifying against his former boss. But the former vice president plays a central role in a new federal indictment unsealed this week that outlines the first criminal charges against Donald Trump connected to his efforts to overturn the 2020 election. The 45-page indictment is informed, in part, by contemporaneous notes that Pence kept of their conversations in the days leading up to the Jan. 6 attack on the U.S. Capitol. **More on p8**

Estonia The prime ministers of the three Baltic countries agreed yesterday to speed up their nations' disconnection from Russia's power grid by nearly one year and connect with the continental European energy network by February 2025. In a joint declaration, Kaja Kallas, Krisjanis Karins and Ingrida Simonyte - the leaders of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania, respectively - pledged the countries would complete the decoupling as soon as the technical capacity was in place.

Russia A court yesterday imposed fines on Apple and the host of Wikipedia for failing to remove material deemed to be "false information" about Russia's military actions in Ukraine. A justice of the peace in a magistrate's court, which handles administrative violations and low-level criminal cases, fined the Wikimedia Foundation 3 million rubles (\$33,000) for retaining material on Russian-language Wikipedia pages that violated a law against discrediting Russia's military and spreading false information about the Ukraine conflict, the Interfax news agency reported.

AP PHOTO



UK The Bank of England raised its main interest rate yesterday to a fresh 15-year high of 5.25%, and indicated it would stay high for some time to bring down persistently high inflation — another potential blow for those seeing their rents and mortgages rise during a cost-of-living crisis. "Inflation is falling, and that's good news," bank Gov. Andrew Bailey (pictured) said. "We need to make absolutely sure that it falls all the way back to the 2% target."