**Concours de Unes 2024 - CLEMI /AFP**

**8 dépêches en anglais**

Dépêche N°1 **China says US TikTok vote follows 'logic of a bandit'**

* Beijing (China)
* 14 March 2024 09:02
* AFP

China on Thursday said the US House of Representatives' approval of a bill that would force TikTok to sever ties with its Chinese parent company or be banned in the United States follows "entirely the logic of a bandit".

The short-video app has soared in popularity worldwide but its ownership by Chinese technology giant ByteDance -- and alleged subservience to Beijing's ruling Communist Party -- has fuelled concern in Western capitals.

On Wednesday, the US House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved a bill that would force TikTok to divest from its parent company or face a nationwide ban.

The bill is yet to pass the Senate, where it is expected to face a tougher test in order to become law.

"The bill passed by the United States House of Representatives puts the United States on the opposite side of the principles of fair competition and international economic and trade rules," foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a regular press conference.

"If so-called reasons of national security can be used to arbitrarily suppress excellent companies from other countries, then there is no fairness and justice at all," he said.

"When someone sees a good thing another person has and tries to take it for themself, this is entirely the logic of a bandit.

"The United States' handling of the TikTok incident will allow the world to see more clearly whether the United States' so-called rules and order are beneficial to the world, or whether they only serve the United States itself."

bur-je/sco

Dépêche N°2

**Biden and Trump gird for marathon White House race**

* Washington (District of Columbia, United States)
* 13 March 2024 23:35
* AFP (Frankie TAGGART)

Eight months ahead of the US presidential election, the campaign moves from the parties' nominating contests to the trench warfare of what promises to be one of the longest, most brutal head-to-head showdowns in memory.
President Joe Biden and his predecessor Donald Trump -- the oldest pair of nominees in history -- emerged this week from a primary season that has inflicted battle scars on both, raising questions over their judgment and mental acuity.
The 81-year-old incumbent Democrat and his Republican foe, 77, see their rematch on November 5 as an existential moment for America and have spent months trading deeply personal insults in a bruising start to the campaign.
Both are unpopular with large sections of a populace wary of handing the keys to the most powerful office in the world to men born closer to the inauguration of Civil War hero Ulysses S. Grant than to November's election.
Trump -- who never left the political stage after defeat in 2020 and faces dozens of pending criminal charges -- is likely to be dividing his time between his signature rallies and court appearances.

**- 'Age matters' -**

Trump would take Biden's record as the oldest president in history were he to succeed in November and stay the course for a full second term, yet the age issue has been lopsided -- threatening Biden more than his rival.

Trump's gaffes at campaign rallies -- where he regularly confuses names, places and history -- have paled beside a special counsel report that called Biden an "elderly man with a poor memory."

"Age matters. Biden looks older in 2024 compared to 2020, and he is working hard to dispel the notion that he is past his prime," said political historian Mike Cullinane, of Dickinson State University in North Dakota.

**- Everything to play for -**

Trump's aides point to polling showing him ahead in the all-important swing states to argue that he is holding the stronger hand.

Biden says a second Trump term would shake the foundations of democracy as the Republican purges critics, reshapes the federal government in his authoritarian image and pursues vendettas to avenge every perceived slight.

The Democrat's problem is that Trump has been open about these plans, which are already baked into his support among millions of Americans and -- for now, at least -- have done little to harm his poll numbers.

But to win, Trump will need to reach beyond the "Make America Great Again" crowd and convince moderates that he isn't running simply to stay out of jail.

The twice-impeached tycoon has recently been found liable in fraud and sexual abuse lawsuits, and faces 80 felony charges, accused of Espionage Act violations and trying to steal the 2020 election.

ft/bgs/nro/des

Dépêche N°3

**Gaza war kills more children than in four years of worldwide conflict: UNRWA**

* Geneva (Switzerland)
* 12 March 2024 20:21
* AFP

More children have been reported killed in the war raging in Gaza than in four years of conflict around the world, the head of the UN agency for Palestinian refugees said Tuesday.

"Staggering. The number of children reported killed in just over 4 months in Gaza is higher than the number of children killed in 4 years of wars around the world combined," Philippe Lazzarini said on X, formerly Twitter.

His post referenced United Nations numbers showing that 12,193 children had been killed in conflicts worldwide between 2019 and 2022.

It compared that to reports from the health ministry in Hamas-run Gaza indicating that more than 12,300 children died in the Palestinian territory between last October and the end of February.

"This war is a war on children. It is a war on their childhood and their future," Lazzarini said.

The brutal war began with the unprecedented October 7 Hamas attack that resulted in about 1,160 deaths in Israel, mostly civilians, according to an AFP count based on Israeli official figures.

The militants also took around 250 hostages, dozens of whom were released during a week-long truce in November. Israel believes about 130 captives remain in Gaza, including 32 presumed dead.

Israel's retaliatory bombardment and ground offensive have killed 31,184 Palestinians in Gaza, mostly women and children, according to the territory's health ministry.

nl/giv

Dépêche N°4

**Russia says shot down 14 drones over Ukraine border regions**

* Moscow (Russia)
* 14 March 2024 07:13
* AFP

Russia's defence ministry on Thursday said that 14 Ukrainian drones were destroyed overnight over the regions of Belgorod and Kursk on the border with Ukraine.

It marked the latest wave of drone attacks on Russian territory this week, ahead of presidential elections on March 15-17 that are all but guaranteed to hand President Vladimir Putin another six years in power.

Eleven drones were shot down over the region of Belgorod and three over the region of Kursk, the defence ministry said in a statement.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, dozens of Ukrainian drones targeted several Russian regions, including oil refineries hundreds of kilometres from the frontline, in the regions of Ryazan, Nizhny Novgorod and Leningrad.

bur/yad/mca

Dépêche N°5

**EU parliament adopts 'historic' rules on AI**

* Strasbourg (Bas-Rhin, France)
* 13 March 2024 12:52
* AFP (Pauline Froissart with Raziye Akkoc in Brussels)

The European Parliament gave final approval on Wednesday to wide-ranging EU rules to govern artificial intelligence, including powerful systems like OpenAI's ChatGPT.

Senior European Union officials say the rules, first proposed in 2021, will protect citizens from the possible risks of a technology developing at breakneck speed, while also fostering innovation on the continent.

Brussels has sprinted to pass the new law since OpenAI's Microsoft-backed ChatGPT arrived on the scene in late 2022, unleashing a global AI race.

There was a burst of excitement for generative AI as ChatGPT wowed the world with its human-like capabilities -- from digesting complex text to producing poems within seconds, or passing medical exams.

Further examples of generative AI models include DALL-E and Midjourney, which produce images, while other models produce sounds from a simple input in everyday language.

The far-reaching regulation passed with the support of 523 lawmakers in the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France, with 46 voting against.

The EU's 27 states are expected to endorse the text in April before the law is published in the EU's Official Journal in May or June.

"Today is again an historic day on our long path towards regulation of AI," said Brando Benifei, an Italian lawmaker who pushed the text through parliament with Romanian MEP Dragos Tudorache.

"We managed to find that very delicate balance between the interest to innovate and the interest to protect," Tudorache told journalists before the vote.

The EU's internal market commissioner, Thierry Breton, hailed the vote.

"I welcome the overwhelming support from the European Parliament for the EU AI Act," he said. "Europe is now a global standard-setter in trustworthy AI."

**- AI policing restrictions -**

The EU's rules known as the "AI Act" take a risk-based approach: the riskier the system, the tougher the requirements -- with outright bans on the AI tools deemed to carry the most threat.

For example, high-risk AI providers must conduct risk assessments and ensure their products comply with the law before they are made available to the public.

Violations can see companies hit with fines ranging from 7.5 million to 35 million euros ($8.2 million to $38.2 million), depending on the type of infringement and the firm's size.

There are strict bans on using AI for predictive policing and systems that use biometric information to infer an individual's race, religion or sexual orientation.

raz/ec/jj

Dépêche N°6 –

**Adagio in sea: Coral larvae 'settle near sounds of healthy reefs'**

* Paris (France)
* 13 March 2024 16:48
* AFP (Kelly MACNAMARA)

Audio recordings of healthy reefs -- an underwater chorus of fish songs and crackles from snapping shrimp -- may help efforts to restore coral ecosystems harmed by climate and human impacts, scientists said Wednesday.

With the future of the world's biodiversity-rich coral reefs threatened by climate change, some experts are looking for rehabilitation strategies to go alongside broader efforts to slash planet-heating pollution. Researchers at Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution say one such method to help reefs rebuild could be sound, after they broadcast audio from a healthy reef to entice coral larvae to settle on the seabed at a degraded reef.

Coral larvae use a range of signals from reefs, including chemical cues, as they swim through the open water in their first stage of life looking for a permanent home, said Nadege Aoki, lead author of the study published in the journal Royal Society Open Science.

"Now we have also demonstrated that the local sound environment is very important for these corals, and that playing reef sounds can potentially be a vital tool in the effort to restore coral reefs," she told AFP.

**Under threat**

There was still much more to learn about how corals respond to sound, Aoki said, including whether different species behave in the same ways and how they are able to "hear".

Coral reefs support about a quarter of all marine life, as well as the millions of people who rely on them for food and income.

But human-driven climate change is spurring mass coral bleaching as the oceans heat and scientists warn that up to 90 percent of reefs could be lost if warming reaches 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

 Dépêche N°7

**Oscars revenge for 'Anatomy of a Fall' after French snub**

* Paris (France)
* 23 January 2024 17:45
* AFP

With a slew of Oscar nominations on Tuesday, including for best picture, France's "Anatomy of a Fall" got revenge after being snubbed by the country's own selection committee.

The courtroom drama about a woman accused of murdering her husband was overlooked as France's selection for best international film at the Oscars, which instead went to "The Taste of Things", an ode to gastronomy and romance that did well abroad but was widely derided as cliche and old-fashioned back home.

In the end, "The Taste of Things" did not make the final short-list when the Oscar nominations were announced on Tuesday.

And revenge was sweet for "Anatomy of a Fall", which was put in the running for five awards, including best picture, screenplay and editing, as well as best actress for Sandra Hueller and best director for Justine Triet.

Countries select their entries for best international film, which is then whittled down to five by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences in Hollywood. All the other categories for Academy Awards, or Oscars, are chosen directly by Academy voters.

Some had seen France's decision to snub the film as revenge for Triet's outspoken comments against the government of President Emmanuel Macron when "Anatomy of a Fall" won the top prize at Cannes last year.

In any case, Triet's film has since been scooping up awards, including surprise wins for best screenplay and best non-English language film at the Golden Globes earlier this month.

Macron, who had stayed silent over her Cannes victory, finally congratulated Triet, writing on X that he was "proud to see French cinema recognised at the Golden Globes".

er/yad

 Dépêche N°8

**Atletico beat Inter on penalties to reach Champions League quarters**

* Madrid (Spain)
* 13 March 2024 23:52
* AFP

Atletico Madrid bounced back from two goals down on aggregate against Inter Milan to reach the Champions League quarter-finals with a thrilling 3-2 penalty shoot-out triumph on Wednesday.

Trailing by a single goal after last month's first leg, Atletico looked dead and buried when Federico Dimarco pushed home Inter's opener at the Estadio Metropolitano.

But Antoine Griezmann immediately pulled the hosts level on the night and three minutes before the end of the regulation 90 minutes substitute Memphis Depay took the tie to extra time with a fine low finish.

That set up the decisive shoot-out which ended with Inter missing three of their five penalties, star striker Lautaro Martinez handing passage to the last eight to Atletico when he booted his spot-kick way off target.

The two teams could barely have come into Wednesday's match in more contrasting form as Inter had won 13 matches on the bounce since the start of 2024 while Atletico had won only one of their last five.

However it was an even and exciting contest in the Spanish capital in which Atletico pushed hard for the win and both sides created a hatful of opportunities.

Depay smashed a powerful effort off the woodwork moments before his strike took the two teams to an additional 30 minutes while Rodrigo Riquelme wasted a glorious chance to snatch the tie for Atletico without the need for extra-time.

Inter meanwhile were left ruing two great chances on the break as Atletico pushed for their second, both Marcus Thuram and Nicolo Barella finishing poorly with chances to seal the tie.

Simone Inzaghi's Inter now turn their attentions back to winning their 20th Serie A title while Atletico await Friday's draw for the last eight in Nyon.

Inter, who wasted a series of opportunities to earn a bigger first-leg advantage, are 16 points clear of AC Milan with 10 league matches remaining.

td/mw