

# China launches first Internet court in e-commerce hub



Combo photo shows the working process in a court room of the Internet court in Hangzhou, capital of east China's Zhejiang Province, Aug. 18, 2017. The court, first of its kind in China, specializing in handling Internet-related cases, opened Friday to cater to the increasing number of online trade disputes and copyright lawsuits. The cases handled by the court will be tried online. [Photo/Xinhua]

China's first court specializing in handling Internet-related cases opened Friday in the e-commerce hub of Hangzhou, capital of Zhejiang Province, to cater to the increasing number of online disputes.

The Hangzhou Internet Court heard its first case regarding a copyright infringement between an online writer and internet giant Netease on its opening day.

Sitting in front of their computers in Hangzhou and Beijing, the agents representing the plaintiff and the defendant communicated with the judge online. The trial lasted about 20 minutes.

"The Internet court breaks geographic boundaries and greatly saves time in traditional hearings," said Wang Jiangqiao, vice president of the court.

The court mainly handles civil cases such as contract disputes involving online shopping, service and small loans, copyright and infringement lawsuits, domain name dispute, Internet defaming and some administrative lawsuits.

It will also handle certain cases assigned by superior courts.

By registering on court's website, plaintiffs can file lawsuits and pay legal costs. The cases handled by the court will be tried online. The process is quicker, and plaintiffs and defendants can have their disputes handled while at home and at much lower cost.

"The hearing of an Internet-related case often lasts at least two days and each side has to spend thousands of yuan to travel to the court," said Zhang Sijia, a lawyer.

"We are involved in cases all over the country and the costs are too high to attend every lawsuit. Sometimes even if we win the case, we lose a huge amount of money in the process. It will significantly lower our costs if we can have them done online," said Yang Wei, vice president of Netease.

The opening of the court is along with the fast growing internet users and the consequent online disputes in China.

According to the latest report from the China Internet Network Information Center, China had about 751 million Internet users and 724 million mobile Internet users as of the end of June.

As China pushes its Internet Plus and innovation strategies, the Internet is playing an increasingly important role in the country's economic transformation. China is home to a number of Internet giants such as Alibaba, Baidu and Tencent.

The income of China's top 100 Internet companies rose 46.8 percent year-on-year to 1.1 trillion yuan (about 164 billion U.S. dollars) in 2016, latest official data showed.

It was the first time the total has surpassed one trillion yuan, according to calculations by Ministry of Industry and Information Technology and the Internet Society of China.

But the country is also seeing a surge in cyber disputes as more people go online to shop, publish their works and manage finance.

In 2015, the Zhejiang provincial higher people's court initiated a pilot online court program at three district courts in Hangzhou to handle online

trade, copyright and financial services disputes.

So far, a total of 15 courts in Zhejiang have joined the program and dealt with nearly 23,000 cases.

“With more cases accepted, we found it hard to judge a case according to traditional lawsuit regulations,” said Li Shaoping, deputy head of Supreme People’s Court.

The Internet court was therefore outlined at the 36th meeting of the Central Leading Group for Deepening Overall Reform in June as the latest effort to deepen judicial reform through lifting the efficiency of justice, improving the hearing procedures of Internet-related cases and promoting the sound development of the Internet industry.

The new court allows both sides to submit evidence in real time and is connected with big data to help judges make decisions.

“For example, the system can present the judge with similar cases as references in the course of the proceeding,” said Wang. “The judge can also check the transaction history at any time when dealing with cases involving online transaction disputes.”

“By setting up the Internet court, we hope to establish a professional platform to deal with Internet-related cases with new concepts and specially-designed regulations,” Li said.

Zhou Hanhua, law researcher with the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, said the Internet court involved the use of information technology in judicial procedures and process transformation.

The reform should try to let everyone feel justice in each case, he added.

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## Two officials under investigation following fatal coal mine landslide

Two officials have been placed under investigation following a fatal landslide at an open-pit coal mine in north China’s Shanxi Province.

The total number of fatalities rose to eight as four more bodies were recovered Thursday. The accident occurred at around 3 p.m. on Aug. 11 at Lyuxin coal mine in Heshun County, but the coal mine company denied the casualties until its head turned himself in to police Tuesday, confessing that about 10 people were buried in the accident.

At least one person remains missing, but the exact number of people buried is not yet known.

Zhang Ruiqing, the county coal administration head, and Yao Jiangbo, head of the county bureau of land and resources, are both being investigated for suspected "violation of laws and regulations." Zhang has been removed from his post.

Lyuxin coal mine, under Shanxi Coal Transportation and Sales Group Co., Ltd., has an annual coal capacity of 2 million tonnes.

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## Heavy rain kills 10 in Guangxi

Downpours have killed 10 people in south China's Guangxi Zhuang Autonomous Region, authorities said Friday.

Heavy rain has lashed 23 counties since last Saturday, and more than 190,000 people have suffered losses, according to the regional department of civil affairs.

So far, 11,100 people have been evacuated.

A total of 7,800 hectares of crops have been damaged, and 305 houses have collapsed, resulting in a direct economic loss of 574 million yuan (86 million U.S. dollars), according to the department.

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## Pump leak led to PetroChina plant fire: authorities

The fire that broke out Thursday in a chemical plant in Dalian, northeast China's Liaoning Province, was caused by leak in an oil pump, authorities said Friday.

The fire broke out at around 6:40 p.m. in a subsidiary of state-owned PetroChina Company Limited in the coastal city, according to the local publicity department. No casualties were reported.

Liu Yan, Dalian's deputy mayor, said that the leak occurred in a pump in the company's catalytic cracking unit that churns out 1.4 million tonnes of heavy oil annually.

Representatives from the company said that the accident showed vulnerabilities in safety management.

"We need to learn lessons from the fire and launch a safety inspection to rule out further risks," Liu said.

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## Beijing 8th cheapest city in the world for cab fare

Beijing has been ranked eighth in an international taxi price index issued recently by a British company for its cab fare – 2.3 yuan (\$0.34) per kilometer.

The 2017 Taxi Price Index, issued by Carspring, an online seller of used cars, shows taxi fares in 80 tourist cities in around the world based on three metrics: The cost per kilometer, the cost of waiting time, and the fare from the airport to the city center.

For the cost per kilometer, Cairo took the top spot at \$0.10, followed by Bangkok (\$0.18), Moscow (\$0.27), Mexico City (\$0.28), Jakarta (\$0.30), Bangalore (\$0.30), Mumbai (0.32), Beijing (\$0.34), Bucharest (\$0.35) and Kuala Lumpur (\$0.36).

The most expensive city for cab fare is Zurich, Switzerland, at \$5.19 per kilometer.

For a typical 3 kilometer ride, Beijing is ranked the 15th cheapest with a fare of \$3.08, and Cairo retains its top position as the cheapest city with \$0.55. Zurich is the most expensive with \$25.25.